



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **European Social Fund: over 1 billion euros to boost growth and jobs in The Netherlands**

The European Commission welcomes the adoption of the Dutch national Operational Programme for the implementation of the [European Social Fund](#) in the period 2014-2020. This programme outlines the priorities and objectives to spend €1.014 billion (of which over €500 million from the EU budget), contributing to strengthening economic growth in all Dutch regions and to achieving the [Europe 2020 objectives](#) of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion László Andor commented: *"I am happy to see The Netherlands fighting social exclusion by focussing a major part of the ESF resources on helping those the furthest away from the labour market finding a job."*

On 22 August 2014, the Commission adopted the Partnership Agreement with The Netherlands, which lays the basis for the use of all European Structural and Investment Funds in the country in 2014-20 (IP/14/941). The ESF represents 50% of the total Cohesion Policy funding allocated to The Netherlands.

The total ESF allocation will be distributed among the following three priorities:

- Inclusion through education and employment: over 70 % of the total budget (€720 million) will be invested to integrate excluded groups into the labour market. Labour integration pathways, (re)-training, and individual coaching will be the most prominent tools used by the Dutch municipalities, who are best placed to develop tailor-made solutions.
- Sustainable and quality employment: €200 million will be invested to help counter an expected shortage of labour, supporting measures for active and healthy ageing of the workforce as well as the (re)organisation of work environments and working conditions in order to keep people longer in employment;
- Special support for the four largest cities in The Netherlands: In Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht and The Hague, €50 million will be available for creating local employment initiatives with the aim of bringing together labour demand and labour supply and thereby addressing the existing mismatch in these areas.

The character of the 2014 -2020 ESF Programme drastically changed in comparison to the 2007- 2013 period. While previously over 50% of the ESF allocation supported the training and qualification of workers already in employment, in 2014-2020 the ESF focuses on the lower end of the labour market, investing 71% of the allocation to social inclusion measures to help those at the margins of the labour market to find a job

Another novelty is the integrated approach with the [European Regional Development Fund](#) in areas with special needs in the four largest cities in The Netherlands.

## Background

The [European Social Fund](#) (ESF) plays a fundamental role in supporting Member States' investment in human capital and thereby in strengthening the competitiveness of the European economy as it is emerging from the crisis. Every year the ESF assists **over 15 million people** by helping them to upgrade their skills, facilitating their integration into the labour market, combating social exclusion and poverty and enhancing the efficiency of public administrations.

In 2014-2020, for the first time in the history of EU Cohesion Policy, a minimum budget representing at least 23.1% (at EU level) within Cohesion Policy funding has been allocated to the ESF - see [MEMO/14/84](#).

## For more information

[European Social Fund website](#)

[László Andor's website](#)

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