



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND INCLUSION

Skills  
Czechia, Poland, Slovakia

Brussels  
EMPL.E.5/KK/rcg (2021)1840951

Dear Ms Kuchyňková, Dear Mr Lesák,

Thank you for your letter of 9 February 2021 in which you raise your concerns about the impact of a reduced allocation of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) in favour of the Cohesion Fund, and about the new co-financing rules on preventive social services offered by NGOs in particular. It is with regret that I hear about the difficulties you experienced in putting across your expertise in the relevant consultations.

Concerning transfers from ESF+, you are probably aware that this is an option provided by the cohesion policy funds legislation. The ceiling for such transfers is 20% of the initial national allocation per fund, 25% in case of the Czech Republic; therefore, the 10% transfer approved by the Czech government is within this limitation. However, seen the significant needs for social investment compounded by the current pandemic, we support keeping all the ESF+ allocation as proposed. This is the position already expressed towards the Czech authorities and we will therefore ask them to provide a solid justification for this transfer proposal.

As for the setting-up of co-financing rates, it is also the full competence of the Czech authorities. In the period of 2021-2027, in accordance with applicable legislation, the Member State may modulate this co-financing rate whilst respecting the principle of transparency and equal treatment of beneficiaries. This is a concern which merits attention during the upcoming programming negotiations. We fully support rules that encourage the participation of smaller beneficiaries, such as NGOs, in ESF+ activities.

As regards the application of the partnership principle, we would like to reassure you that the Commission is following up its application, in line with the European code of conduct on partnership, ie. Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 240/2014, which will remain applicable in the 2021-2027 period.

Yours faithfully,

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