



**NICOLAS SCHMIT**  
MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
JOBS AND SOCIAL RIGHTS

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Dear Ms Kuchyňková,  
Dear Mr Lesák,

Thank you for your letter of 9 February in which you inform me about your continued concerns regarding the possibility of a reduced allocation of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), as proposed by the Czech government.

I fully share your view that a reduced ESF+ allocation would be to the detriment of the Czech employment and social policies. It would further weaken the capacity of municipalities, non-governmental organisations and educational institutions to address the economic and social impact of the current Covid-19 pandemic. This is particularly worrying in light of the increase in unemployment, notably among young people. Other phenomena need close attention and appropriate funding, such as skills shortages, the social exclusion of marginalised groups and the widening educational gap.

It is in this context that I have suggested that the Czech authorities maintain the initial allocation foreseen for ESF+, notably in light of the limited social ambitions of the first draft of the national Recovery and Resilience Plan and the initial signals of the Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe (REACT-EU) allocation to crisis response measures.

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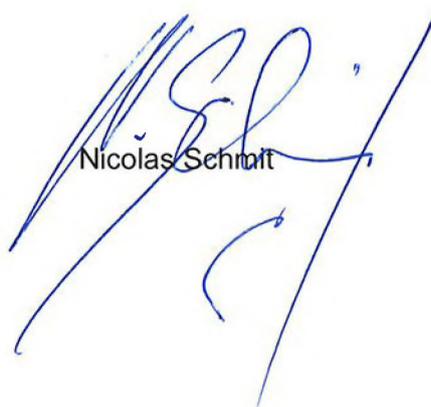
Ms Iva Kuchyňková,  
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Mr Vít Lesák,  
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You also raise the question of a fully inclusive consultation process involving a broad spectrum of organisations representing the public interest. In fact, this is a pre-condition for future operational programmes in all Member States, including the Czech Republic, and my services are actively following this issue with the Czech authorities.

Please rest assured that I am pursuing the dialogue with the Czech authorities to promote effective social rights with a view to ensuring fairness and social justice in the European Union.

Yours sincerely,



Nicolas Schmit