

Brussels, 25 July 2025
(OR. en)

**Interinstitutional File:
2012/0295 (COD)**

**11911/25
ADD 2**

**SOC 548
CADREFIN 125**

COVER NOTE

From: Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Ms Martine
DEPREZ, Director

date of receipt: 9 July 2025

To: Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the
European Union

No. Cion doc.: SWD(2025) 189 annex

Subject: PART 3/3 COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT
EVALUATION Ex-post evaluation of the 2014-2020 Fund for European
Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)

Delegations will find attached document SWD(2025) 189 annex.

Encl.: SWD(2025) 189 annex



Brussels, 9.7.2025
SWD(2025) 189 final

PART 3/3

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT
EVALUATION

Ex Post Evaluation 2014-2020 Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)

{SWD(2025) 190 final}

FEAD OP-I

Austria
Belgium
Bulgaria
Cyprus
Czechia
Estonia
Greece
Spain
Finland
France
Croatia
Hungary
Ireland
Italy
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Latvia
Malta
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Slovenia
Slovakia

FEAD OP-II

Germany
Denmark
Netherlands
Sweden

F E A

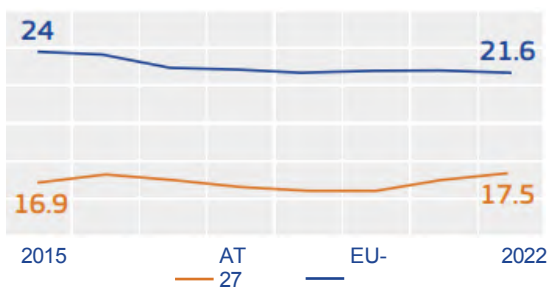
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

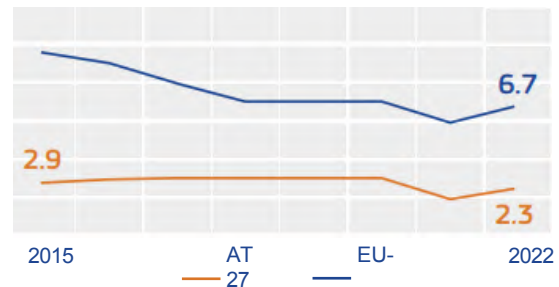
In Austria, FEAD had positive results by contributing to alleviating material deprivation of children. It provided children of low-income households with school bags or stationery material at the beginning of the school year, thereby helping families to reduce their expenditures. The target group were children affected by or at risk of poverty, identified as those whose families were recipients of needs-based minimum benefits (Mindestsicherung or 'social assistance').

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The at risk of poverty or social exclusion rate in Austria remained below the EU average between 2015 and 2022 (years for which data is available).



The severe material and social deprivation rate in Austria has overall been declining and was below the EU average between 2015 and 2022 (years for which data is available).

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 27.2 million total funding of which **EUR 24 million** EU contribution including **EUR 6 million** of REACT-EU funds

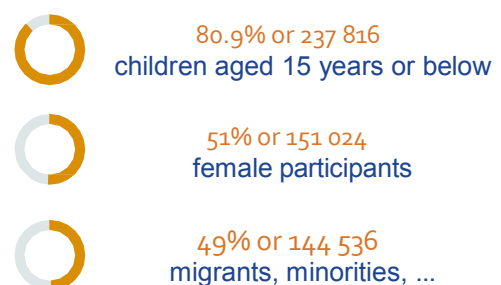
FEAD supported

basic material assistance to the most deprived families, consisting of school bags and goods for school use

and provided accompanying measures, such as advice to school children on a range of subjects in the form of a leaflet

FEAD distributed

FEAD reached **293 893 people** out of which



EUR 23.2 million worth of goods for children

*Figures as recorded in the SFC2014 monitoring system by September 2023. Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the categories.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

FEAD contributed to the social inclusion of children of deprived families

The school materials and school bags provided were high-quality and up-to-date branded items. Children were able to choose between different designs, helping them feel on equal terms with their peers, and thus avoiding stigmatisation. The project thus undoubtedly contributed to social inclusion, balancing inequalities and promoting equal opportunities.

Basic material assistance contributed to environmental sustainability

The provision of basic material assistance in Austria contributed to the environmental horizontal principle of FEAD. Durable quality items were selected for the school packages from the start of the project and in 2016, in cooperation with the Ministry for Environment, all items were checked to see whether more environmentally friendly

Multiple distribution points ensured wider reach

Geographic coverage was guaranteed through cooperation with a well-established partner organisation (Red Cross) and the setting up of over 100 local distribution points, where volunteers helped to hand out the selected items to the end recipients. This was important because limited mobility was considered one of the biggest challenges for the target group.

alternatives were available. The proportion of products with eco-labels continuously increased: by 2020, all backpacks and school bags were produced with fabrics made from recycled PET bottles. In 2021, packaging material collected from the distribution points in the previous year was reused.

LESSONS LEARNED

School starter pack eased financial burden and helped social inclusion

The school starter package was perceived as particularly successful, as it directly reached the target group of children while at the same time taking a financial burden off their families. Access to the school starter packages was regulated by the receipt of needs-based minimum benefits. Such investments in educational materials represent a very sustainable form of support and prevention of social disadvantage.

High quality, non-stigmatising products were selected

Key to the success of FEAD in Austria were reliable communication structures and coordinated procedures between stakeholders involved, including the high motivation volunteers. Overall, the

Commitment of all involved parties contributed to successful implementation

Key to the success of FEAD in Austria were reliable communication structures and coordinated procedures between stakeholders involved, including the high motivation of volunteers. Overall, the effectiveness of the programme could, in a large part, be attributed to the commitment and engagement of all parties involved.

effectiveness of the programme could, in a large part, be attributed to the commitment and engagement of all parties involved.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

'School Starter Pack'

In Austria, FEAD funds were used to focus on one large project: The 'School Starter Pack' was decided upon based on research identifying families' increased need for financial assistance at the beginning of

each new school year. Apart from school bags, stationery material could be chosen, which was especially useful for families benefiting from the project for consecutive years.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FEAD in Austria

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPagId=3603> Website of

FEAD Austria <https://www.sozialministerium.at/> or

<https://www.sozialministerium.at/Themen/Soziales/Soziale-Themen/Schulstartklar/Rueckblick-Schulstartpaket.html>



FEA

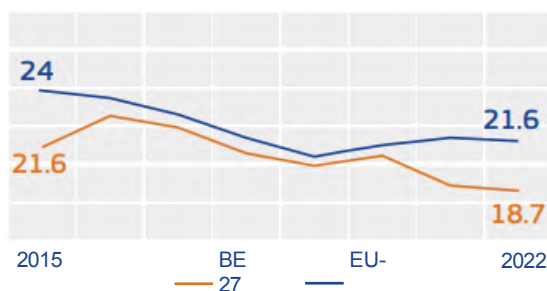
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

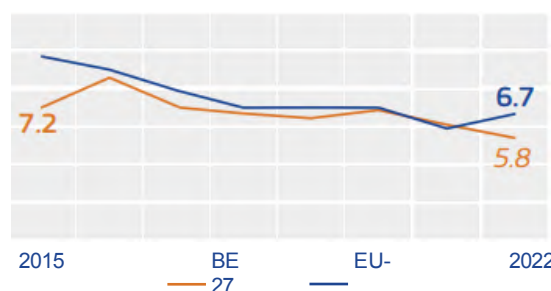
In Belgium, FEAD had positive results in terms of covering food needs and complementing this with accompanying measures that contribute to social inclusion. FEAD targeted disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals, notably people living below the poverty line, in particular homeless people and refugees. The main FEAD partner organizations were the municipal Public Social Services Centres (CPAS/ OCMW), the Belgian Federation of Food Banks, the Red Cross, the Federation of Social Services (FDSS), Alimen't, and the Belgian Network for the Fight against Poverty (BAPN).

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Belgium has been declining since 2015 and was consistently below the EU average between 2015 (24%) and 2022 (21.6%) (years for which data is available).



The proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Belgium has overall been declining since 2014, and was consistently below the EU average between 2015 and 2022 (years for which data is available).

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 134.3 million total funding
of which **EUR 119.9 million** EU contribution
including **EUR 46.1 million** of REACT-EU
funds

FEAD supported
food assistance to the most deprived, consisting of
individual food packages and hot meals/lunches in
soup kitchens.

and provided accompanying measures, such as
redirection to competent services, advice on
personal hygiene or on managing a household
budget, coaching
and workshops, especially to enhance integration
in
education or the labour market

FEAD distributed

FEAD reached
3 156 993 people
out of which

84 016 tons of food aid
10 115 096 meals
17 648 057 food packages

36% or 1 149 004
women

31% or 972 620
migrants, minorities, ...

29% or 926 047
children at risk of poverty

8% or 240 323
> 65 years

5% or 165 776
homeless

3% or 93 591
people with disabilities



*Figures represent the situation for FEAD OP-I for the programming period 2014-2020 implemented up to December 2022, as recorded in the SFC2014 monitoring system by September 2023. FEAD operations may have continued to be implemented until the end of 2023. Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the categories.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

More than 3 million people reached by FEAD

FEAD contributed to all national and European objectives aimed at reducing poverty and improving social inclusion. The collaboration with the Public Social Services Centres, who also offered social inclusion measures to recipients has been a key success factor in Belgium, making FEAD a part of an integrated social policy.

FEAD provided material support and inclusion activities

FEAD produced leverage effects. The Managing Authority went beyond FEAD requirements to meet the needs of end recipients, for example offering material assistance such as baby wipes, sanitary kits, and basic hygienic products. Additional subsidies were also given

FEAD products represented 50% of food support

FEAD food support represented approximately 50% of food distributed to the most deprived via food banks and food aid organisations. Around one third of partner organisations in Belgium only distributed FEAD products.

to the Public Social Services Centres and warehouses to deal with the various crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and to deliver social, cultural and political activities to help increase social participation and break social isolation of end recipients.

LESSONS LEARNED

Capacity building of the FEAD team contributed to suc-

A key success factor of FEAD in Belgium was the continual capacity building of the FEAD team since the beginning of the programme. Regular (quarterly) meetings between FEAD partners were organised in order to share information and learn from each other, and consultations with numerous partners when developing the list of food products for each campaign were also organised in order to best meet the needs of end recipients.

Support through volunteers assured cost-effective and genuine support of stigmatised recipients

FEAD food distribution was cost-effective due to the extensive use of volunteers and low transport costs. Volunteers played a major role in organising the delivery system in a centralised manner instead of transporting food all over the country. They were not a part of administrative structures or local authorities, and therefore best suited to offering genuine, personal support to end recipients.

Crisis response was successful through constant dialogue and additional resources

The COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine had a major impact on FEAD, with 18% more end recipients between 2021 and 2022. However, thanks to the partner organisations, the constant dialogue with the sector and the use of additional

national and REACT-EU resources, the programme succeeded in coping with and adapting to the global context by finding solutions that allowed the fund to achieve its primary objective: to provide end recipients with relevant support in times of need.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

'SOREAL project'

In Belgium, there was an increasing demand for food aid, and at the same time an increasing need to fight food waste. The SOREAL project tackled this issue by acting as a bridge between food suppliers and food aid organisations. The project collected unsold food products and swiftly distributed them to 10 local food organisations that assisted the most deprived people in the region. These food products were subsequently used in distributed food parcels, and to prepare meals in reception centres, and for workshops. As a result of this project, over 100 tonnes of food have been saved and redistributed to Belgium's most deprived, reaching more than 5 000 individuals.

'FOOD IT digital tool'

The introduction of digital tools helped enhance the distribution cycle and improve the service to end recipients. The centre of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, Giraud (Brussels), introduced a 'FOOD IT digital tool' to handle the distribution of FEAD goods more quickly and efficiently. This was a user-friendly application on tablets, which volunteers used during the distribution process. The use of the tool led to significant productivity improvements and decreased distribution time by more than 40%, with recipients served very quickly.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FEAD in Belgium

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPageId=3604> Website of

FEAD Belgium <http://www.mi-is.be>

FEA

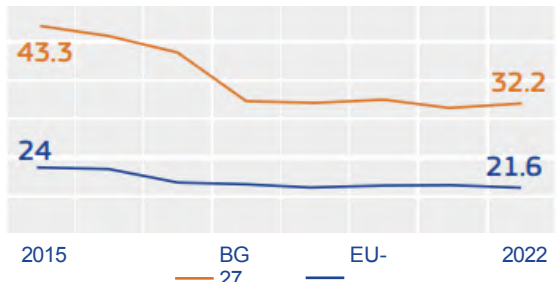
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

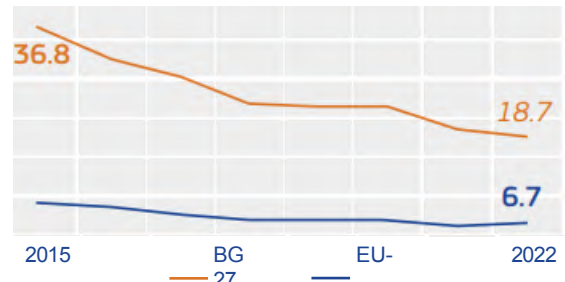
In Bulgaria, FEAD had positive results in terms of covering food needs and complementing this with accompanying measures that contributed to social inclusion. FEAD targeted the most deprived and vulnerable citizens in the country based on income criteria. The target group was broadened to include persons from high-risk groups of infection during the COVID-19 pandemic, and Ukrainians fleeing Russian military aggression after the onset of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The Bulgarian Red Cross was responsible for the distribution of individual food packages, while over 200 municipalities prepared and distributed warm meals. Accompanying measures were provided by the Red Cross and the municipalities.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Bulgaria has been declining. However, the rate was consistently above the EU average between 2015 (24%) and 2022 (21.6%) (years for which data is available).



The proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Bulgaria has been declining. However, the rate was consistently above the EU average between 2015 and 2022 (years for which data is available).

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 161.9 million total funding
of which **EUR 143.4 million** EU
contribution including **EUR 38.6 million** of
REACT-EU funds

FEAD reached
3 265 520 people
out of which

1 727 668 food packages

FEAD supported

food assistance to the most deprived, consisting of individual food packages and hot meals/lunches in soup kitchens

and provided accompanying measures, such as advice on food preparation, storage and reduction of food waste, educational activities, personal hygiene advice, redirection to competent services, individual coaching, advice on managing a household budget & purchase of personal protective equipment and disinfectants

FEAD distributed

105 712 tons of food aid
64 722 772 meals

57% or 1 845 376
women

27% or 871 372
> 65 years

25% or 819 504
children at risk of poverty

23% or 757 321
people with disabilities

10% or 339 345
migrants, minorities, ...

0.1% or 2 305
homeless



*FEAD operations may have continued until December 2023. Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the categories.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Warm meal support was extended through FEAD funding

FEAD funding enlarged the existing programme for warm meals supported by the Social Protection Fund. This proved to be very beneficial for those who lived below the threshold of poverty. The support allowed recipients to eat warm food and several nutritious meals throughout the week.

FEAD contributed to reducing household budget costs

FEAD in Bulgaria contributed to the national objective of reducing the number of people living in poverty by 260 000 until 2020 by reducing the food costs of a household. In 2021, the programme distributed 276 519 packages of basic food products to 481 639 persons (and

More than 70 000 people were supplied with full meals in

In 2021, the partnership with the municipalities provided 71 805 people with a full lunch including a soup, a main course and bread. This meal was provided during the whole year, including the summer season.

members of their families). FEAD supported the continuation of the food packages delivery programmes implemented by the Bulgarian Red Cross.

LESSONS LEARNED

Positive effects through social contact

FEAD's soft outcomes were as relevant and necessary as the food distributed. In cases where a warm meal was provided at elderly people's homes, end recipients highly appreciated the contact and communication with social workers, especially when they lived alone.

Awareness-raising and capacity building

FEAD in Bulgaria was very decentralised which allowed for opportunities for capacity-building of social inclusion actors across the country. The experience of municipalities in delivering services to deprived people, in combination with active awareness-raising measures implemented by partner organisations at local level proved

Good communication between FEAD stakeholders

FEAD success factors included good and regular communication between partner organisations and the Managing authority, and adaptability of partner organisations to address day to day challenges.

to be very successful. The Managing Authority invested time and staff capacity to train the municipalities and share good practices, motivating them to take part in FEAD activities. As a result, the activities took place in most municipalities in the country.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

Food support as an entry point for further support services

The Social Assistance Agency (Managing Authority) in Bulgaria combined food distribution with tailored counselling and information support provided by local partner organisations. Food support became an entry point to offering further support services to vulnerable people in need. Recipients of food support were either referred to social inclusion measures financed by the ESF (e.g. personal assistants, day care centres), or were provided with education, health, or labour market services in the community.

Daily lunch at public dining facility at Gabrovo municipality

The Gabrovo municipality, located in less developed northern Bulgaria, has high rates of poverty. The municipality provided daily lunches to the most vulnerable individuals in this region at a public dining facility. In order to be inclusive of end recipients with physical disabilities, the municipality delivered food aid directly to their homes. Social inclusion was enhanced through individual consultations with food aid recipients, to raise awareness about the administrative and social services provided in the municipality.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FEAD in Bulgaria

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPagelId=3605> Website of

FEAD Bulgaria <http://www.asp.government.bg/operativna-programa-za-hrani>

F E A

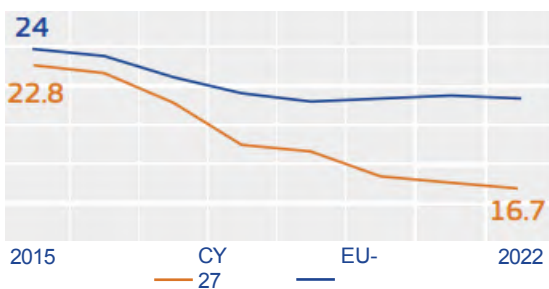
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

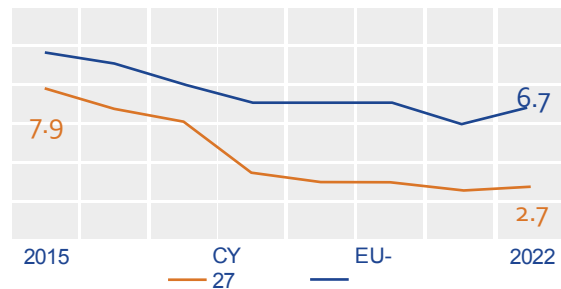
In Cyprus, FEAD had a strong focus on children and had positive results in terms of contributing to reducing the marginalization of deprived school children and babies born into disadvantaged families. FEAD provided a top-up to the existing ESF programme for the provision of free meals to students at all levels of the education system.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Cyprus has been declining and was consistently below the EU average between 2015 (24%) and 2022 (21.6%) (years for which data is available).



The proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Cyprus has been declining and was consistently below the EU average between 2015 and 2022 (years for which data is available).

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 4.6 million total funding
of which **EUR 3.9 million** EU
contribution

FEAD reached
8 729 people
out of which

FEAD supported

food assistance to the most deprived, consisting of free meals for poor students at all levels of public education and basic material assistance in the form of support for new-born children (e.g. hygiene items, clothes, bedlinen and other goods for babies)

and provided accompanying measures, such

as individual coaching and workshops and psychological and therapeutic support

meals

FEAD distributed

153 tons of food
aid **722 386**

95% or 8 275
children at risk of poverty

68% or 5 963
women

44% or 3 896
migrants, minorities, ...



*FEAD operations may have continued until December 2023. Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the categories.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Support of families with new-borns through material assistance

Cyprus offered material assistance to families with babies, in the form of a new-born baby pack. In this way it aimed to address the fact that many families receiving minimum guaranteed income are not able to afford basic goods needed to prepare for new-born members of their family. This increases the risk of social exclusion and has a detrimental impact on the early development of new-borns.

Alleviation of child poverty through breakfasts in schools

FEAD in Cyprus alleviated poverty for children and their families by offering breakfasts in schools to the most deprived children, based on quality and hygiene standards set by the Central School Canteen Control Committee. Children eligible for support were those with

Addressing gaps and complementing the national programme

FEAD addressed existing needs and covered gaps in the social services system so that deprived families could receive some support. It complemented the Ministry's programme for free meals to students and the provision of minimum guaranteed income to families with newborn babies.

parents or guardians receiving the minimum guaranteed income or living in poverty/unemployed, orphans or children of single-parent or large families with financial problems.

LESSONS LEARNED

High effectiveness at low cost

The new-born baby pack did not require a large proportion of the total FEAD budget, but nonetheless offered the basic items that families at risk of poverty needed. It is a good example of how 'a little help goes a long way'.

Advisory committees ensure successful implementation

Key success factors of FEAD in Cyprus were the Advisory Committees in schools which ensured that support reached those who needed it. Those students would otherwise not have had access to breakfast, with detrimental effects on their performance.

Effective outreach through knowledge and understanding of social services

Knowledge of the target groups helped ensure that FEAD support reached them. Social services knew which families were excluded or at risk of social exclusion and needed support for new-borns, and

schools knew which students were from families with financial problems and needed the school breakfast.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

'Free breakfast for students'

The free breakfast for students at all levels of public education addressed child material deprivation and food deprivation. This was complemented with counselling and psychological support to public education students.

'Newborn baby pack'

FEAD supported families with new-born children at risk of poverty or social exclusion by offering them a newborn baby pack, including items otherwise not affordable by low-income families, such as prams.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FEAD in Cyprus

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPageId=3607> Website of FEAD Cyprus <http://www.dgepcd.gov.cy/>

FEA

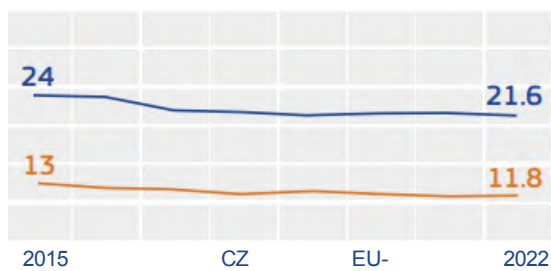
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

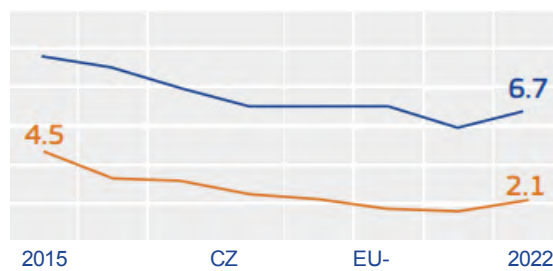
In Czechia, FEAD had positive results in terms of offering food and material assistance to people in need and who are not supported by social services. This was complemented with accompanying measures that contribute to social inclusion. The main target group were children and families with children at risk of poverty, which made up almost half of FEAD end recipients in Czechia. Other groups targeted included migrants, Roma and other ethnic groups, people with disabilities and older people. FEAD cooperated with partner organizations that included schools, canteens as part of elementary schools and kindergartens, food banks, NGOs and municipalities.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



Overall, the proportion of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion in Czechia declined between 2015 and 2021 but showed a slight increase in 2022. It was, however, consistently below the EU average between 2015 (24%) and 2022 (21.6%) (years for which data is available).



Overall, the proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Czechia has been declining and was consistently below the EU average between 2015 and 2022 (years for which data is available).

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 31.3 million total funding
of which **EUR 27.2 million** EU
contribution including **EUR 3.9 million** of
REACT-EU funds

1 702 684 food packages

FEAD supported

food assistance for persons and households in serious need,
food distribution to children in serious social need - lunches
at school and material distribution for persons and
households in serious social need

and provided accompanying measures, such as

social counselling, information on the possibilities of further
assistance, nutrition counselling and advice on food
preparation and storage, financial counselling, support
related to job finding and organising leisure activities in the
most affected regions of Czechia

FEAD distributed

5 762 tons of food aid
4 549 921 meals

FEAD reached
950 697 people
out of which

44% or 413 941
children at risk of poverty

43% or 8 061 782
women

34% or 3 681 795
migrants, minorities, ...

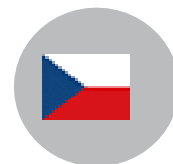
19% or 176 615
homeless

12% or 109 345
> 65 years

8% or 80 434
people with disabilities



*FEAD operations may have continued until December 2023. Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the categories.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Supporting deprived families through free lunches for children in kindergarten and school

FEAD contributed to reducing poverty and social exclusion of children in kindergarten and primary school. It offered them free lunches in cases where there would otherwise be no lunch at all. This was a relief for families in need, who could instead focus their finances on other key aspects of their lives such as paying debts, finding a job, childcare and related expenses.

Improved participation of children in school routines

The implementation of school lunches resulted in a significant improvement in children's attendance, physical fitness, psychological well-being, ability to manage school activities, concentration, social skills and integration into society. FEAD projects also successfully changed the eating habits of children whose diet at home was previously irregular/unhealthy. School staff also considered the contact with parents very valuable, as it allowed them the opportunity to work comprehensively with the family in need.

Trust of partner organisations increased wellbeing and quality of life of participants

The trust target groups had for the partner organisations delivering support was a key success factor of FEAD in Czechia. This allowed FEAD to have an impact not only on the immediate situation of people at risk of poverty, but also on their social, psychological and health status. Some recipients on the fringes of society or senior

citizens were able to improve their living conditions thanks to receiving high quality food that they had not previously been able to afford. Recipients were very willing to cooperate with partner organisations, which was also reflected in their motivation to take part in accompanying measures.

LESSONS LEARNED

FEAD and ESF synergy supporting vulnerable groups, covering national gaps

Complementarity with ESF was a success factor for FEAD in Czechia. FEAD support for food in school catering facilities was not covered by any other similar measures or programmes. This support was complemented by ESF measures to increase the employability of persons far from the labour market and at risk of social exclusion, including homeless persons.

Follow-up assistance through accompanying measures

Accompanying measures were an important complement to food and material assistance. With such measures, FEAD recipients were provided with the information on how to improve their situation and redirect to other services for follow-up assistance (e.g. services that could help them increase their skills and chances to improve their living conditions, integrate into society or the labour market).

Reaching target groups through experienced partner organisations

A success factor of FEAD in Czechia was the distribution of support through partner organisations with experience in dealing with the target groups. Partner organisations had a good understanding of

the needs of end recipients and were able to better target the assistance. This was particularly impactful when working with usually hard-to-reach persons, such as the homeless or very poor families.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

'School lunches for disadvantaged children'

The 'School lunches for disadvantaged children' project covered the cost of school lunches for children whose parents could not afford them. It aimed to provide food at schools and kindergartens not just to ensure children receive sufficient levels of nutrition, but also to contribute to their social development. The children receiving the

lunches showed better physical and mental health, and improved school attendance levels. Children also learnt new social habits thanks to sharing a meal with others, with them becoming part of a group of classmates, making new friends and were more likely to stay at school for afternoon extracurricular activities.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FEAD in Czechia

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPagelId=3608> Website of
FEAD Czechia: <http://www.mpsv.cz/>

FEA

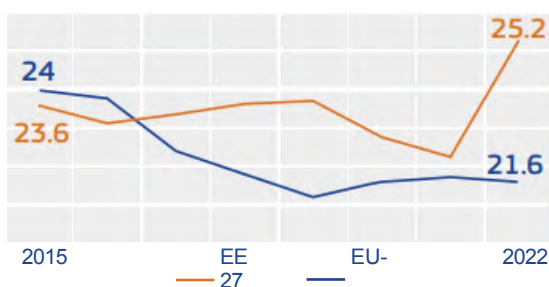
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

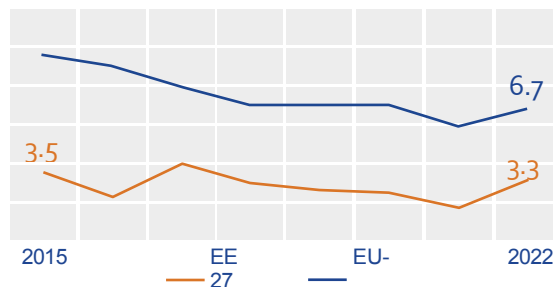
In Estonia, FEAD had positive results in terms of contributing to reducing relative poverty of children, people aged over 65 and the unemployed. It targeted disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals who were recipients of subsistence allowance.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Estonia has fluctuated between 2015 and 2022, rising again between 2021 and 2022. Since 2016, it was consistently above the EU average (years for which data is available).



The proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Estonia has been steady and was consistently below the EU average between 2015 and 2022 (years for which data is available).

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 13.9 million total funding
of which **EUR 12.5 million** EU
contribution including **EUR 4.5 million** of
REACT-EU funds

FEAD supported

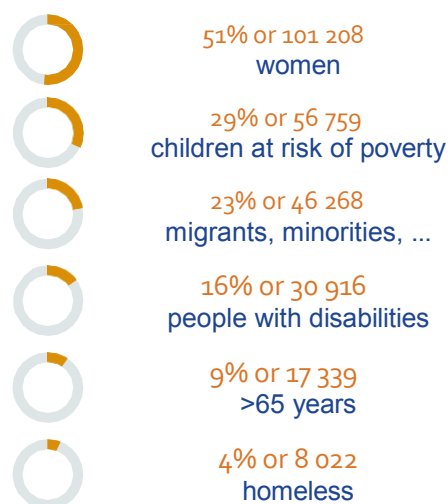
food assistance to the most deprived, consisting of food packages which were partially bought and partially donated

and provided accompanying measures, such as debt counselling, personal assistant services and educational activities and skills-trainings/programmes

FEAD distributed

4 493 tons of food aid
329 681 food packages

FEAD reached
196 910 people
out of which



*FEAD operations may have continued until December 2023. Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Vital food aid supported family stability

FEAD played an important role by providing food aid to disadvantaged and deprived people. Food support, consisting of food packages of 3-10 kg per family member, enabled end recipients to cope with everyday subsistence needs. Around a third of FEAD end recipients were children living in deprived families. Thanks to FEAD support, families were able to allocate money to other needs. Complementing food support with accompanying measures has raised awareness on issues like health and food waste.

Benefits for homeless people through specifically designed delivery system

FEAD in Estonia brought important benefits to homeless people, who are amongst the most deprived in the country. They were targeted by FEAD with a delivery system specifically designed for them, i.e. with food packages that did not require cooking facilities, to be used in homeless shelters.

LESSONS LEARNED

Voluntary workers contribute to cost-effectiveness

FEAD food distribution was cost-effective due to the partner organisations' flat rate cost (5%) for bought food aid packages, in combination with donated food aid packages. The use of volunteers also contributed to the cost-effectiveness of operations. Even when volunteers were difficult to find, the programme managed to obtain support from Ukrainians fleeing Russian military aggression who became volunteers. This benefited both FEAD and the displaced persons by giving them a sense of purpose and a role in the community.

Challenges addressed through change of delivery procedures

Challenges brought on by external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic were effectively addressed by changing FEAD delivery procedures. Home delivery was introduced, and in some remote regions was the only way through which FEAD support was provided to target groups (i.e. on the island of Saaremaa). As families were not able to help other relatives during the COVID-19 pandemic, home delivery guaranteed everyone was reached with support.

PROJECT EXAMPLE

'Support of Ukrainians fleeing Russian military aggression'

The number of Ukrainians fleeing Russian military aggression in Estonia increased year by year from the start of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine - by the end of 2022, 41 871 people had applied for temporary protection. This number increased further to 50 654 people by the end of 2023*. The need for food aid thus also increased. By combining REACT-EU and state budget funds, it was possible to distribute

purchased food aid four times during the year, in addition to donated food aid, which was distributed more often, and to thus cover the needs of the entire target group. Ukrainians fleeing Russian military aggression were given slightly different food packages than other food aid recipients, because they were often accommodated in hotels and ships, and thus unable to prepare food.

*Estonian Police and Boarder Guard Board: <https://www.politsei.ee/et/ajutise-ja-rahvusvahelise-kaitse-taotlejate-arv>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FEAD in Estonia

FEA

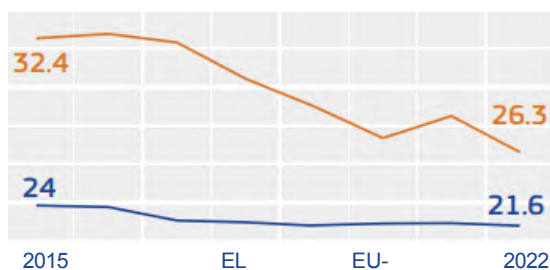
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

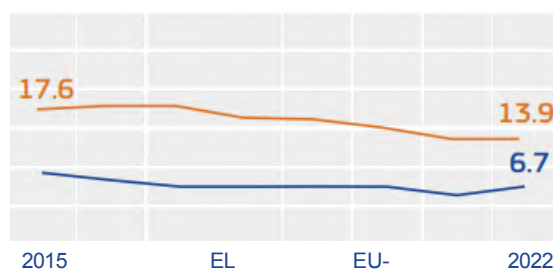
In Greece, FEAD had positive results in terms of covering food needs, complementing this with accompanying measures. It targeted people who were experiencing severe food deprivation, but followed a holistic approach, focusing also on supporting the social inclusion of end recipients, with special emphasis on deprived children and their families. The programme was delivered in a decentralised manner through a network of 54 partner organizations all over Greece.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Greece has been declining but it is still high and was consistently above the EU average between 2015 and 2022 (years for which data is available).



The proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Greece has been declining but it is still high and was consistently above the EU average between 2015 and 2022 (years for which data is available).

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 323.0 million total funding
of which **EUR 281.0 million** EU
contribution

FEAD supported

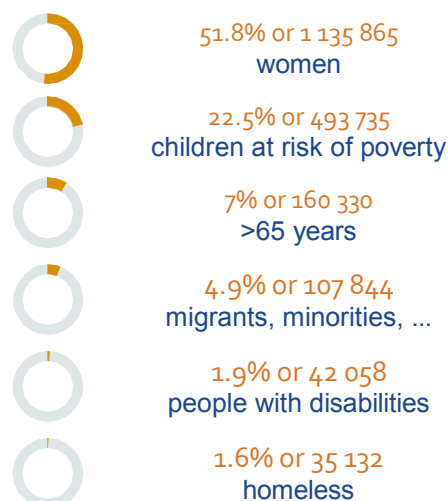
food assistance to the most deprived, consisting of food packages and basic material assistance, including items for baby hygiene or school materials for children and provided accompanying measures, such as individual coaching and workshops, psychological and therapeutic support, advice on managing a household budget and social and leisure activities

FEAD distributed

71 842 tons of food aid
16 067 696 meals
4 444 751 food packages

FEAD reached

15 409 188 people
out of which



*FEAD operations may have continued until December 2023. Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

More than 2 million people were reached by FEAD

The main contribution of FEAD in Greece was the alleviation of extreme poverty. FEAD recipients in Greece were people who received the minimum guaranteed income and lived in situations of extreme poverty and material deprivation. Target groups included deprived families with children, with a focus on single-parent families and large families.

FEAD addressed a gap in Greece in the field of food and material assistance

FEAD addressed a gap in the support provided to people facing severe food deprivation. This was particularly crucial in 2014 given the unprecedented high levels of poverty and social exclusion in Greece at the time. By receiving non-financial support through FEAD, end recipients were able to save money to cover other important subsistence needs (e.g. housing or clothing).

Accompanying measures contributed to alleviating social exclusion of children

FEAD in Greece prioritised the provision of accompanying measures for children facing material deprivation and poverty. Targeted psychological support for teenagers, creative, cultural and sports

activities, recreational programmes, and provisions of safe spaces for play and socialisation contributed to empowerment and social integration of deprived children and their families.

LESSONS LEARNED

The proximity of partner organisations to end recipients contributed to a high absorption rate

FEAD target groups did not generally trust public institutions and as a consequence were initially reluctant to show up at food delivery points. The implementation of the programme by partner organisations that were familiar to target groups, as well as targeted visibility campaigns overcame this obstacle and led to an 85% take-up rate of FEAD support.

FEAD supported the capacity-building of partner organisations

Partner organisations improved their management and organisational skills for the provision of support to the most deprived through being involved in FEAD. They also improved their ability to adapt to external circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Good stakeholder cooperation and visibility were key success factors

Good cooperation at various levels between the Managing Authority and partner organisations was important for the success of FEAD, as were competent staff in partner organisations. Visibility campaigns and outreach to those most in need were also crucial, and aided by

the continuous review of the needs of end recipients. This was particularly important as needs changed due to crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic or natural catastrophes in Greece.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

'Explorers of the Mind'

The 'Explorers of the Mind' project in the region of Achaia, designed in the framework of FEAD accompanying measures sought to encourage children's autonomy and cultivate their emotional development and social skills. It offered opportunities for social integration of children aged 10-14 through a play-based learning approach and activities designed to stimulate multi-sensory learning.

'Network of Children's Rights'

On behalf of the City of Athens, the 'Network for Children's Rights' provided a programme for children and their families to support their development. The breadth of services offered as part of the FEAD programme acted as a unique 'one-stop shop', giving recipient households access to several support services through a single source. Services included psychosocial support, speech therapy, teaching, job counselling and financial assistance.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FEAD in Greece

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPagelId=3614> Website of
FEAD Greece <https://teba.opeka.gr>

FEA

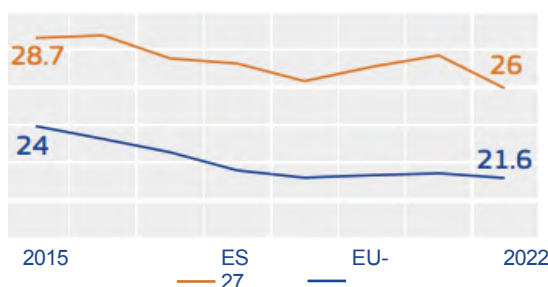
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

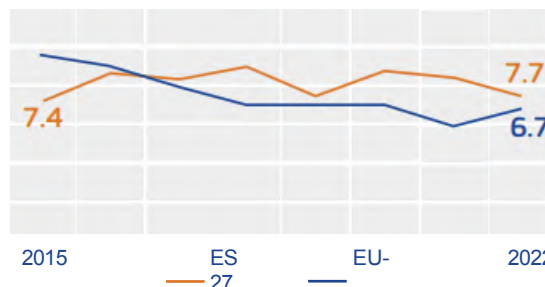
In Spain, FEAD had positive results in terms of covering food needs of disadvantaged people and complementing this with accompanying measures that contributed to social inclusion. It targeted the most deprived people, notably individuals, families, households, or groups which were in a situation of economic poverty, as well as homeless people and other socially vulnerable persons. FEAD in Spain was delivered through two key distribution organizations, the Spanish Red Cross and the Spanish Federation of Food Banks, and their extensive network of around 5 400 delivery organizations throughout the country.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Spain has been declining. However, it was consistently above the EU average between 2015 (24%) and 2022 (21.6%) (years for which data is available).



The proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Spain has been relatively stable. However, it was above the EU average from 2017 to 2022.

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 839.8 million total funding of which **EUR 740.4 million** EU contribution including **EUR 177.0 million** of REACT-EU funds

FEAD supported

food assistance to the most deprived, consisting of food packages and meals in soup kitchens

and provided accompanying measures, such as

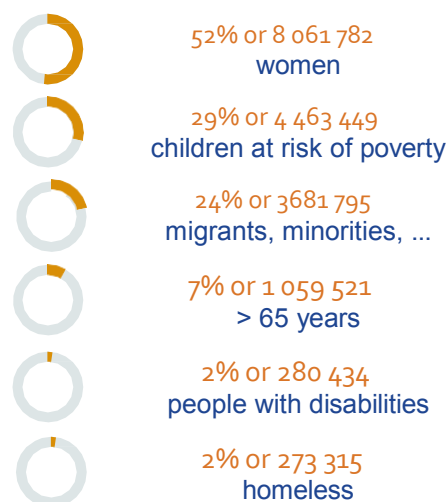
distribution of leaflets providing beneficiaries with useful information on available nearby social services

FEAD distributed

765 986 tons of food aid
251 816 712 meals
34 412 082 food packages

FEAD reached

13 619 618 people out of which



*FEAD operations may have continued until December 2023. Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Expected target group figures exceeded

FEAD in Spain effectively reached many of the most disadvantaged people, complementing the work of the autonomous communities and NGOs in supporting the most deprived. In addition to distributing food from FEAD, the Spanish Federation of Food Banks (FESBAL) and the Spanish Red Cross received food from voluntary donations. Without FEAD support, many people would have faced great difficulties in covering their basic food needs, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Successful implementation through networking and connecting

An important effect of the FEAD programme was that it put disadvantaged people in contact with public and private entities that could provide them with additional support. Regional administrations and town councils were able to provide end recipients with access to social resources in combination with access to food aid.

Collaboration between local organisations optimised resources and improved food distribution

A total of 102 local delivery organisations in Barcelona collectively formed 24 groups, each operating in a single area, with the municipality providing both the required space and financial support for the storage of food. The groups had a common digital programme for stock management, a common system for gathering information on end recipients from social services and for preparing the documentation

required. This cooperation model optimised economic, administrative, IT and logistical resources, by sharing transport costs, human resources, and material resources (e.g. freezers, storage space, IT systems). It also leveraged the amount of food available by increasing other sources of food supply.

LESSONS LEARNED

Streamlined procurement and uniform distribution criteria ensuring efficient implementation

FEAD in Spain was very efficient thanks to the agility and good organisation of the body in charge of centralised purchasing, tendering and authorisation of participation, the Spanish Agrarian Guarantee Fund (FEGA). The organisation ensured that all partner organisations had the same criteria for distribution, which contributed to the programme's success.

Programme implementation enhanced by close collaboration between third sector and public authorities

Close collaboration between third sector entities and public authorities helped identify partner organisations, define the needs of the target groups and process the required documentation. The programme was characterised by a high degree of complexity, requiring coordination of numerous actors for its effective implementation.

Coaching and communication as key success factors

Coaching and communication with delivery organisations at central and local level was a key success factor of the programme. At national level, the Spanish Red Cross worked closely with delivery organisations to help them understand the programme and its processes. It established frequent communication with them, with the quality of services offered

by delivery organisations improving over time. At local level, for example the Food Bank in Barcelona organised participative meetings with local delivery organisations operating in the same territory and municipal social services. This exchange of experiences helped identify and address problems faced with the management of food delivery and the link to social services.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

Training actions at food bank of Sevilla

The coordinators and social workers of the food bank of Sevilla carried out training actions with the local delivery organisations. The objective was to promote networking among the different delivery organisations and social services in the same area in order to offer integrated support to end recipients. The training and advice enabled them to enhance their competencies in working with end recipients and to gain a more nuanced understanding of their needs, as well as of the extent to which FEAD could address them. In order to make the most of available resources, the food bank also conducted workshops on nutrition and food consumption.

IT tool for food delivery by Red Cross in Valencia

The Red Cross in Valencia used an innovative IT tool to facilitate food delivery to families. The tool allowed local delivery organisations to quickly identify each end recipient family and the type and quantity of food they should receive. As a consequence, the delivery of food packages to families was faster, any mistakes produced by manual calculations were minimised, and food delivery was more equitable

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FEAD in Spain

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPagId=3628>

Website of FEAD Spain

<https://www.mites.gob.es/UAFSE/es/destacados/fead/index.htm>

FEA

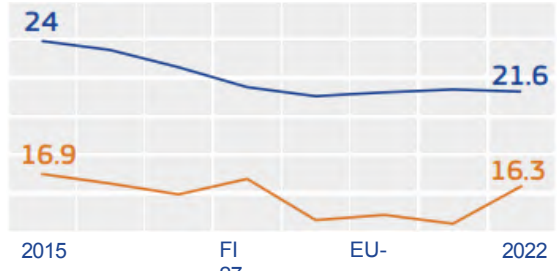
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

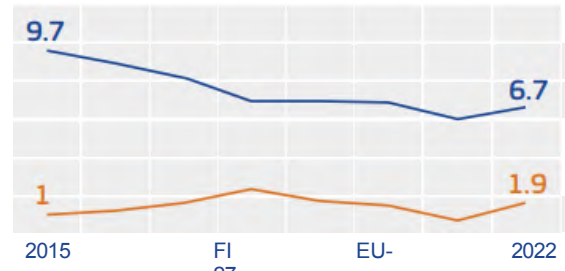
In Finland, FEAD had positive results in terms of providing food to deprived people who had fallen out of the safety net of the public sector and whose daily diet consisted of insufficient and poor nutrition. It targeted disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals, including migrants, homeless people and families with children. FEAD collaborated with 29 partner organizations, mainly NGOs and civil society organizations, such as the Finnish Red Cross, The Free Church of Finland and the Back to Life association.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Finland has been relatively stable and was consistently below the EU average between 2015 (24%) and 2022 (21.6%) (years for which data is available).



The proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Finland was consistently very low compared to the EU average between 2015 and 2022 (years for which data is available).

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 26.5 million total funding
of which **EUR 22.5 million** EU contribution

2 012 601 food packages

FEAD supported

food assistance to the most deprived, consisting of food packages and meals

and provided accompanying measures, such as advice on food preparation and storage, educational activities to promote healthy nutrition, cooking workshops, redirection to competent services, advice on managing a household budget and social and leisure activities

FEAD distributed

12 339 tons of food aid
288 331 meals

FEAD reached
2 001 767 people
out of which

41% or 821 762
women

29% or 579 190
> 65 years

14% or 274 502
children at risk of poverty

10% or 209 019
migrants, minorities, ...

2% or 44 495
people with disabilities

1% or 16 302
homeless



*FEAD operations may have continued until December 2023. Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the categories.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

FEAD made up 15-20% of food aid in Finland

FEAD in Finland reached a large share of the most disadvantaged people, with approximately 20 000-25 000 people receiving their food through subsidies each week. In a context where the social security system does not formally recognise food aid, FEAD made up 15-20% of the food aid given in Finland. The Red Cross distributed food in 35 locations around Finland with FEAD support proving to be particularly important in smaller municipalities where other social inclusion actors were not present. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the number of vulnerable people increased, but FEAD was able to address their needs.

Uniting effects through neighbourhood network

FEAD had a notable impact on awareness and unity among end recipients. FEAD support was sought after actively by end recipients with instances where individuals visited distribution points and specifically requested FEAD food or inquired about the next scheduled delivery. This in turn raised awareness of the needs of this group amongst the local community, where people felt that the neighbourhood 'came to the

LESSONS LEARNED

FEAD as continuation of national Food aid

FEAD food distribution was effective due to the long-term experience of key stakeholders with such a system. Food aid (including FEAD) was handled nationally in one system, coordinated by the Finnish Food Agency. This system has been active since 1997 with FEAD acting as a continuation and development of this kind of cooperation.

Increased network cooperation resulting in professionalisation of distribution

One key element of success of FEAD in Finland was its well-established network, with a wide range of partner organisations, including civil society and other organisations, distributing food support. Such organisations (parishes, congregations, local associations) had local knowledge of the

PROJECT EXAMPLES

'Food Aid & Fellowship'

The Finnish Red Cross provided food aid in 50 branches across the country. In addition to material deprivation, Red Cross volunteers identified that people at high risk of poverty often encountered barriers to participation in their communities, which may have caused their social exclusion. As a result, starting in 2017, with the support of other partner organisations, the Red Cross implemented the Food Aid & Fellowship project which provided peer support and fellowship to end recipients, with the objective to facilitate the transformation of food recipients into active members of their communities. Food aid recipients undertook short courses on personal relations and helped with the organisation of different social activities.

Building the capacity of social inclusion actors

FEAD had a leverage effect by becoming more than 'just' handing out food. Distributing food support through FEAD made it possible for partner organisations to also activate their members and deliver other social activities around food delivery to the most deprived. Some partner organisations realised they could handle the volume of FEAD activities, and this emboldened them to take on new projects and offer other social inclusion activities they might not have taken on otherwise.

rescue' and neighbours helped people who were not able to reach delivery points by themselves. Some actors not previously active in food aid found FEAD to be a driving force to get started, get together and work to help others. This was especially beneficial in small communities and with small partner organisations.

Increased trust and transparency leading to efficient handling of challenges

The way FEAD involved partner organisations helped create trust and a shared ownership of the programme. This trust also created transparency between the national administrative agency and the partners, where problems were quickly identified, reported and solved together.

needs of the most deprived. With time, this network cooperation increased, and partners gained more experience resulting in more professional food distribution through improvements in the inventory and logistics systems.

'Ruoka-apu.fi' website

In the context of FEAD and with the use of national funding, Kirkkopalvelut ry, an association of parish services, in cooperation with several Finnish food aid organisations, created the 'Ruoka-apu.fi' website which aimed to help people in need find food aid. It provided a space where food aid distributors could advertise their events, making them easier to find. The website's tailored functions included maps, calendars and scroll-down lists. By sharing information on food aid activities, the website supported national and local cooperation between food aid distributors, registered associations, parishes and municipalities

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FEAD in Finland

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPagelId=3611> Website of

FEAD Finland <https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/yhteisot/tuet-ja-kehittaminen/ruoka-apu/>

FEA

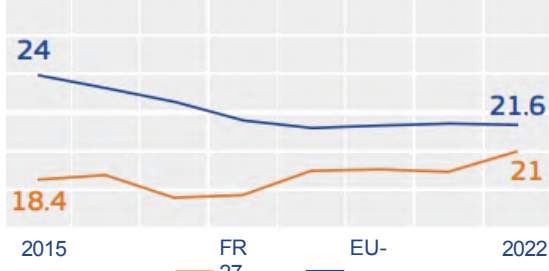
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

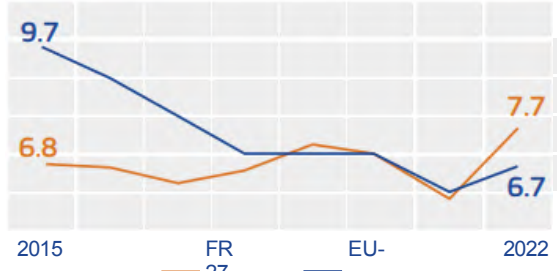
In France, FEAD had positive results in terms of covering food needs of the most deprived, including people receiving social minimum income, in a situation of social emergency, the homeless or households living below the poverty line. FEAD was a fundamental support for food aid policy in France. It made up nearly 30% of the food distributed by partner organizations. The FEAD Managing Authority collaborated with four main partner organizations who were in charge of purchase and distribution (Croix Rouge Française, Secours Populaire Français, Restos du Coeur and Fédération Française des Banques

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in France has been rising but remained below the EU average between 2015 (24%) and 2022 (21.6%) (years for which data is available; time series break in 2022: now including four overseas departments).



The proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in France has fluctuated since 2015. In 2022, it was above the EU average. (time series break in 2022: now including four overseas departments)

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 691.4 million total funding of which **EUR 603.3 million** EU contribution including **EUR 104.0 million** of REACT-EU funds

FEAD supported

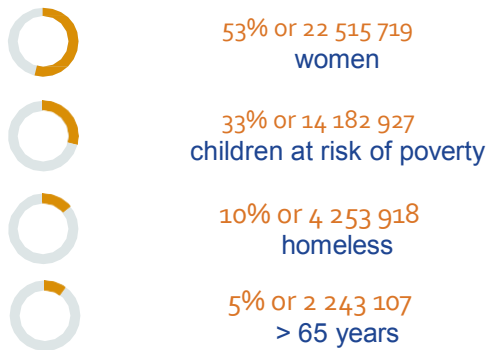
food assistance to the most deprived, consisting of food packages and meals

and provided accompanying measures, such as redirection to competent services, social and leisure activities, coaching and workshops to enhance integration in education or the labour market, information on access to rights, social benefits, care, and integration through employment, support for housing, access to cultural activities and language courses for migrants

FEAD distributed

685 705 tons of food aid
593 420 707 food packages

FEAD reached **42 490 821** people out of which



*FEAD operations may have continued until December 2023. Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the categories.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Structural impact on partner organisations and strong representation of FEAD in national food assistance

FEAD was indispensable in the fight against food insecurity in France. Each year, around EUR 30 million worth of food was directly and freely distributed to people. FEAD provided between 25 and 30% of the food distributed every year and was the main source of public funding for food assistance. FEAD also had a structural impact on partner organisations because it allowed them to build a solid seven-year sourcing strategy, providing them with financial stability to conduct their work.

FEAD as a catalyst for additional support, promoting social integration

FEAD in France produced leverage effects. It prompted partner organisations to offer accompanying measures that were not covered by FEAD but by national and local funds. These included a wide variety of activities such as cooking workshops, coaching on nutritional diets, psychological support, job counselling, French language courses, access

Complementary role of FEAD to national inclusion policy

FEAD was complementary to national policy on social inclusion. Food assistance was provided as first step, with end recipients receiving an 'emergency food package'. Following this, their situation was assessed, and they were offered accompanying measures to help them on their path to social inclusion. This included referral to other services that could better address their individual needs.

INFORMATION

LESSONS LEARNED

Broad network structures ensured 12 000 reception points

The broad network of partner and delivery organisations in France was a key success factor of FEAD. FEAD relied on four well-established and structured partner organisations that each had contact points capable of managing a significant number of recipients. They had excellent territorial coverage, with almost 12 000 reception facilities across the country. Thanks to these organisations and their strong networks, FEAD was easily available to recipients across the whole territory, including those living in rural or harder-to-reach areas.

Use of electronic vouchers in Mayotte

The COVID-19 pandemic had a large impact on food aid distribution structures in France. The number of volunteers and partner organisations reduced, collections from supermarkets and agricultural donations decreased, while the people at risk of poverty increased, mainly due to job loss or partial unemployment. To address these challenges, the

PROJECT EXAMPLES

Distribution of food parcels to students

The COVID-19 pandemic worsened the conditions for existing FEAD end recipients, while new clients also sought food aid, particularly students, people with precarious jobs (e.g. short-term contracts, temporary or informal work), independent entrepreneurs, restaurant owners and craft workers. The distribution of food parcels to students in the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region aimed to meet the increase in demand for food assistance by distributing food parcels (each worth approximately EUR 26) to the most disadvantaged students attending third-level educational institutions in the region. Between 800 and 1 400 students received food parcels each week. The initiative also led to a collaborative network, as it brought together social centres, youth centres and 'missions locales' to help identify these groups that were otherwise not known by social services.

ADDITIONAL

to cultural and recreational events, accommodation support, access to banking services, and judicial and administrative support. Accompanying measures proved to be the best way for partner organisations to establish lasting contact with end recipients, with the ultimate goal of ensuring their social and professional integration.

Centralised food purchase system enhanced FEAD effectiveness

The centralised food purchase system through FranceAgriMer contributed to the effectiveness of FEAD in France. It enabled purchasing large volumes of food, at competitive prices. Such grouped, centralised, purchases helped to structure and strengthen FEAD networks, as the 400 delivery points did not have to purchase food individually. This was complemented by the use of flat rates to cover the transport and storage costs of partner organisations, which further contributed to efficiency.

FEAD in France <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPagId=3612>

Website of FEAD France <http://social-sante.gouv.fr/affaires-sociales/lutte-contre-l-exclusion/aide-alimentaire/article/fonds-europeen-d-aide-aux-plus-demunis-fead>

Mayotte introduced electronic vouchers purchased and distributed directly by the partner organisations. Electronic vouchers were exchanged exclusively for basic food assistance, and allowed FEAD to continue supporting people at risk, in a situation of social emergency, and homeless people.



Social model by 'Les Restaurants du Coeur'

Les 'Restos du Coeur' a FEAD partner organisation was well-known throughout France for its provision of food aid to the most vulnerable. Through an innovative social model, it employed people from disadvantaged backgrounds to provide food to those in need. Many of the people involved in the programme lacked practical skills, therefore, the partner organisation in Aubervilliers offered them job insertion workshops consisting of training in specific skills such as communication, road safety and cooking. The cooking workshop for instance, taught participants how to cook with FEAD products, with the prepared meals then delivered by Les Restos du Coeur to people in need.

FEA

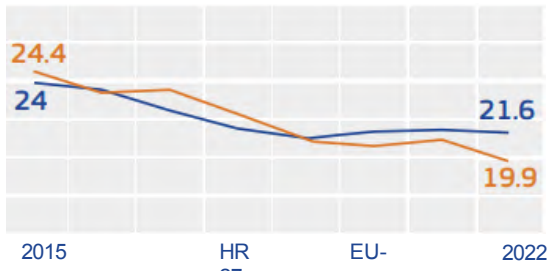
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

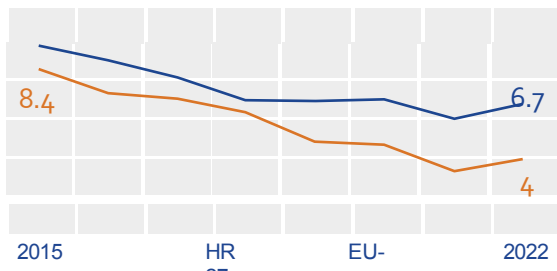
In Croatia, FEAD had positive results in terms of providing food and material assistance to disadvantaged groups in the country. Target groups included children affected by or at risk of poverty, homeless people and people at risk of housing exclusion, elderly, people with disabilities, and people living in remote areas. A novel element of the support was the support provided to children, through school meals for primary school children from households receiving child allowance, and school materials for children in compulsory education living in poverty. FEAD was delivered through a network of partner organizations responsible for purchasing, storing and distributing food and goods.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Croatia has been declining since 2015. It was marginally below the EU average between 2019 and 2022.



The proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Croatia has been declining. It was consistently below the EU average between 2015 and 2022 (years for which data is available).

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 53.1 million total funding
of which **EUR 46.6 million** EU contribution
including **EUR 10.0 million** of REACT-EU funds

FEAD reached
630 139 people
out of which

FEAD supported

basic material assistance and food assistance to the most deprived, consisting of food packages and meals

and provided accompanying measures, such as

educational activities to promote healthy nutrition, personal hygiene advice and healthcare, counselling on financial literacy, advice on parenting, managing a household budget, maintaining or restoring family or community ties, including support for conflict resolution



51% or 321 298 women

39% or 247 082

18 021 390 meals
847 864 food packages

FEAD distributed

16 640 tons of food aid

children at risk of poverty

20% or 127 117
> 65 years

9% or 53 918
migrants, minorities, ...

3% or 21 302
people with disabilities

0.3% or 2 008
homeless



*FEAD operations may have continued until December 2023. Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the categories.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

FEAD measures ensured cost-effective school meals

FEAD support was cost-effective, in particular the school meals. The defined price of one school meal per student was in line with the average price of a daily meal per student.

Increased scope and improved response to target groups'

FEAD in Croatia increased the scope and number of people receiving food aid and basic material assistance. It also helped providers of support identify additional needs of end recipients that could be addressed. FEAD was also successful in responding to newly emerging needs, for example, providing support to Ukrainians fleeing Russian military aggression.

Fostered cooperation through enhancement of Managing Authority and partner knowledge

FEAD helped build the experience and knowledge of the Managing Authority and partner organisations involved. The Ministry developed their experience in managing EU projects in an integrated way, by combining the functions of Managing Authority and Intermediate body and introducing new policy measures in stages, learning from

experience over time. FEAD partner organisations benefitted from increased recognition by donors, local authorities and the community, allowing them to build their capacities and create stronger cooperation with other civil society organisations and local government authorities.

LESSONS LEARNED

Alignment with national structures

FEAD operations were aligned with the Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Croatia (2014- 2020) and the ESF Operational Programme Efficient Human Resources (2014 - 2020). This contributed to making the programme more effective.

Value added to existing projects by support of partner organisations

Projects financed by FEAD added value to existing national programmes by strengthening the work and activities of non-profit organisations with experience in offering humanitarian support to people in need. FEAD provided these crucial organisations with additional resources, enabling them to better serve the people in their communities.

Expansion of aid structures through implementation of new school meal scheme

Whilst the distribution of food and material goods was an extension of existing programmes in Croatia implemented by humanitarian organisations, the national school meals scheme supported by FEAD was a novelty in social policy in the country.

School meals were provided to primary school students who were in or at risk of poverty. Eligibility criteria for school meals included the child's family structure, household economic status, and health status.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

Caritas 'Packages of Joy'

The FEAD 'Packages of Joy' project (2018 – 2019) was set up by Caritas to alleviate poverty by providing non-financial assistance to the most deprived. It provided food, hygiene and textile packages to the most deprived citizens of 45 parishes located across the Sisak-Moslavina and Zagreb counties. One of the biggest achievements of the project was the support it provided to people living in rural areas. These recipients were, in most cases, elderly people who, due to insufficient resources and geographical isolation, were previously nearly impossible to reach. Thanks to six different delivery points covering the whole Diocese, and a strong network of volunteers, all people in need received food packages.

INFORMATION



ADDITIONAL

'Humanitarian Package for Slavonia and Pounje'

The FEAD 'Humanitarian Package for Slavonia and Pounje' project aimed to alleviate the most severe forms of poverty in these regions by providing food and hygiene supply packages, as well as measures targeted at recipients living in rural areas.

FEAD in Croatia
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPagelId=3606> Website of FEAD Croatia
<http://www.mrms.hr/>

These included manuals with instructions on how to produce and maintain various vegetable crops, training and expert counselling on how to prepare vegetable crops. The project helped recipients break the circle of poverty through education on crop storage.



FEA

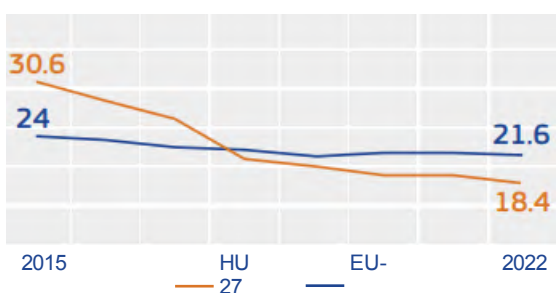
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

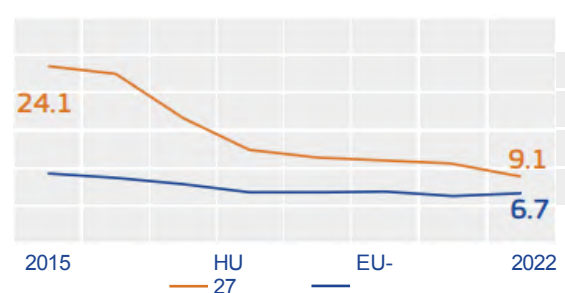
In Hungary, FEAD had positive results in terms of satisfying the food and material needs of deprived people, complemented by psychological and therapeutic support on addiction, mental health and lifestyle counselling. The support focused on children in or at risk of poverty (especially for basic material assistance) but included other target groups such as homeless people and people at risk of housing exclusion, persons with limited working capacity and elderly persons with extremely low incomes. FEAD was delivered through 12 partner organizations consisting of public organizations, non-profit organizations, local governments, and church legal entities.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The proportion of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion in Hungary almost halved between 2015 and 2022. It dropped below the EU average in 2018.



The proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Hungary declined between 2015 and 2022 but remained above the EU average (years for which data is available).

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 110.5 million total funding
of which **EUR 93.9 million** EU contribution

FEAD reached
1 384 055 people
out of which
2 355 183 food packages

FEAD supported

food and basic material assistance to poor families with children

and provided accompanying measures, such as

psychological and therapeutic support, focusing on addiction, mental health and lifestyle counselling, advice on hygiene, food consumption, storage and family budget management

FEAD distributed

26 010 tons of food aid
6 246 479 meals

78% or 1 073 143
children at risk of poverty

26% or 304.103
migrants, minorities, ...

18% or 251 171
people with disabilities

13% or 173 658
women

7% or 72.200
> 65 years

5% or 62.497
homeless



*FEAD operations may have continued until December 2023. Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the categories.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Focus on the prevention of child poverty and access to quality education

FEAD material support was particularly important in Hungary, with a focus on reducing and preventing child poverty, in line with the government's objectives and with the 2014 country-specific recommendations. The operation 'provision of basic consumer goods for poor families with children' provided support for the purchase of personal items, including school equipment, contributing to improving the conditions for children to access quality education.

Around 1 million hot meal packs distributed to homeless per year

FEAD had a positive impact on the situation of homeless people in Hungary through direct and extensive outreach to the target group and partnership with homelessness service organisations. An average of 4 050 homeless people were provided with one hot meal per day

Reducing difficulties through basic material assistance and accompanying measures

FEAD directly alleviated some of the difficulties recipients faced in accessing basic daily necessities. FEAD provided food items, hot food and basic material support alongside a range of accompanying measures to support end recipients with psychological, addiction and mental health challenges. These measures included lifestyle counselling, advice on hygiene, food consumption, storage and family budget management.

per month and around 1 million hot meal packs were distributed annually to around 20 000 different homeless people. Nearly half of the homeless people that were served daily in the institutional system received the service.

LESSONS LEARNED

National network ensured effective distribution

The network of people involved in FEAD played a key role in its success in Hungary. FEAD partner organisations were present in all counties, and staff working there were familiar with the distribution sites and with the individuals receiving support, and with family and child welfare services. A large fleet of vans was used for the distributions and staff made themselves available during peak periods to ensure support could be effectively delivered to all who needed it.

Effective adaptation to COVID-19 pandemic

During the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the inclusion of hygiene and disinfection products in the package contents proved to be a particularly welcome and helped reduce the risk of infection.

Electronic platform and public procurement process contributed to cost-effectiveness

FEAD's cost-effectiveness was increased through the use of an electronic platform for food distribution and a public procurement process. The Register System for Assistance and Counselling of Persons in Need, which replaced paper documentation, simplified the

administrative processes of receiving and handing over food and material support packages. The procurement process was carried out regularly so that the unit price of each meal was as low as possible.

PROJECT EXAMPLE

'Warm meals for the homeless'

In order to reduce hunger and malnutrition among the homeless, the Hungarian Public Foundation for the Homeless provided nutritionally balanced meals to homeless individuals across the country. Over the course of the project, approximately 4 000 homeless people received meals from Monday to Friday. In the scope of two years, about two

million meals (1 367 tonnes of food) were distributed at 85 locations, with the assistance of 47 partner organisations. The project also offered addiction-related, mental and psychiatric assessments, as well as individual and group counselling/therapy sessions to homeless people, contributing to promoting their social integration.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FEAD in Hungary

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPageId=3615> Website of
FEAD Hungary <https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/ministry-of-human-resources>

FEA

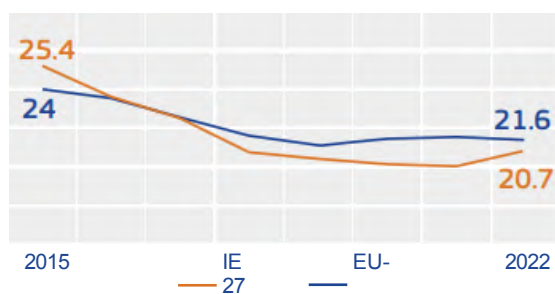
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

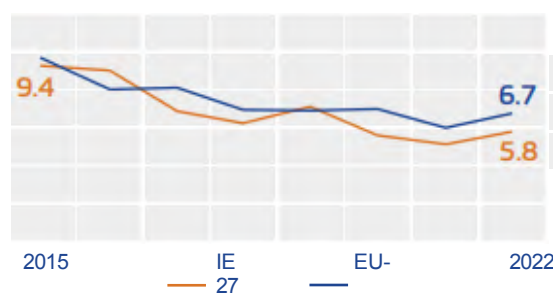
In Ireland, FEAD has made a difference by covering the food and material needs of people in vulnerable situations and complementing this support with accompanying measures that contribute to their social inclusion. FEAD targeted a wide range of groups, including workless households or households with low work intensity, single parent families and families with large numbers of children, the ill and persons with disabilities, the elderly, Roma and travelers, migrants and members of ethnic minorities, homeless persons, the unemployed, ex-offenders, addicts and persons living in areas of urban or rural disadvantage. FEAD was delivered through 151 charities, which were local partner organizations with access to food procured and stored by FoodCloud (a non-profit social enterprise), the main partner organization, with three warehouses across Ireland.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



While in 2015, Ireland's proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion was slightly the EU average, it declined until 2018 and has since been slightly below the EU average.



From 2015 to 2018, the proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Ireland was below the EU average and declined steadily. In 2019 there was a short increase, followed by another steady decline until 2021. The rate increased slightly in 2022 (the last year for which data is available) but remained below the EU average.

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 26.8 million total funding
of which **EUR 22.8 million** EU contribution

4.2 million monetary value of goods for children

FEAD supported

food assistance to the most deprived, consisting of food packs and meals and basic material assistance, consisting of school starter packs for children and home start packs for refugee families moving into new homes

and provided accompanying measures, such as redirection to competent services (e.g. social, administrative), facilitating access to health care, educational activities and skills- trainings/programmes, coaching and workshops, especially to enhance integration in education or the labour market

FEAD distributed

6 272 tons of food aid
8 677 571 meals
1 613 246 food packages

FEAD reached
1 120 976 people
out of which

4,6% or 512 309
children at risk of poverty

37% or 415 200
women

14% or 155 025
homeless

13% or 141 743
migrants, minorities, ...

9% or 95 325
> 65 years

4% or 43 834
people with disabilities



*FEAD operations may have continued until December 2023. Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the categories.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



Meeting basic needs and activating local charities

FEAD food support had two major impacts. It provided people with basic food and food packs that they would not normally have had

- support which was invaluable to people who needed it. It also

Distribution of 170 000 school stationery kits

FEAD material assistance in Ireland was important for addressing the needs of school children. All FEAD material support focused on children. 170 000 school stationery kits were distributed to children of FEAD food recipients and to children living in Direct Provision Accommodation, Emergency Orientation, Reception Centres and in Homeless Emergency Accommodation. In addition, school stationery

Complementarity with ESF and national policy

FEAD in Ireland complemented both the ESF and national policy. The fund was recognised in the government's roadmap for social inclusion, while FEAD actions were fully consistent with the ESF objective to invest in active inclusion through employment. FEAD food and basic material assistance was used to connect and build relationships with families in need so that they could then be directed

activated the work of local charities: without FoodCloud supplying food through FEAD, these charities would not have been able to get off the ground.

kits were provided to schools in Inner City Dublin and to children participating in the Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy programme of the Department of Education. The School Kit Program was instrumental in helping the children to see themselves as equal to their peers for the first time in their lives and to increase their confidence.

to the appropriate national social services. For instance, FEAD recipients were directed to the Youth Diversion Projects, which were co-funded by the Irish Government and the ESF. The FEAD Managing Authority agreed protocols with the ESF Managing Authority to ensure this complementarity between the funds.

LESSONS LEARNED



Local partners' flexibility helped overcome challenges in FEAD delivery

The flexibility of local partner organisations (charities) helped overcome delivery challenges when staff were not available or when volunteers dropped out. In such cases, deliveries were quickly rescheduled. Local partners' experience and knowledge of FEAD recipients also helped them better target the support, while providing additional services such as education or legal advice.

Local knowledge enhanced targeted distribution of aid

Knowledge of the local context and of the profiles of end recipients contributed to better targeting of food and material support. FEAD in Ireland was distributed through a network of local charities who knew their communities, ensuring that people with the greatest need benefited from the aid.

Collaboration among policy makers and NGOs drove successful programme implementation

Close cooperation and consultation amongst policy makers and NGOs involved in FEAD were key factors for the successful implementation of the fund in Ireland. The programme was designed from the outset through consultation with key policy makers and NGOs, taking into

account studies on the needs of the target groups. During implementation, collaboration in data collection was ensured: partner organisations collected all the necessary data for monitoring and evaluation of the programme and the Managing Authority collated it digitally.

PROJECT EXAMPLES



'FoodCloud Hub'

'FoodCloud' was the main partner organisation that provided food assistance under the FEAD programme in Ireland. It was selected because it had a physical presence across different regions of Ireland. FoodCloud Hub was responsible for the procurement and storage of FEAD food products, and for coordinating the collection of products from other local partner organisations. It developed a unique solution to tackling food waste, by connecting businesses with large volumes of surplus food to charities that distributed food aid in communities across Ireland.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

'FEAD Migration Programme by the Irish Red Cross'

The Irish Red Cross FEAD Migration Programme aimed to ensure that refugees arriving under the Irish Refugee FEAD in Ireland

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPageId=3616> Website of FEAD Ireland <https://www.welfare.ie/>

Protection Programme had their basic hygiene needs met and were supplied with essential household goods. They procured, coordinated and distributed 2 273 hygiene kits to refugees arriving in Ireland and 215 household goods kits to newly housed refugees across the country.



F E A

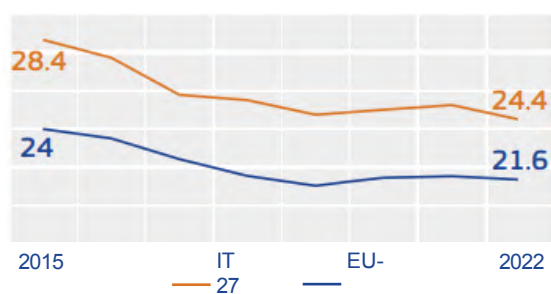
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

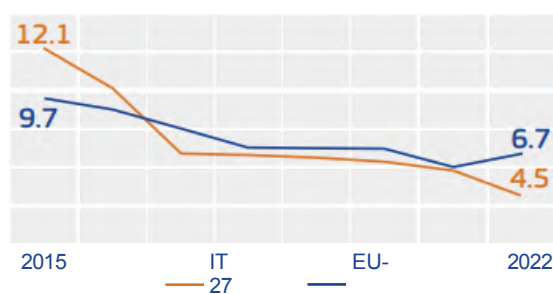
In Italy, FEAD had positive results in terms of addressing food poverty and material deprivation of homeless and other vulnerable people and providing social inclusion measures. FEAD operations particularly targeted the homeless, people in absolute poverty and experiencing severe material deprivation, and families with children, primarily large families with housing problems. The programme was delivered through a network of 191 partner organizations and 9 385 local partner organizations, consisting of non-profit organizations and public bodies operating in the social field.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The proportion of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion in Italy has been declining. It was, however, consistently above the EU average between 2015 (24%) and 2022 (21.6%) (years for which data



The proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Italy has been rapidly declining. It has been below the EU average since 2017.

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 988.3 million total funding
of which **EUR 870 million** EU
contribution
including **EUR 199.4 million** of REACT-EU
funds

527 315 tons of food aid
145 726 747 meals
211 136 790 food packages

FEAD supported

food assistance to the most deprived, consisting of food packs and meals, basic material assistance to homeless and other disadvantaged people (pilot action started in 2018)

and provided accompanying measures, such as educational activities to promote healthy nutrition, accompaniment to services, support and guidance in job search, psychological and therapeutic support, advice on managing a household budget, skills training programmes, provision of legal services

FEAD distributed

FEAD reached

21 655 380 people

out of which

4,6% or 9 871 066
women

2,8% or 6 139 657
migrants, minorities, ...

2,3% or 4 926 073
children at risk of poverty

1,0% or 2 139 249
> 65 years

4% or 966 600
homeless

1% or 311 453
people with disabilities



*FEAD operations may have continued until December 2023. Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the categories.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

FEAD contributed to mitigating poverty and social exclusion in Italy, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic

Given the lack of structural income support policies in Italy, FEAD played a key role in mitigating the effects of extreme poverty. Its role became even more important during the COVID-19 pandemic. FEAD's large network of structures across the country, with warehouses and volunteers able to provide immediate help to people with COVID-19, without work or without any type of support, was fundamental.

FEAD acted as an entry point for vulnerable individuals to further support

FEAD food support had a multiplier effect. It gave partner organisations a chance to identify and connect with people that needed further support. Food support acted as a simple entry point for vulnerable individuals, that could then be redirected to additional social inclusion

Social interaction as a positive side-effect of food and material aid

Food aid served as a way for people to connect. The widespread network of structures involved in FEAD delivery at local level helped social services reach and connect with people in severe poverty who were often afraid to access services due to mistrust.

LESSONS LEARNED

Locally rooted non-profit organisations

The proximity of partner organisations to the local communities and target groups contributed to a more focused provision of support. In Italy, non-profit entities such as the Italian Red Cross, Caritas or the Food Bank were all large structures deeply rooted in the regions, with strong understanding of their communities. This helped ensure that the right people were reached with FEAD, and that relevant support was provided to them.

The importance of volunteers

FEAD implementation in Italy benefited from working with young volunteers and the use of emergency vehicles, which helped to reach many people by delivering meals directly to their homes. The involvement of local voluntary services and collaboration between

FEAD packages were essential for the most deprived

Without FEAD support, many families would have been in difficulty. Food packages were delivered once or twice a month and were fundamental in improving end recipients' diet, giving them products which they would otherwise not have been able to afford.

local authorities and NGOs led to mutual learning and innovation in the social inclusion policies, both in terms of administrative procedures (co-planning) and service provision (housing first).

PROJECT EXAMPLES

'Housing First Trieste'

'Housing First Trieste' was a pilot project that provided permanent housing in Trieste to homeless people with high failure rates in previous integration projects. The project also fostered participants' social integration and well-being by helping them access existing local community support services, education and training. It won the bronze medal at the FEANTSA Ending Homelessness Awards in 2021 for combining the ESF and FEAD funding to promote inclusion paths for 30 homeless residents.

Electronic vouchers and cards in the City of Brescia

The City of Brescia set up a system for citizens to apply for electronic vouchers and cards in order to speed-up food aid distribution. The vouchers' value was based on the composition of the family unit. These vouchers, distributed monthly, allowed end recipients to make purchases near their homes, removing stigmatisation and providing dignity by enabling people to make their own choices.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FEAD in Italy

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPageId=3617>

Website of FEAD Italy www.lavoro.gov.it/Pagine/default.aspx

FEA

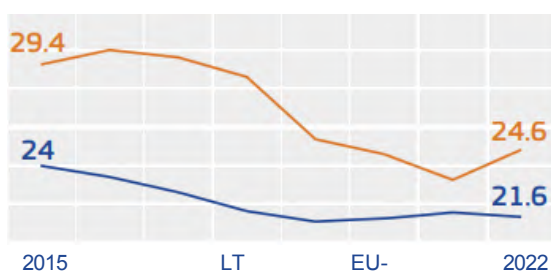
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

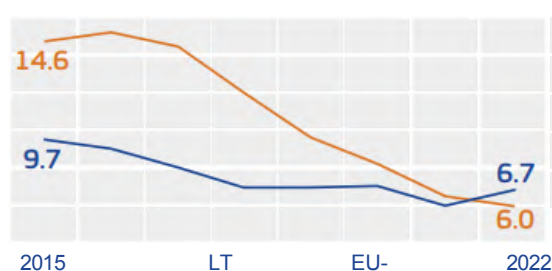
In Lithuania, FEAD had positive results in terms of addressing the food and material needs of end recipients. It targeted disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals, including persons whose average monthly income was lower than 1.5 times the state-supported income, the elderly, disabled, large families and single parent families. FEAD collaborated with a network of partner organizations, consisting of NGOs (e.g. Lithuanian Caritas, Maisto Bankas, National Poverty Reduction Organization Network) and municipalities.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Lithuania has been declining. However, it was consistently above the EU average between 2015 (24%) and 2022 (21.6%) (years for which data is available).



The proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Lithuania has been declining. However, it was above the EU average between 2015 and 2021.

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 90.8 million total funding
of which **EUR 77.2 million** EU contribution

FEAD supported

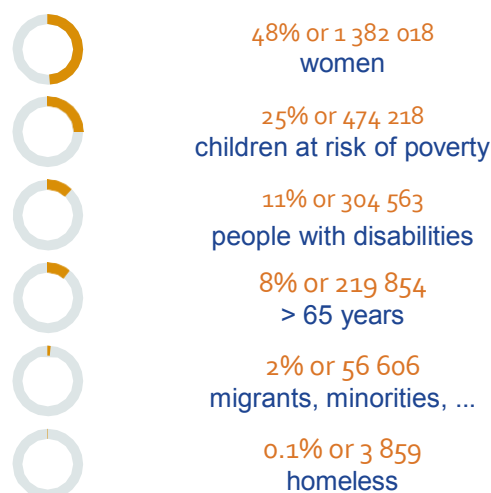
food assistance to the most deprived, consisting of food packs, basic material assistance, consisting of hygiene packs to the most deprived

and provided accompanying measures, such as advice on food preparation, storage, and reduction of food waste, personal hygiene advice, redirection to competent services, individual coaching and workshops, psychological and therapeutic support, social and leisure activities, educational activities and skills-training programmes, provision of legal services

FEAD distributed

48 289 tons of food aid
9 775 689 food packages

FEAD reached
2 897 729 people
out of which



*FEAD operations are not yet complete at this stage as it was further implemented in 2023. Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Regularity of food and material support

FEAD contributed to alleviating poverty by providing food and material support to people with the lowest income, six times per year. Support proved necessary for satisfying basic material needs and also allowed people to save money in order to buy other necessary goods or pay bills.

High accessibility through outreach and assistance

FEAD support reached all those who applied. Low-income households were informed about FEAD support directly, with information on how and where to apply. Social workers helped them fill in the application if they needed assistance. FEAD packages were available in various locations, which also increased take-up of support.

Enhancement of community engagement and psychological well-being

FEAD accompanying measures helped end recipients develop life skills, such as how to manage a family budget, lead a healthy lifestyle, or renew their employment skills. Recipients were also able to participate in social activities, combatting social isolation and contributing to improve their

emotional/psychological status. For example, summer camps were effective in bringing children close to nature and enjoying time with their peers. Families would not have been able to offer such experiences to their children without FEAD support.

LESSONS LEARNED

Adaptations were made to FEAD to deal with COVID-19 and the Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine

The COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine had a major impact on FEAD in terms of increasing the number of end recipients. The fund was adapted to deal with this. Additional resources were used to respond to the growing demand for food aid during the pandemic. The Managing Authority changed eligibility criteria so as to allow Ukrainians fleeing Russian military aggression access to FEAD food and hygiene packages without an assessment of their income.

The importance of NGOs, social workers and volunteers

The involvement of a wide range of social inclusion actors was a key success factor of FEAD in Lithuania. NGOs in half of the municipalities were involved in FEAD delivery, whilst nutritionists in the monitoring committee advised on which products to buy and how to balance the diet of end recipients. Social workers in every district of the municipality were also involved in providing support, whilst volunteers helped monitor activities.

Successful coordination with partner organisations increased overall effectiveness

The delivery of FEAD by partner organisations contributed to the effectiveness of the programme. Partners published distribution schedules and food package compositions on the website or sent messages by phone to potential recipients. This was complemented with additional information provided by social workers to end

recipients directly. In some cases, social workers picked up the food packages and delivered them directly to the end recipients when they were unable to access the delivery points. This was particularly important for persons with disabilities, the sick, or single parents with nowhere to leave their children.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

Free counselling and social projects

The accompanying measures in Lithuania were designed through direct communication with the target group - listening to their needs, identifying their level of motivation, and consulting data on their profiles (e.g. participation in employment, use of public services). FEAD partner organisations offered counselling to end recipients on social care, financial planning and hygiene. Municipalities and NGOs also encouraged end recipients to participate in social projects, such as cooking meals with products delivered through FEAD, sports and leisure activities for children, and training for women.

'Reserved for the Elderly'

The project 'Reserved for the Elderly' aimed to tackle the barriers to participating in social activities so as to increase the self-confidence and social skills of older people and facilitate their reintegration into the job market. The project offered personal development opportunities to older people through courses, personal development sessions and participation in volunteering activities. It targeted people between 55 and 64 years of age who were unemployed. Participants were encouraged to engage in volunteering activities with the Food Bank of Lithuania, one of the FEAD partner organisations.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FEAD in Lithuania

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPagId=3619> Website of
FEAD Lithuania <http://www.priimk.lt/>

all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the categories.



FEA

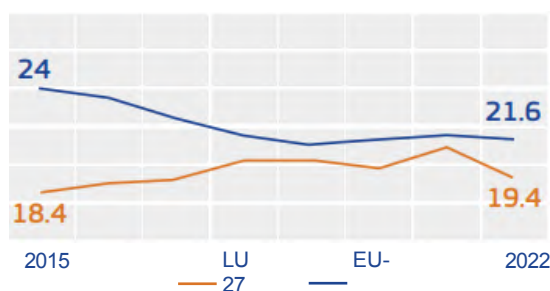
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

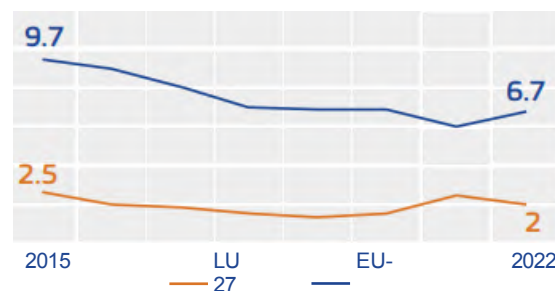
In Luxembourg, FEAD had positive results in terms of covering food needs and complementing this with accompanying measures that contributed to social inclusion. FEAD targeted workless households or households with low work intensity. The Managing Authority, the Solidarity Division of the Ministry of Family and Integration, collaborated with partner organizations. These were NGOs with storage and transport capacity and distribution experience, as well as social offices. The coordination of the NGOs was ensured by the Spëndchen, the national donation collection and storage centre 16 social groceries were involved in FEAD distribution, run by Caritas Luxembourg, Red Cross Luxembourg, NGO Cent buttek, and Fie Epicerie Zelver (a standalone organization in the south of Luxembourg).

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The proportion of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion in Luxembourg has been slowly rising. It was consistently below the EU average between 2015 (24%) and 2022 (21.6%) (years for which data is available).



The proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Luxembourg has been relatively low, since 2015. It was consistently well below the EU average between 2015 and 2022 (years for which data is available).

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 5.5 million total funding
of which **EUR 4.8 million** EU contribution
including **EUR 0.9 million** of REACT-EU
funds

15 007 tons of food aid
209 081 food packages

FEAD supported

food assistance to the most deprived, consisting of distribution of food (oil, milk, pasta, rice, sugar and tuna), basic material assistance, consisting of basic hygiene items (toothpaste, shower gel, shampoo and toilet paper) to the most deprived

and provided accompanying measures, such as educational activities to promote healthy nutrition/ cooking workshops, skills training programmes, advice on managing a household budget, personal hygiene advice, social assistance under the Social Welfare Act, workshops promoting regular physical activity, other forms of advice on debt, literacy, language classes, legal advice etc.

FEAD distributed

FEAD reached
195 634 people
out of which

74% or 144 868
migrants, minorities, ...

52% or 101 668
women

29% or 56 568
children at risk of poverty

3% or 5 834
people with disabilities

2% or 4 168
> 65 years

1% or 1 934
homeless



*FEAD operations may have continued until December 2023. Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not

all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the categories.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Strengthening already existing state support measures

FEAD contributed to reinforcing the existing Luxembourg State Aid Programme and was instrumental in continuing government support to those most in need. FEAD also contributed to developing, if necessary, a life plan allowing the person or household receiving FEAD support to regain their financial and social autonomy.

A wide array of support initiatives

FEAD offered a range of accompanying measures tailored to the needs of end recipients. They included culinary advice, cooking lessons, meal preparation, budget management, information on rights, courses in languages and mathematics for the children of end recipients, introductory computer courses, and assistance with

Adaptation to the new social needs caused by COVID-19

The additional budget from REACT-EU contributed to responding not only to the usual needs of households in precarious situations, but also to new demands arising from the social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

preparation of tax declarations. These were complemented with innovative social activities such as multicultural parties, a weekly event that allowed people to play card and board games, a Fairtrade week with discounts on Fairtrade products, or barbecue evenings in the summer.

LESSONS LEARNED

The benefits of flexible, additional funding

An online platform developed for FEAD recipients at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic went live on 28 March 2020. The platform was able to be set up quickly and efficiently thanks to the flexibilities offered under the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII) to secure additional funding. Many of the extra costs during the pandemic were absorbed by FEAD.

Effective coordination between partner organisations

Centralised purchase, networking among the partner organisations, as well as the creation of synergies between social inclusion actors, contributed to an effective delivery model. There was a central purchasing body and a total of 16 grocery stores which all operated in the same way. All these organisations received food from the same

A listening ear amid the pandemic

The partner organisations in charge of distribution had extra personnel present to listen to end recipients' problems. This was particularly important during the COVID-19 pandemic, when vulnerable groups were experiencing increased loneliness due to social distancing and lockdowns.

central purchasing body, Spëndchen (asbl), which managed the FEAD budget and ordered the products. This ensured that each partner organisation received the right orders with the right quantities of food, and one delivery every week.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

'The Social Greengrocer Project'

Social greengrocer stores were introduced in response to the social stigma experienced by users of the non-electronic voucher system implemented in Luxembourg (whereby users had to stand and wait whilst a manager was brought over to validate their vouchers). Social greengrocer stores, set up by the FEAD partner

organisations (Red Cross and Caritas) offered end recipients the opportunity to do their own food shopping with more autonomy. The stores offered products bought under FEAD and at a fraction (10-30%) of the market value, without the need for vouchers.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FEAD in Luxemburg

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPagId=3620> Website of

FEAD Luxemburg <http://www.mfi.public.lu/>

all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the categories.



FEA

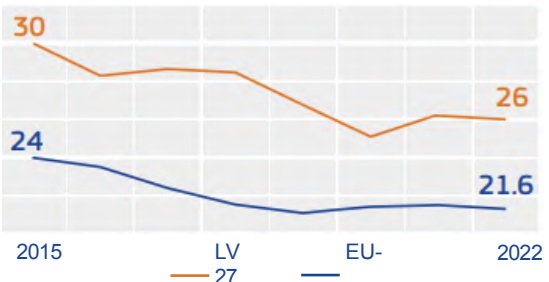
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

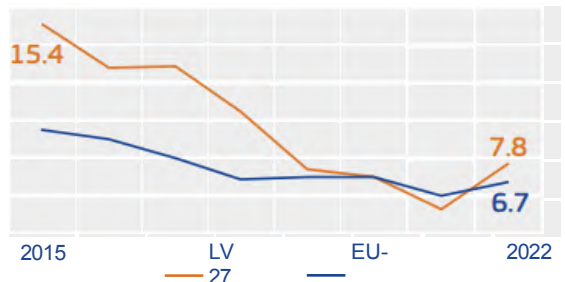
In Latvia, FEAD had positive results in terms of addressing the food and material needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals. FEAD targeted disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals and included activities that specifically targeted children affected by or at risk of poverty. Over the course of the programming period, up to 28 partner organizations, consisting of municipalities, associations and foundations, religious organizations, were involved in delivering FEAD in Latvia.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Latvia has been declining but was consistently above the EU average between 2015 (24%) and 2022 (21.6%) (years for which data is available).



The proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Latvia has been declining but was mostly above the EU average between 2015 and 2021.

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 57.6 million total funding
of which **EUR 49.0 million** EU contribution
including **EUR 7.9 million** of REACT-EU funds

2 567 561 meals
3 012 635 food packages

FEAD supported

food assistance to the most deprived, consisting of individual food packs and cooked meals and basic material assistance to children, consisting of hygiene packs and teaching material

and provided accompanying measures, such as group and individual counselling, educational activities to promote healthy nutrition, redirection to competent services, psychological and therapeutic support, advice on managing a household budget, on parenting and on job search

FEAD distributed

19 832 tons of food aid

FEAD reached
1 053 332 people
out of which

48% or 510 616
women

22% or 234 898
children at risk of poverty

20% or 208 488
> 65 years

13% or 134 529
people with disabilities

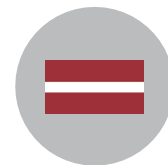
7% or 78 500
migrants, minorities, ...

1% or 5 954
homeless



*FEAD operations may have continued until December 2023. Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not

all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the categories.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Promotion of social inclusion measures

FEAD eased the situation of the most deprived citizens and promoted their social inclusion. Social inclusion measures for deprived persons included sports activities, advice on legal, health or other personal issues, and assistance with job search. The network of almost 30 partner organisations and social services which carried out these additional measures contributed greatly to end recipients' path to social inclusion.

Prioritising children's needs

Material support delivered through FEAD was especially relevant for children. FEAD offered hygiene products and household goods, including children's hygiene products specifically for children up to 2 years of age and school supplies for students. Basic material assistance was highly positively assessed by end recipients,

Improving household budgets of the most deprived

FEAD improved the overall household situation by allowing end recipients to free up budget for other expenses. Funds saved in the household budget were spent on additional food or directed to end recipients' children's school events or extracurricular educational lessons.

who managed to save money as a result of FEAD support and directed these savings to their children's additional education. The material deprivation of households decreased in Latvia during the programming period.

LESSONS LEARNED

Swift and steady assistance enhanced recipients' quality of life

FEAD support was delivered quickly to people in need of support, compared to other programmes. For families and people in crisis who need immediate help, the decision to grant public social assistance takes time. However, FEAD eligibility was confirmed within 1-2 days of application, allowing families to immediately go to one of the food distribution points. FEAD recipients also knew they could receive the support over a period of time, giving them a feeling of stability and security.

Addressing the emerging needs of Ukrainians fleeing Russian military aggression

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine had a major impact on the FEAD target group. The number of end recipients increased substantially, with the number of Ukrainians fleeing Russian military aggression accounting for almost 50% of end recipients in the capital Riga, for instance. FEAD actors adopted an equality approach by equating the needs

Continuous support thanks to successful collaboration

There were 18% more end recipients between 2021 and 2022, partly due to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, thanks to the partner organisations, the constant dialogue with the social inclusion sector and the availability of additional national resources, FEAD succeeded in coping with and adapting to the global context, finding solutions that allowed the fund to continue supporting people most in need.

for social services of Ukrainians fleeing Russian military aggression with those of the local population. The Managing Authority and partner organisations amended existing supply contracts to include baby food, hygiene and household goods and hygiene goods for small children, ensuring the immediate supply of additional support kits to Ukrainians.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

'10 simple habits in order to live a greener life'

'10 simple habits in order to live a greener life' was a series of information sessions delivered as part of broader educational programme entirely funded by FEAD and run by the Latvian Red Cross. Practical and useful sessions for end recipients in their daily lives were delivered, such as how to sustain a healthy lifestyle and balanced diet, and how to master budgeting and time management.

'The School of Life'

St. John's Ambulance Latvia (a FEAD partner organisation) identified that end recipients of FEAD needed support in their daily habits and in social interaction. Due to their circumstances, end recipients often lacked knowledge of personal hygiene, maintaining a healthy lifestyle or cooking.

Foodbank, 'Paēdušai Latvijai'

The foodbank was implemented by Latvia's Samaritan association and proved instrumental in providing food packages to people in need, through offering a delivery service to people who were not able to come to the distribution points.

In response, the organisation created 'the School of Life', offering counselling and information sessions addressing the challenges of social exclusion, encouraging participants to actively improve their daily routine and become more independent in solving personal social issues.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FEAD in Latvia

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPageId=3618> Website of FEAD Latvia <http://www.lm.gov.lv/>

F E A

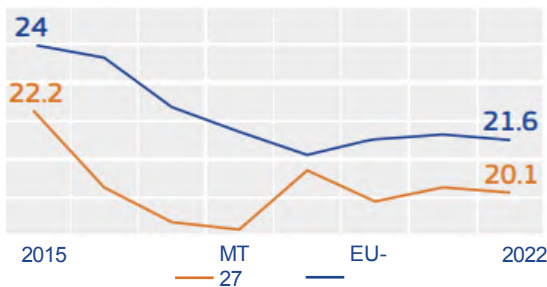
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

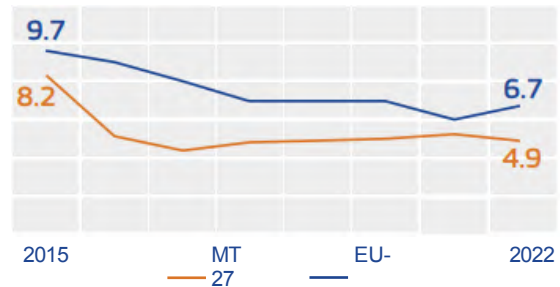
In Malta, FEAD had positive results in terms of covering food needs of the most deprived, complemented by accompanying measures that contributed to alleviating social exclusion and tackling social emergencies. It targeted low-income

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Malta has been relatively stable. It was consistently slightly below the EU average between 2015 (24%) and 2022 (21.6%) (years for which data is available).



The proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Malta has been declining. It was consistently below the EU average between 2015 and 2022 (years for which data is available).

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 4.6 million total funding
of which **EUR 3.9 million** EU contribution

FEAD supported

food assistance to the most deprived, consisting of distribution of food packages to disadvantaged households

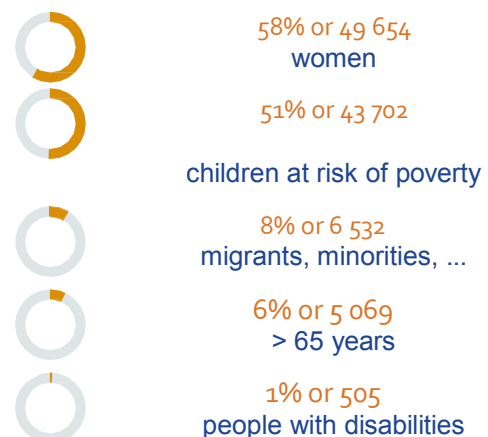
and provided accompanying measures, such as

educational activities to promote healthy nutrition, skills training, specific advice on maintaining or restoring family and community ties, including conflict resolution, parental assistance, assistance for home care, family workshops on parenting skills, first aid and family budgets

FEAD distributed

1 305 tons of food aid
86 823 food packages

FEAD reached
85 921 people
out of which



*FEAD operations may have continued until December 2023. Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Reducing poverty and increasing social inclusion

The FEAD programme contributed towards reducing the number of severely deprived persons in Malta, also through a wide range of accompanying measures. These were implemented by the partner organisation alongside the distribution of food boxes. The accompanying measures were targeted towards heads of households eligible for FEAD as well as their family members and had a high take-up rate. For example, the financial literacy training programme in 2021 was completed successfully by 84% of participants.

Successful outreach by combining European and national funding

The FEAD programme was implemented by the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS), which is also responsible for state-funded food distribution and delivering social services. Through the two schemes (national and FEAD), FSWS reached 26 000 families

LESSONS LEARNED

Additional social support beyond food and material assistance

In Malta, FEAD activities were designed to be an entry point into other forms of social support. FEAD did not solely focus on the delivery of food packages, but also offered a tailored approach to identifying the particular needs of each household through a comprehensive profiling process. Through this, the partner organisation actively sought to identify the needs of the end recipients and subsequently contacted other national actors and national authorities to offer the relevant support.

Consultation with end recipients was an important factor for effective implementation

End recipients were consulted throughout the delivery of FEAD support. This took the form of a joint service agreement to identify their needs, which gave recipients a sense of ownership over the intervention. Social workers consulted end recipients on a regular basis to ensure they received adequate support. For instance, the

PROJECT EXAMPLES

Innovative accompanying measures

Innovative accompanying measures were implemented in Malta through FEAD. The 'Employment Readiness – Skills Building sessions', targeted the long-term unemployed and aimed to provide them with the necessary soft skills to search for, apply and attend a job interview. Reading sessions in Maltese in collaboration with the National Literacy Agency and the distribution of books to families with children under the age of three were also organised. The Cottonera community services organised the 'Superheroes of the Earth Summer Camp', during which children cultivated a garden and planted fruit trees. The Qawsalla (rainbow) group supported women in their 40s to enhance their support network and pass on their skills to other women in the community.

Assistance for the most deprived

In Malta, the FEAD programme assisted families that were most in need. It focused exclusively on food deprivation and targeted low-income households, particularly families with children and the elderly. Food distributions were carried out from 17 different localities, which ensured that eligible households could easily access a distribution centre. Food packages were distributed to heads of households, of which more than half were female.

at risk of poverty and social exclusion. By also offering accompanying measures, it helped reduce poverty and exclusion among vulnerable families mostly through linking them with relevant social services.

Effective adjustment during the COVID-19 pandemic

FEAD in Malta swiftly and effectively reacted to the COVID-19 pandemic. The time window to collect food packages from the central location was prolonged to over one month and the partner organisation allowed those who were in quarantine to collect their food packages at a later date.

INFORMATION



ADDITIONAL

FEAD partner organisation collaborated with the Housing Authority and two National Banks (APS and BOV) to support and advise FEAD end recipients to apply to 'the Social Bank Loan Scheme'. This offered them the possibility to obtain a mortgage without the need for a 10% down payment.

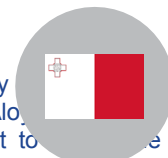
FEAD in Malta

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPagId=3621>

Website of FEAD Malta <https://eufunds.gov.mt/>

'Let's connect'

The project 'Let's connect' was carried out by Middle school, Active Ageing Day Centres, St Alois students and B'Kara parishes. It reached out to isolated people and provided them easily accessible and understandable training on how to use social media apps such as WhatsApp and Skype.



FEA

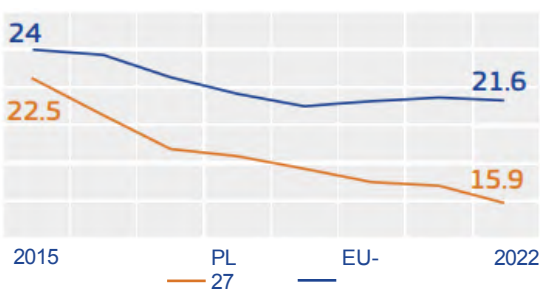
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

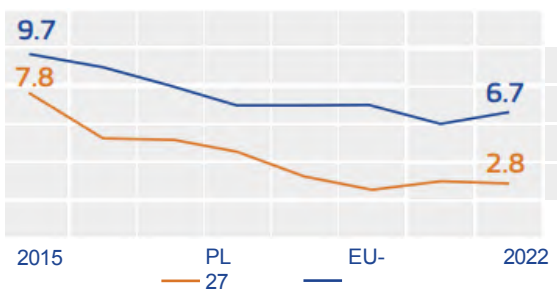
In Poland, FEAD had positive results in terms of covering food needs and complementing this with accompanying measures that contributed to social inclusion. It targeted disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals, notably people who could not afford a proper meal. FEAD was delivered through a network of five nationwide organizations (Caritas Polska, Federation of Polish Food Banks, the Polish Committee for Social Welfare, the Polish Red Cross and the Old Catholic Church in Poland), around 90 regional partner organizations, and over 2 500 local partner organizations.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



Overall, the proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Poland has been declining. It was consistently below the EU average between 2015 (24%) and 2022 (21.6%) (years for which data is available).



Overall, the proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Poland has been declining. It was consistently below the EU average between 2015 and 2022 (years for which data is available).

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 556.9 million total funding
of which **EUR 473.4 million** EU contribution

FEAD supported

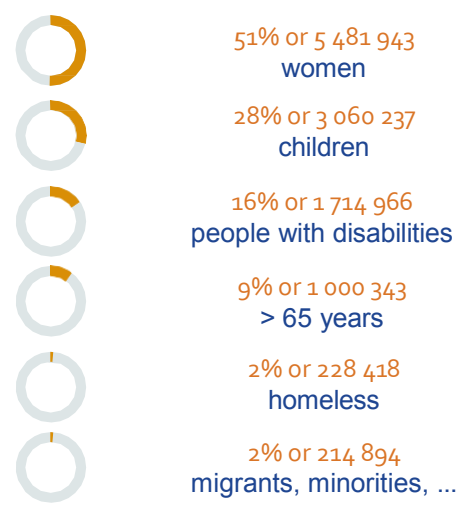
food assistance to the most deprived, consisting of distribution of food packs to the most deprived and provided accompanying measures, such as advice on food preparation and storage, cooking workshops, advice on how to reduce food waste, advice on managing a household budget, social and leisure activities, psychological and therapeutic support

FEAD distributed

463 108 tons of food aid
13 093 543 meals
47 716 434 food packages

FEAD reached

10 748 634 people
out of which



*FEAD operations may have continued until December 2023. Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Reach of a broader target group compared to national measures

FEAD reached a wider number of target groups than social policy measures under Polish laws. The income criteria for FEAD were set higher than for the Social Assistance Act (at 235% of the Act's criterion), in order to reach people outside the social assistance system, yet still facing difficulties in affording basic need. This meant in particular that FEAD reached the elderly and seniors who did not qualify as recipients in the social assistance system due to their age.

A wide range of accompanying measures

The accompanying measures helped end recipients in their social inclusion path and prompted them to take action to change their situation. End recipients could develop different skills such as sewing, cooking or crocheting. Other accompanying measures helped strengthen their independence and competence in running

LESSONS LEARNED

Simplification allowed a quick response to people's needs

The simplification of procedures for FEAD (compared to those of the ESF) helped to respond quickly to specific needs that arose and to adapt the regulations to provide more relevant support to people in need. As the budget was based on large, complicated and time-consuming public tenders for the purchase of large quantities of food, simplification was very important.

Strengthening of regional and local networks

The implementation model of FEAD in Poland created a strong network of partner organisations operating regionally and locally. The partnerships developed over time into strong networks, with excellent cooperation with the end recipients.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

Educational workshops and food distribution by the Polish Committee of Social Welfare

The Polish Committee of Social Welfare provided educational workshops alongside food distribution for vulnerable people. The project aimed to provide systematic support to vulnerable individuals facing economic challenges and/or social exclusion, including the homeless, individuals with disabilities, migrants or those who had a particularly low income. Meals or food packages were distributed in homeless shelters and community centres located in bigger cities as well as smaller communities. People eligible for support could not be more than 30 kilometres from a distribution point. End recipients could participate in educational workshops on a range of topics at the distribution points, including household budgeting, housekeeping, food waste prevention and meal preparation using FEAD- provided ingredients.

Complementarity with national policies for social inclusion

FEAD contributed to poverty reduction and social inclusion in Poland as it was embedded in national anti-poverty and social policy. The programme was linked to the Act on Social Assistance, which determined which people were eligible for support, as well as other national programmes, such as the Home and School Meals programme.

a household, raised awareness on food waste or a healthy diet, increased family communication through the developing their conflict resolution skills. Psychological support and leisure activities were also provided, helping raise self-confidence and instilling a sense of community.

Expertise provided by an advisory body

An advisory body (as opposed to a monitoring committee) was set up in Poland for FEAD, which contributed to its effective implementation. The advisory body was made up of a group of practitioners with experience of working with the target group. They held regular meetings and gave specific advice to the Managing Authority which was often taken on board in FEAD operations.

Partner organisations had access to guidelines developed by the Managing Authority on the programme. Good cooperation was enabled by the flexibility and responsiveness of the Managing Authority.

'Academy of Exceptional Activity'

The Project 'Academy of Exceptional Activity' was a collaborative effort between the Food Bank in Lodz, and 'Monar', an NGO providing therapeutic support for people struggling with addiction. The Food Bank involved 'Monar' participants in the delivery of FEAD food parcels to end recipients of the Social Welfare Centre in Lodz. The project facilitated participants' social and psychological reintegration, by providing them with an opportunity to make a difference in their community. Overall, approximately 140 volunteers from 'Monar' were involved in delivering food aid.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FEAD in Poland <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPagelId=3623>
Website of FEAD Poland <https://www.gov.pl/web/rodzina/program-operacyjny-pomoc-ywnosciowa-2014-2020>

FEA

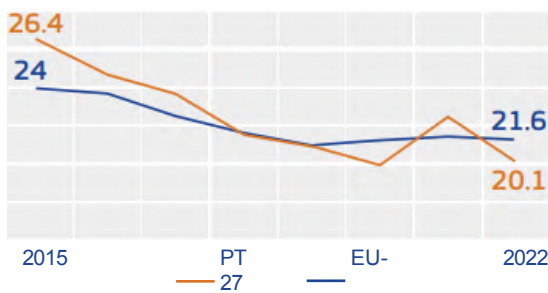
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

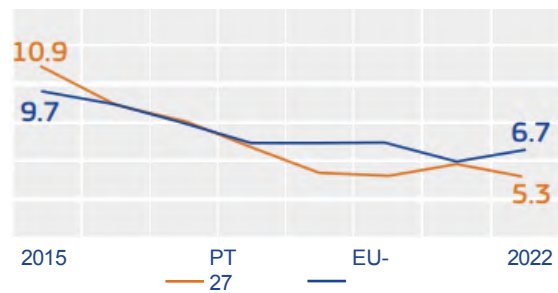
In Portugal, FEAD had positive results in terms of supporting public authorities and civil society to provide food support to the most deprived people across the country. The target groups were deprived individuals or households, defined based on economic need. FEAD in Portugal was managed by the same structure managing the ESF, coordinated by both the Ministry of Labor, Solidarity, and Social Security and the Ministry of Planning and Infrastructure to ensure alignment with government policies and objectives. The distribution of food was under the responsibility of a large network of partner organizations (over 600 in 2022) which were public or private non-profit bodies.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The proportion of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion in Portugal has been declining, largely in line with the EU average between 2015 and 2022 (years for which data is available).



The proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Portugal has been declining. It was below the EU average from 2018 to 2022 (years for which data is available).

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 208.2 million total funding
of which **EUR 177.0 million** EU
contribution

FEAD supported

food assistance to the most deprived, consisting of food packs including fresh, dry and frozen goods

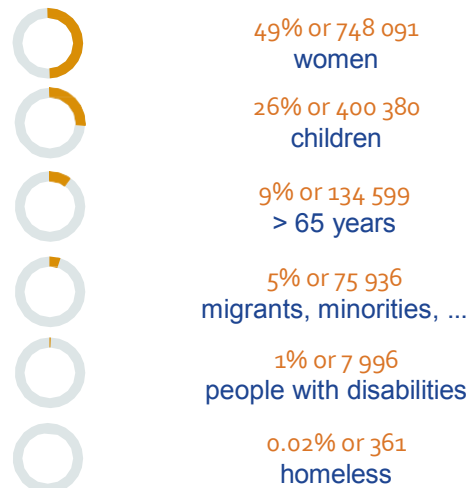
and provided accompanying measures, such as advice on food preparation and storage, Advice on how to reduce food waste and advice on managing a household budget

FEAD distributed

115 604 tons of food aid
3 034 288 food packages

FEAD reached

1 539 807 people
out of which



*FEAD operations may have continued until December 2023. Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the categories.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Funding of the first nationwide food programme

FEAD in Portugal financed the first national food support programme for the most deprived people. It was the only national-level food support programme in the country. The Managing Authority was involved in defining measures and objectives for the programme in partnership with relevant authorities, health institutions and the Institute of Social Security. The food baskets were composed of products that covered 50% of an individual's energy and nutritional needs.

Provision of a healthy and balanced diet

FEAD in Portugal contributed to providing a balanced diet to the most deprived. The General Directorate of Health, the Food Safety Authority and relevant regional authorities collaborated in order to compose a food basket that met the criteria of a balanced diet, taking

LESSONS LEARNED

Reduced financial burden for end recipients

FEAD food support reduced the financial burden on end recipients by providing a consistent source of food, allowing them to use their household budgets on other expenses. This approach complemented the social security system in Portugal.

Involvement of professionals

FEAD in Portugal demonstrated that in order to support the social inclusion of very vulnerable groups, professionals with experience in working on social policy are crucial. Whilst volunteers played an important role in delivering FEAD, the formal organisation of

PROJECT EXAMPLES

Developing a territorial food strategy

Before FEAD delivery began, a territorial strategy was developed, indicating the type and diversity of food to be distributed, the nutritional needs to be met and the regularity of distribution. The aim of the strategy was to ensure an equitable and balanced distribution from a territorial point of view, on both the supply and demand side. The planning was carried out as follows: the value of the basket was calculated, then its composition defined. Estimates were produced on the number of people who could be supported, on the basis of each end recipient receiving one basket of food per month over 24 months. The national territory was divided into 135 territories, ensuring that at least 150 end recipients could be supported at this frequency in each one. Electronic vouchers were introduced in 2021 in order to fully cover the territory while simultaneously remove stigma faced by end recipients of food packs.

Successful implementation despite difficult socio-economic circumstances

Despite the difficult economic and social context, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the subsequent energy crisis and inflation, FEAD programme implementation was able to support the increased numbers of people needing help over the programming period. It also maintained the regularity of the food assistance.

into account climatic and environmental aspects as required by the FEAD horizontal principles. The food baskets also took into account the food consumption habits of Portuguese people.

Multitude of accompanying measures

FEAD food support facilitated the implementation of supplementary support measures, such as waste reduction education, information on optimization of family budgets, and better selection of food items for distribution. These measures were designed to enhance the overall impact of the programme.

food support accompanied by social inclusion and integration measures, required coordination at the level of policies in order to offer comprehensive solutions to poverty reduction.

Accompanying measures

The implementation of accompanying measures was an innovative aspect of FEAD and gave end recipients access to training and guidance in practical aspects such as optimising family budget management, preventing food waste and selecting food products. FEAD funding helped develop these follow-up actions, which became an asset for the whole programme and for end recipients in particular.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FEAD in Portugal

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPageId=3624> Website of
FEAD Portugal <http://poapmc.portugal2020.pt>

FEA

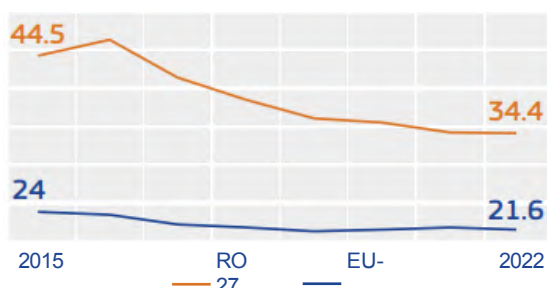
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

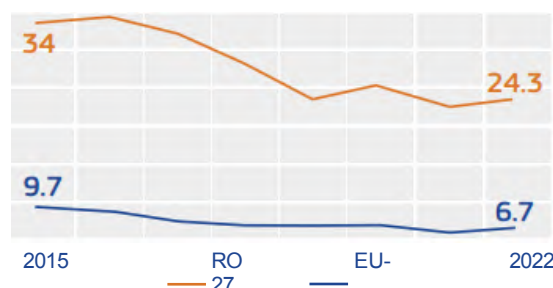
In Romania, FEAD had positive results in terms of covering both food and material needs of the most deprived people, while complementing these with accompanying measures that contributed to social inclusion. It targeted disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals, including old people, families in severe poverty who received the guaranteed minimum income, and children in or at risk of poverty. FEAD partner organizations covered 41 counties in Romania, and included municipalities, local public administration, NGOs, religious institutions, canteen operators and logistics partners.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Romania has been declining but remained significantly above the EU average between 2015 (24%) and 2022 (21.6%) (years for which data is available).



The proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Romania has been declining, but remained significantly above the EU average between 2015 and 2022 (years for which data is available).

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 574.8 million total funding
of which **EUR 497.0 million** EU
contribution including **EUR 56.0 million** of
REACT-EU funds

FEAD reached
13 661 174 people
out of which

FEAD supported
food and material assistance to the most deprived,
consisting of food packages and meals, hygiene products
and school material

283 595 tons of food aid
11 027 838 meals
18 618 986 food packages

and provided accompanying measures, such as
education on ensuring personal and home hygiene,
facilitation of access to healthcare services,
educational activities to promote healthy nutrition,
coaching and workshops, especially to enhance
integration in education or the labour market

FEAD distributed

34% or 4 677 540
women

22% or 2 995 263
children

19% or 2 557 929
>65 years

16% or 2 176 455
people with disabilities

2% or 321 319
migrants, minorities, ...

0,1% or 10 803
homeless



*FEAD operations may have continued until December 2023. Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the categories.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



Identification of the most deprived

The design and delivery of FEAD allowed social inclusion actors to identify the most disadvantaged people at community level. This was achieved with the help of administrative territorial units, inspectorates and schools who were close to the target groups and understood their needs. An inventory was set up for granting FEAD support at community level, which drew the attention of community leaders to the needs of the most deprived in their areas.

Successful cooperation with partner organisations

FEAD contributed to building and developing strong partnerships. The collaboration between partner organisations, the public social assistance system and other projects in the social inclusion area, improved the range of services offered to end recipients. Partnerships

A community-centered approach

FEAD contributed to the reduction of poverty and social exclusion by using a community-centred approach. Support was geared to the needs of the community, such as education, employment, social, housing and health needs, and involved volunteers at the local level.

were developed with stores, food banks and social enterprises, often involving end recipients in local projects (e.g. reduction of food waste, cultivation of gardens for fresh fruit and vegetables).

LESSONS LEARNED



Reducing stigmatisation and discrimination

Food distribution and the delivery of accompanying measures was undertaken by NGOs that work in the social field. Special attention was placed on reducing the stigmatisation and the discrimination of families in severe poverty, young single mothers, people over 65 years of age and the homeless.

Effective monitoring system

Data collection was carried out by partner organisations and shared with the Managing Authority in electronic format. The fact that FEAD and ESF were both under the same Managing Authority reduced the risk of double financing and facilitated

Distribution via electronic cards and vouchers

During the COVID-19 pandemic, electronic vouchers were introduced as an indirect delivery of food and basic material assistance. This helped ensure people in need could access necessary support quickly and allowed end recipients to select products they needed themselves, supporting their dignity and autonomy.

effective monitoring of the fund. Technical assistance measures contributed to capacity development and also reduced administrative burden, with the ultimate aim of supporting the largest possible number of end recipients with the funding available.

PROJECT EXAMPLES



Electronic social vouchers for the most disadvantaged stu-

In 2022, the project 'Educational support based on electronic social vouchers for the most disadvantaged categories of students' was implemented. It distributed 224 809 vouchers for the purchase of educational equipment for the 2021-2022 school year. The project continued into the 2022-2023 school year. It contributed to improving school attendance of recipients and supporting their social integration.

'Material support kits'

A 'material support kit' or 'newborn kit' was provided through FEAD for young pregnant women and mothers at risk. Social workers determined who was eligible for support by requesting information about the family situation of potential recipients from the public social assistance service.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FEAD in Romania

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPageId=3625> Website of FEAD Romania <http://www.fonduri-ue.ro/>

F E A

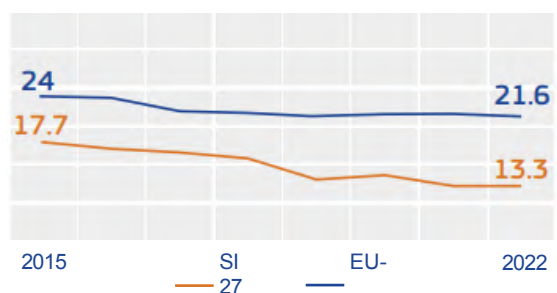
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

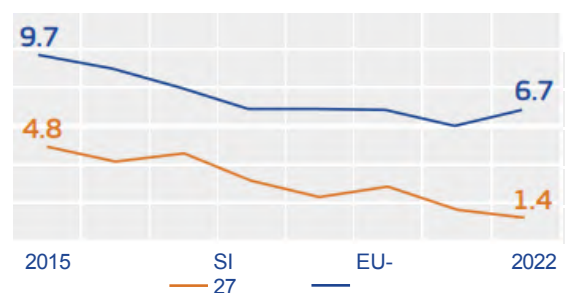
In Slovenia, FEAD had positive results in contributing to the reduction of poverty by covering food needs and by offering accompanying measures. It targeted disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals, including workless households or households with low work intensity, individuals without permanent residence and foreigners, addicts and homeless people. The Managing Authority was the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, which collaborated with partner organizations such as the Red Cross Slovenia, Slovenian Caritas, and the Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Agricultural Markets.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Slovenia has been declining and was consistently below the EU average between 2015 (24%) and 2022 (21.6%) (years for which data is available).



The proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Slovenia has been declining and was consistently below the EU average between 2015 and 2022 (years for which data is available).

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 33 million total funding
of which **EUR 29.4 million** EU
contribution including **EUR 8.9 million** of
REACT-EU funds

FEAD reached
1 329 788 people
out of which

6 872 866 food packages

FEAD supported

food assistance to the most deprived, consisting of
distribution of food packs

and provided accompanying measures, such as

educational activities to promote healthy nutrition,
individual coaching and workshops, educational
activities and skills trainings, psychosocial counselling
and strengthening of social skills and knowledge

FEAD distributed

31 188 tons of food aid

52% or 696 463
women

21% or 273 608
children at risk of poverty

16% or 215 142
> 65 years

8% or 112 150
migrants, minoritie, ...

4% or 49 851
people with disabilities

1.4% or 18 329
homeless



*FEAD operations may have continued until December 2023. Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the categories.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

FEAD improved the general quality of life for Slovenian households facing poverty

At the microeconomic level, FEAD measures contributed to alleviating the hardship faced by the most deprived. FEAD was particularly important during times of crisis, including the COVID-19 pandemic and energy crisis and natural disasters such as the 2023 floods in Slovenia. The majority of end recipients (97%) stated in the structured survey that the fund had a positive impact on them and their household members.

Material support as entry point for additional assistance

FEAD worked as an important entry point for other forms of assistance, especially from the point of view of empowerment and social activation. Partner organisations recorded an increase in participation of end recipients in accompanying measures, such as

Addressing the worst forms of poverty

FEAD contributed to the elimination of the worst forms of poverty in Slovenia. Approximately 160 000 vulnerable people received food packages annually (although this number varied). FEAD made up around half of the food distributed by humanitarian organisations in the country. It thus represented an important source of humanitarian aid in Slovenia.

support for families and individuals in dealing with everyday problems, individual psychosocial counselling and assistance, strengthening social skills, etc. FEAD also proved to be an important way for recipients to see the benefits of the EU on their daily lives.

LESSONS LEARNED

The importance of volunteers

The main factor that influenced the cost-effectiveness of FEAD was the large number of volunteers who worked within partner organisations. This partly addressed the issue of the flat rate of 5% which was not enough to cover partner organisations' costs in delivering the fund. The partner organisation Caritas alone had around 320 distribution points with volunteer support.

Successful adaptation amidst COVID-19

FEAD delivery adapted well to challenges brought on by COVID-19. The number of end recipients increased substantially, and it became increasingly difficult to access them in light of lockdowns and restrictions to social gatherings. Operations were adapted to respond to this, with protective equipment provided to volunteers,

Effective communication between different stakeholders

Factors that facilitated effectiveness of FEAD included good communication with representatives of the Ministry, a dedicated team within the Ministry, partner organisations which were able to cover all parts of the country, a well-developed network of volunteers, as well as good cooperation amongst partner organisations delivering the support.

disinfection processes introduced and food distributed in front of the warehouses to allow for social distancing. Another major problem was the lack of communication with recipients which was addressed by the introduction of telephone socialising, alleviating social isolation.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

'Srečevalnica' project'

The 'Srečevalnica' project offered additional support to individuals who came to receive food and material assistance at the Regional Red Cross Association of Ljubljana. The Red Cross identified that a significant group of end recipients were long-term unemployed women and single mothers. In response, they developed a range of activities to support their social integration, including events, workshops and meetings where recipients could access information and advice. Regular weekly activities provided an opportunity for lifelong learning and the expansion and strengthening of the social networks of the participants.

'First aid workshops for children'

In the Slovenian region of Zagorje ob Savi, the partner organisation Red Cross organised a first aid workshop for children whose families have difficulties paying for extracurricular activities. In addition to food and material assistance, the project aimed to provide children with the tools and social skills for life-threatening situations. Through this activity, the FEAD partner organisation helped children to become more resilient and proactive in their own protection and the protection of their communities.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FEAD in Slovenia

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPageId=3627> Website of
FEAD Slovenia <http://www.mddsz.gov.si/>

F E A

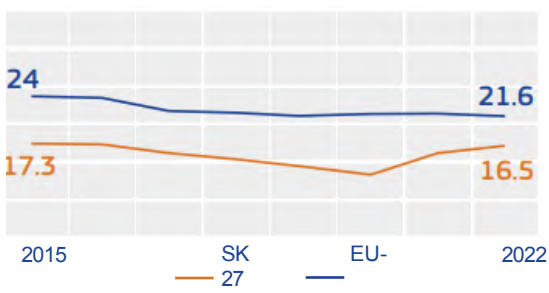
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

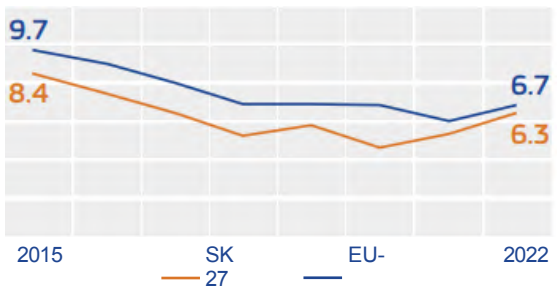
In Slovakia, FEAD had positive results by providing food and hygiene packages, as well as accompanying measures, to address food and material deprivation of the most deprived. It targeted people who were in receipt of social welfare assistance but not food assistance. Individuals were also supported with accompanying measures such as advice and counselling, to help them with social integration and finding a way out of poverty. The Managing Authority was the Section of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. FEAD in Slovakia was delivered through 11 partner organisations, consisting of NGOs, associations, the church and other charities.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Slovakia has remained relatively stable and was consistently below the EU average between 2015 (24%) and 2022 (21.6%) (years for which data is available).



The proportion of people suffering from severe material and social deprivation in Slovakia has been declining, and was consistently below the EU average between 2015 and 2022 (years for which data is available).

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 87.8 million total funding
of which **EUR 78 million** EU
contribution
including **EUR 22.9 million** of REACT-EU
funds

FEAD reached
1 414 048 people
out of which

FEAD supported

food assistance to the most deprived, consisting of food packs or hot food and basic material assistance, consisting of hygiene packs to address material deprivation

and provided accompanying measures, such as advice on food preparation and storage, redirection to competent services, coaching and workshops, psychological and therapeutic support, provision of legal services

FEAD distributed

18 608 tons of food aid
410 445 meals
1 435 952 food packages

50% or 708 546
women

41% or 580 130
children at risk of poverty

4% or 53 454
people with disabilities

2% or 35 205
homeless

1.4% or 20 200
> 65 years



*FEAD operations may have continued until December 2023. Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the categories.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Efficient communication between the Managing Authority and partner organisations

A factor that significantly helped the successful implementation of the programme was cooperation and communication with partners. The Managing Authority and partner organisations were very willing to seek solutions together to the problems encountered. A FEAD working group also helped identify needs and challenges, which were subsequently addressed by the Managing Authority and partner organisations.

Professional assessment of the social problems faced by end recipients

The delivery of food and material support to the target group provided an opportunity for qualified social workers to assess end recipients' broader needs and obstacles to social inclusion. Social counselling and other professional activities then supported individuals to tackle

Material support as an entry point for social counselling

Providing hot meals without any potentially stigmatising requirements proved to be an excellent tool for engaging new social service users. The meals were handed out free of charge, without registration or the need to show documents or reporting on migrant status. This brought end recipients into contact with social support providers, allowing them to more easily gain the trust of new members of the target group.

these obstacles, in order to prevent and reduce family crisis situations. Support included job search assistance, advice on CV preparation, information on financial assistance and support options, and advice on healthy nutrition, food management and family finances.

LESSONS LEARNED

Effective cooperation with local authorities

Effective working relationships with regional authorities, including the police, were crucial. The delivery of food and hygiene parcels to older people and marginalised communities was carried out in cooperation with local authorities, who also identified new end recipients to replace those no longer receiving support from the programme.

Identifying the needs of the most deprived

An independent working group for the FEAD programme was created, consisting of experts in the field of providing food and/or material aid, who knew the needs and requirements of the end recipients and had experience in providing them with support, complementing national level policies. The working group consisted of various departments of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and

Adapting to COVID-19

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the health information provided to end recipients was changed, including ways to prevent the spread of the virus and how to seek healthcare in case of illness. The target group was also updated on restrictions and adjustments in different countries.

the Family, the Slovak Catholic Charity, the Association of Towns and Municipalities and the Slovak Red Cross. Their meetings focused on issues related to FEAD implementation, such as determination of the target group, composition of food and hygiene packages, distribution methods, etc.

PROJECT EXAMPLE

'Free hot meals'

The project was carried out by different partner organisations, one of them was the Greek Catholic Charity Prešov, who provided warm, healthy meals to homeless individuals to support them during the colder months of the year. One of the key strengths of the project was that the provision of a hot meal served as an entry point for people to access further support services or get involved in other community activities such as the community support centre or the local monthly newspaper distribution. Homeless people started to return to the centre on a regular and even daily basis, allowing social workers to engage with them more consistently and offer support where needed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FEAD in Slovakia <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPageId=3626>
Website of FEAD Slovakia <https://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/rodina-socialna-pomoc/operacny-program-potravinovej-zakladnej-materialnej-pomoci/>

F E A

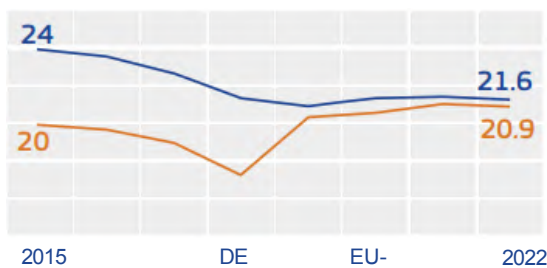
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

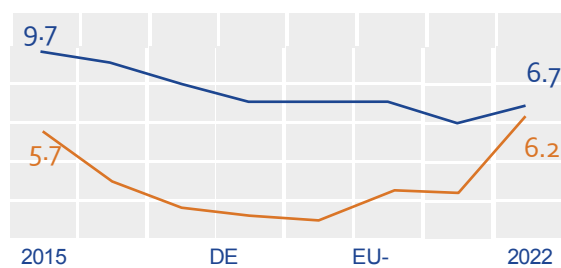
In Germany, FEAD had positive results in terms of improving access to guidance and support services for disadvantaged EU-migrants, improving access of migrant children to offers of early childhood education and social inclusion and improving access to guidance and support for the homeless and people at risk of becoming homeless.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Germany has been relatively stable and was consistently below the EU average between 2015 (24%) and 2022 (21.6%) (years for which data is available).



The proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Germany has been increasing since 2019. However, it was consistently below the EU average between 2015 and 2022 (years for which data is available).

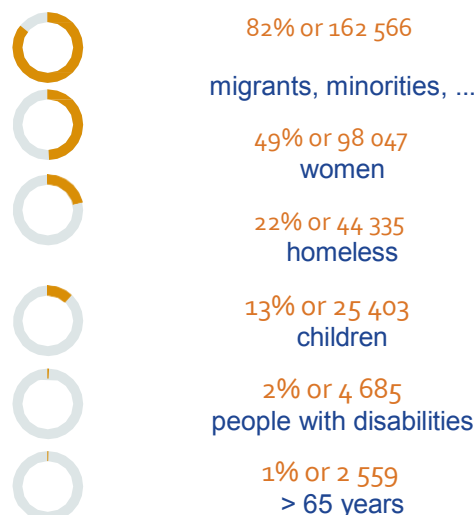
FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 92.8 million total funding
of which **EUR 78.9 million** EU
contribution

FEAD supported

improved access of disadvantaged migrants and their families to existing counselling and support services and improved access of homeless people to existing support

FEAD reached
199 308 people
out of which



*Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Successful awareness raising and inclusion of discriminated target groups

FEAD supported target groups that would otherwise not be reached by existing social services - in particular, the target group of EU migrants at risk of poverty. FEAD contributed to increasing the policy focus on the target group, with a view to their social inclusion. It also helped raise awareness on the topic of discrimination, particularly of Roma and Sinti, through targeted workshops for public and private partner organisations.

Take-up of measures for homeless people exceeded 80%

FEAD made a difference for homeless people or those at risk of losing their homes. The FEAD projects focusing on this target group consistently achieved take-up rates of more than 80%, confirming their effectiveness. Preventative counselling services were particularly successful. These provided beneficiaries with information about the procedures following the termination of a tenancy and identified potential points of intervention. In cases of rent arrears, the project offered

Using FEAD to bridge to existing national services for the most deprived

Germany chose to implement social inclusion measures through FEAD, as a gap in existing services was identified for specific groups of vulnerable individuals. FEAD was centred on empowering individuals to help themselves, with a strong emphasis on providing a bridging function between FEAD and existing services. This was achieved by clearly defining the target groups in cooperation with municipalities, social associations and the Association of Cities and Municipalities, involving all relevant stakeholders.

assistance to improve the financial situation of the individuals. A significant proportion of those seeking help were not in receipt of social benefits (although eligible) and needed assistance with the application process. Support was also provided to help individuals find new accommodation in cases of eviction. FEAD placed a strong emphasis on linking beneficiaries with further support services to achieve this goal.

LESSONS LEARNED

Successful support by addressing language barriers

A success factor of FEAD in Germany was the provision of advice in the mother tongue of the final beneficiaries and very close follow-up, including helping people with completing administrative forms, or physically accompanying them to different service providers in order to obtain services for which they were eligible.

Involvement of migrant organisations ensure effective support

The main focus of FEAD in Germany was on migrants, representing 82% of final beneficiaries. The participation of migrant organisations as partner organisations was therefore important, due to their in-depth knowledge of the target group. Any non-profit organisation could be a FEAD partner organisation, irrespective of whether they were affiliated with the main non-governmental welfare organisations. Involving migrant organisations enhanced knowledge about the self-image, cultural background and needs of the target groups and facilitated access to FEAD support.

Effective composition and active participation of the monitoring committee

The composition and active participation of stakeholders in the FEAD monitoring committee played a pivotal role in the programme's success. The committee's consistent involvement in planning and implementation, along with their structural integration, was a critical factor in addressing the social exclusion of people who

fell through the social security net and were hard to reach. In addition, members of the monitoring committee promoted the FEAD programme and gained support of their respective members, making their involvement a key driver of success.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

'ZuHAuSE (Housing First) II'

The objective of 'ZuHAuSE (Housing First) II' was to support the social inclusion of the most deprived in the city of Gießen. The project was based on outreach street work and social work in the Gießen city centre, co-funded by FEAD, national and regional funds, to help homeless people and those at risk of homelessness. The project linked people with public social support structures in the city, in order to foster their integration. Social workers identified homeless people (and those at risk of homelessness) through outreach activities at various sites and then offered them advice and support in a flexible and unbureaucratic way. If necessary, final beneficiaries were accompanied to existing support services in order to reconnect and gradually reintegrate into society.

INFORMATION



ADDITIONAL

„Social Bridge Hamburg“

The ‘Social Bridge Hamburg’ project supported mobile citizens from EU Member States (primarily Bulgaria, Poland and Romania)

FEAD in Germany

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPagelId=3613> Website of the FEAD Germany <http://www.ehap.bmas.de>

living in precarious conditions in Hamburg, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. It provided practical support and housing at a drop-in centre and put final beneficiaries in touch with suitable support services. The project also established partnerships with organisations providing services to deal with challenges caused by both homelessness and migration.



FEA

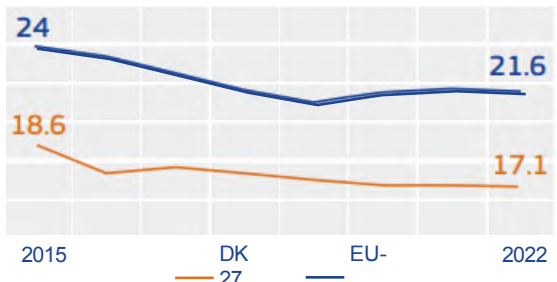
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

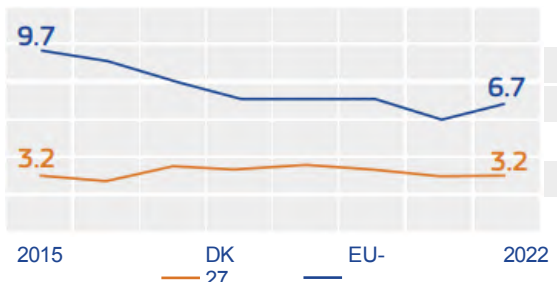
In Denmark, FEAD had positive results in terms of outreach work to attract the most disadvantaged and vulnerable homeless persons who were not using existing social services. It focused on one main target group: homeless people and people at risk of housing exclusion. FEAD was delivered through four partner organisations consisting of social organisations, NGOs and municipal institutions, such as Volunteer Council, The Council for the Socially Vulnerable, European Anti-Poverty Network in Denmark and other relevant authorities.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Denmark has been declining steadily and was consistently below the EU average between 2015 and 2022 (years for which data is available).



The proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Denmark has overall been steady, and was consistently below the EU average between 2015 and 2022 (years for which data is available).

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

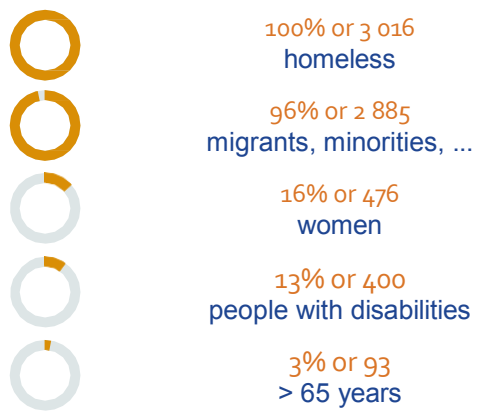
EUR 4.6 million total funding
of which **EUR 3.9 million** EU
contribution

FEAD supported

social inclusion assistance to the most deprived and the homeless with the offer of temporary accommodation and the opportunity to participate in social events

and provided accompanying measures, such as social and leisure activities, educational activities and skills- trainings/programmes and work experience in cooperation with private companies

FEAD reached
3 016 people
out of which



*Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the categories.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

FEAD was a key enabler for four projects in Denmark

notably the project 'Homeless Vulnerable Migrants in Copenhagen', the 'UDENFOR' project, the 'Care Centre Svalegangen' and the 'Step-by-Step Back to Work' project. All projects developed effective solutions to support the target groups and built a bridge to other offers and initiatives.

FEAD contributed to a more stable and healthy life for the homeless

FEAD's specific focus in Denmark was on homeless people who made little or no use of public services, shelters or similar low-threshold services, and had complex social problems, e.g. psychological problems, substance abuse problems, prostitution, pronounced isolation, unmanageable debt and poor health. Final beneficiaries

FEAD supported long-term recovery for hard-to-reach target group

FEAD made a difference for homeless people, by contributing to a positive change in their lives, some in the short term through an improvement in their immediate situation, others in the long-term through housing and a job. The projects reached homeless people that existing initiatives had failed to reach. In this way, the projects also complemented national social inclusion efforts.

had no or very limited experience of the labour market. Through its outreach efforts, social efforts and counselling, FEAD contributed to ensuring that the most socially vulnerable homeless people have a more stable, healthy and safe existence, with a view to lasting improvements in their living situation.

LESSONS LEARNED

FEAD provided stability

All FEAD projects succeeded in meeting the final beneficiaries' basic needs for stability and offered the opportunity to be part of a social community, interact with others and receive advice on how to improve their social situation.

Time as a success factor of the programme

It required time to build relationships between providers of support and final beneficiaries, create a safe space for change, and to be able to follow through on initiatives. Time and experience was also an important factor in successfully addressing the more complex needs of the target group.

Holistic approaches tailored to the needs of the target group

A holistic approach characterised all FEAD projects in Denmark. A comprehensive approach and cross-sectoral collaboration were important factors in helping

the most vulnerable, as they often struggled with multiple different issues, that required support from different stakeholders and social services.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

'Café UDENFOR' and 'Locker Room'

The projects 'Café UDENFOR' and 'Locker Room' targeted marginalised homeless people in Copenhagen and Aarhus through targeted measures that provided them with food, a safe space, and accommodation, as well as support to address their psychological and health-related issues. In Copenhagen, outreach work in the streets was conducted through the 'Locker Room' project. In Aarhus, the 'Café UDENFOR' project offered a meeting point for homeless people and gave them the opportunity to cook and work on practical tasks in the café.

'Kompasset (Compass)'

The 'Kompasset' project was a Copenhagen-based service for unregistered EU migrants experiencing homelessness, founded by the national faith-based organisation Kirkens Korshær (DanChurchSocial). The project was launched in 2016 to address the challenge of an increasing number of migrants experiencing homelessness on the streets of Copenhagen. It offered a combination of services, including in-house programmes, counselling, outreach activities, an emergency night shelter, health work and advocacy work (e.g. filing complaints, campaigning on relevant issues).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FEAD in Denmark

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPagelId=3609> Website of the
FEAD Denmark <http://socialstyrelsen.dk/>

FEA

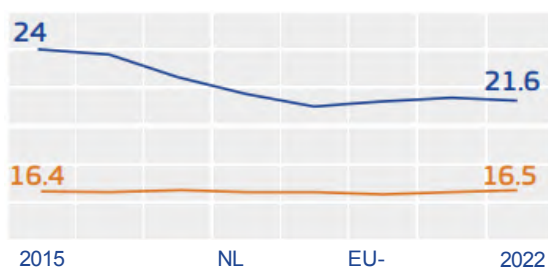
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

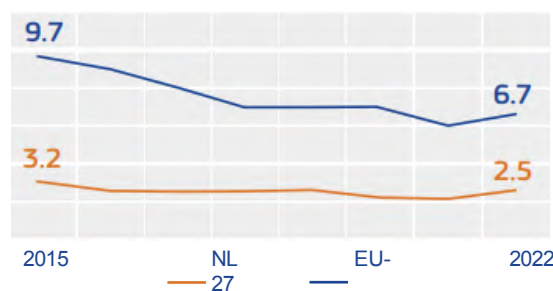
In the Netherlands, FEAD had positive results in terms of providing social participation opportunities for elderly people with a low disposable income. The programme 'Elderly in the neighbourhood' focused exclusively on older people at risk of poverty or isolation in four major cities. FEAD partner organizations included non-profit organizations, municipalities and their respective public libraries, the Legal Aid Board, food banks, and civil society and religious organizations that were active in a specific district or neighbourhood.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Netherlands has been relatively stable. It was consistently below the EU average between 2015 (24%) and 2022 (21.6%) (years in which data is available).



The proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Netherlands has been relatively low. It was consistently below the EU average between 2015 and 2022 (years in which data is available).

FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

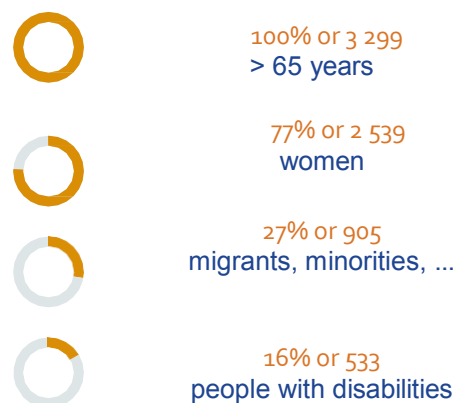
EUR 4.6 million total funding
of which **EUR 3.9 million** EU
contribution

FEAD supported

social inclusion assistance for the most deprived,
consisting of actions to support the elderly with a low
income

and provided accompanying measures, such as
referral to existing local services, and support to improve
their social network and increase their financial, health
and digital skills.

FEAD reached
3 299 people
out of which



* Note that the estimated shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the categories.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Reducing loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic

The programme helped combat loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic. The target group was expanded to include all seniors facing a risk of social exclusion and loneliness. The digital skills acquired by final beneficiaries before the COVID-19 pandemic also allowed them to communicate virtually during the lockdowns.

Reducing social exclusion and enhancing digital skills

FEAD contributed to the prevention and reduction of the social exclusion of pensioners with a low disposable income, through collaboration with public libraries in participating neighbourhoods. The libraries offered opportunities to socialise

Reaching women and migrants

FEAD had the biggest impact on people above age 65, and especially women, who made up the majority of the target group (77%). FEAD actively aimed to reach people with a migration background, who made up one third of final beneficiaries.

through activities such as digital courses, coffee meetings, movie screenings, workshops, and lectures. The project contributed to reducing loneliness and increasing (digital) skills.

LESSONS LEARNED

The importance of personal support

A main success factor of FEAD in the Netherlands were the hostesses, who provided final beneficiaries with personal attention and support and stimulated and facilitated interaction between them. Cooperation with the libraries was also key in the success of FEAD as these were a safe, accessible and low-threshold location in the heart of the community.

Effective adaptation during the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on activities in the libraries in 2020 and 2021, all of which took place in person. The social activities were adapted to take place online or in a

Customised and professional assistance

FEAD provided broad, accessible and customised assistance. This included multilingual consultations, personal referrals, and friendly accompaniment to other support services as needed.

distanced way. New activities directly responding to new needs of the elderly were also introduced, such as teaching them how to make video calls.

PROJECT EXAMPLE

'Ouderen in de wijk'

FEAD in the Netherlands implemented one project: 'Ouderen in de wijk' ('elderly people in the neighbourhood'). This was a collaboration project of public libraries in the four main Dutch cities Utrecht, Amsterdam, the Hague and Rotterdam, with partners such as Mira Media, a foundation that focuses on intercultural dialogue and social cohesion.

Through this project, libraries in the four target areas, together with local partners, supported vulnerable elderly people by encouraging them to become more socially active and to take part in activities. The libraries became community centres for the elderly where they could get together, socialise and engage in activities together.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FEAD in the Netherlands

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPagelId=3622> Website of FEAD Netherlands <https://www.uitvoeringvanbeleidszw.nl/subsidies-en-regelingen/efmb-europees-fonds-voor-meest-behoeftigen/over-europees-fonds-voor-meest-behoeftigen>

F E A

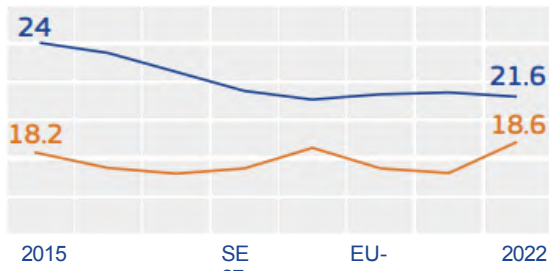
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived 2014-2020

SUMMARY

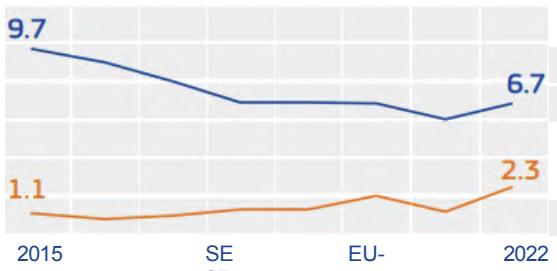
In Sweden, FEAD had positive results in terms of improving the social conditions and the empowerment of socially vulnerable individuals. The target group were disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals, consisting mainly of migrants and people with a foreign background, including non-economically active individuals, many of whom temporarily resided in Sweden, and many of whom were homeless. The Managing Authority was the Swedish ESF Council, who collaborated with NGOs for the delivery of support.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION SEVERE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION



The proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Sweden has remained relatively stable and was consistently below the EU average between 2015 (24%) and 2022 (21.6%) (years for which data is available).



The proportion of people suffering severe material and social deprivation in Sweden has been rising between 2015 and 2022 but was still relatively low when compared to the EU average.

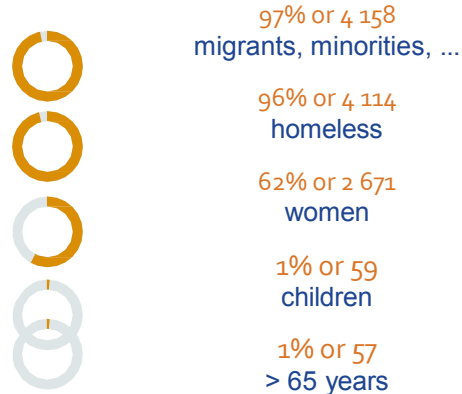
FEAD SUPPORT BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022*

EUR 9.3 million total funding
of which **EUR 7.9 million** EU contribution

FEAD supported

vulnerable groups such as the homeless and disadvantaged newly arrived EU citizens, including preventative actions on health and the provision of basic information regarding Swedish society to ease their integration

FEAD reached
4 290 people
out of which



*Note that the shares or numbers may include the same person in several categories, while not all persons receiving support are necessarily included in any of the categories.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



Increasing the knowledge of the most vulnerable

The activities implemented with FEAD increased the target group's knowledge and understanding of Swedish society. Activities included the provision of information on health, (e.g. nutrition, self-care, and reproductive health) on Swedish culture and society and on rights and obligations of foreign citizens.

Supporting the Swedish social system

FEAD covered a gap in the social support system by addressing socially vulnerable people who could not receive support and assistance under the Swedish Social Service Act (e.g. persons who did not have a residence permit) and who were not covered by

Addressing urgent needs

FEAD made a difference for vulnerable EU citizens in Sweden, primarily by alleviating distress, addressing urgent needs and contributing to increased quality of life and wellbeing. People that were supported were those in a socially vulnerable situation, e.g. homelessness, ill health, lack of access to information and

ESF. Final beneficiaries were mainly EU citizens who came to Sweden on a temporary basis, often without shelter and living on the streets. As they were not eligible for welfare support through national or ESF funds, FEAD helped address their immediate needs.

LESSONS LEARNED



Competent professionals

Central success factors in the implementation of FEAD in Sweden included competent project employees who were successful in building trust with the target group. Needs-based interventions and a high degree of beneficiary involvement in the design of interventions was also crucial.

Building trust

The support provided through FEAD reached a particularly vulnerable group. NGOs were given a major role and projects conducted extensive outreach activities to build trust with the target group,

Clear and focused projects

Another success factor of the programme was that projects were very focused. There was a clear and narrowly defined target group, a project plan, and an administrative system in place. This enabled effective steering of the programme and the projects.

which was aided as well by hiring staff who could speak the languages of end recipients. Building trust was key to being able to subsequently offer additional support.

PROJECT EXAMPLES



'Bättre Hälsa'

The 'Bättre Hälsa' project aimed to help vulnerable, unemployed and homeless women who were European nationals residing in Gothenburg, Malmö or Stockholm and in most cases made their money by begging on the streets. The project organised a range of activities to help women with their personal health. A project leader in each city planned and arranged the activities in collaboration with staff from participating NGOs. The project helped final beneficiaries improve their ability and confidence to make decisions about their health and subsequently access the right services for their needs.

'Pentru Tine - För Dig (For You)'

The 'Pentru Tine - För Dig (For You)' project provided health and social information to mobile EU citizens living in vulnerable conditions in four different cities in Sweden. Through outreach activities, the project focused on the individuals' rights and obligations in Sweden, their home country, and the EU. It targeted non-economically active, vulnerable EU citizens staying temporarily in Sweden, such as those experiencing homelessness, and those without an income who were forced into begging. It contributed to strengthening people's self-empowerment and inclusion in Swedish society.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FEAD in Sweden

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1239&langId=en&intPagelId=3629>

Website of FEAD Sweden <http://www.esf.se/>

ANNEX XII: INSPIRING PRACTICES

A series of inspiring practices were identified during the research for the study, presented in alphabetical order of the Member States concerned. For each inspiring practice, we have defined the aspect of the practice which is considered inspirational and provided a short description. Most of the inspiring practices come from the case studies (see Annex 8) but some have been drawn from other sources of evidence for the study, including the interviews and the analysis of annual implementation reports and national evaluations.

Table A. 99 – Inspiring practices

Country	Inspiring aspect	Description
Austria	Geographical coverage of pick-up points	As explained in an interview, in Austria, the decentralisation of pick-up points fostered the accessibility of FEAD support. Over 100 distribution points were established, with particular efforts made by the Austrian Red Cross and its volunteers to ensure appropriate regional coverage and a clear communication of the opening hours. The success of the implementation of the network of pick-up points is down to the commitment of the partner organisations of FEAD and ensured that recipients all over the country could access FEAD support through the voucher system more easily.
Belgium	Centralisation / cost-effectiveness of delivery	According to case study data (see Annex 8), in 2022, the delivery of FEAD products changed. During the first years of the programme, deliveries were sent directly from the MAs to the beneficiaries. Following the changes, beneficiaries would collect their FEAD orders from four centralised delivery centres across the country. This improved the cost-efficiency of the programme, as it allowed for the MA to reduce the costs of transport, although this resulted in increasing the cost of transport on the side of the beneficiaries. Furthermore, not all beneficiaries had the infrastructure to store food products for extended periods of time, and in large quantities. By centralising the delivery system with the use of four large delivery and storage centres, beneficiaries were no longer required to store large amounts of FEAD products in their own locations (e.g. Red Cross warehouse).
Bulgaria	Monitoring the impact of accompanying measures	The Bulgarian case study (Annex 8) explains that the MA implemented a monitoring system of the usage and immediate results of the accompanying measures in the country. The accompanying measures were delivered either by the Agency for Social Assistance (ASA) local units, the municipalities or other partnering organisations such as NGOs and small businesses. The system involved asking partner organisations to report on the types of accompanying measures provided, as well as specific outputs (e.g., number of participants). The indicators developed under the monitoring system clearly show that the immediate outputs and results of the accompanying measures are tangible. Analysis of the qualitative success of the accompanying measures shows that the individualised approach to every single user of the programme's operations has resulted in positive 'success stories' of people who were first users of the programme's services and later became self-sustainable citizens who were successful at meeting their own needs and providing for their families.
Cyprus	Local partnerships	Interviews with Cypriot stakeholders revealed that the choice to work with schools to distribute the free breakfast programme for deprived students worked very well as schools already knew which students were facing

Country	Inspiring aspect	Description
	with schools to increase the reach of vulnerable groups	economic hardship at home so it was easier to target them. The advisory committees within schools were particularly useful for this.
Denmark	Cooperation between social structures and national authorities	The Care Centre Svalegangen project is highlighted in the Danish case study (Annex 8). The project facilitated good collaboration between existing social and health initiatives. This is thanks to the design of the project with its unique focus on homeless persons recovering after hospitalisation, which required effectively building bridges between support structures that enhance their well-being. This project has been highly successful in bridging the gap between the target group, hospitals, municipalities, and other social services. The project facilitated a transition from medical care to comprehensive support allows residents to access social services, fostering their reintegration into society and ensures a high level of coherence between different stakeholders. The fact that the project succeeded in securing continued national funding, signifies its lasting impact on Denmark's social services landscape.
Estonia	Tailoring support to reach a vulnerable target group	Representatives from the MA and partner organisation explained during the interviews that as part of the design of the FEAD operational programme in Estonia, the Estonian Food Bank (partner organisation), in collaboration with the MA, decided to prepare pecially designed food packages for homeless people which were delivered to homeless shelters. These packages contained FEAD products that did not require cooking facilities to prepare. This meant a particularly vulnerable target group of FEAD end recipients was reached with tailored support to their specific needs.
Estonia	Reducing food waste	The Estonian case study (Annex 8) highlights the fact that donated food was included in FEAD activities in Estonia from 2019 in addition to purchased food, together with a more flexible approach to reach target groups and significantly more frequent food deliveries. The Estonian Food Bank gathered donations from individuals, or via specific donation machines at 14 supermarkets in the country. Furthermore, food with an imminent expiry date was gathered from supermarkets at the end of the day and was delivered within a short period, or deep frozen, if appropriate. Then, one of the local food banks affiliated to the national Estonian Food Bank made up the food parcels containing at least three different product types. In 2022, the Food Bank estimated that it saved 4.3 tonnes of food.
France	Providing opportunities for end recipients to learn skills and access employment in social inclusion actions	A good practice reported by the French Red Cross (and highlighted in the French case study, Annex 8) came from their social inclusion branch called ' Croix-Rouge Insertion '. Croix-Rouge Insertion created 'social inclusion sites' whereby vulnerable groups such as the long-term unemployed, homeless persons, or young people without an income can learn skills related to logistics . Some of these people are employed in the Red Cross's warehouses used during FEAD operations. Thus, on some occasions, people at risk of social exclusion found jobs within the context of FEAD operations.

Country	Inspiring aspect	Description
France	Eligibility criteria	As explained by interviewees for this study, partner organisations in France had a policy of 'unconditional reception' (<i>accueil inconditionnel</i>), which gave the organisations the decision-making power to determine the target groups of FEAD support according to the local context. This meant that the target groups of FEAD were very diverse . It also allowed FEAD support to target different groups as needs changed over time.
Germany	Training to support horizontal integration of anti-discrimination	The German case study (Annex 8) explains that there was active involvement in Germany of migrant and other minorities' self-help organisations. For example, the Hildegard Lagrenne Foundation for the education and inclusion of Roma and Sinti developed workshops to train municipal staff about interculturality so that they can provide more inclusive counselling to FEAD end recipients from these target groups. 15 anti-discrimination workshops were implemented in 2017 and 2018. In many cases, a change of perspective became apparent during the workshops. A short report was prepared in 2019, which led to the development of a guide for partner organisations to prepare and organise anti-discrimination workshops and intercultural training . All FEAD project providers had the opportunity to book such workshops.
Greece	Adjustments to FEAD delivery due to evolving needs	Interview data revealed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, home delivery was introduced in Greece, so that FEAD end recipients who could not leave their home would still receive support without risking their health. This measure continued beyond Covid as it was found to be beneficial for those who are ill, elderly, do not have a car or cannot afford public transport, especially when living in remote areas of the country.
Greece	Accompanying measures	The Greek case study (Annex 8) explains that within the framework of the accompanying measures in Greece a telephone line that provides individualised psychological and social support to end recipients was set up to build mental resilience during the COVID-19 crisis. It was implemented in synergy with an online platform for residents in Western Greece. Callers to the telephone line were informed about the online platform available to the general public but especially targeted at vulnerable groups (e.g. elderly, depressed people, children with autism, patients with chronic diseases). In total, 1,800 end recipients of FEAD support were directed from the support line towards specialised services, such as public social services or local/national NGOs. Both the telephone support line and the online platform reduced the social stigma associated with COVID-19, supported by the fact that these services were open to all and not just to vulnerable people. Another important added value of the online platform was the increased knowledge of end recipients' needs. Daily conversations with experienced telephone agents allowed for links to be created between callers' needs and local public services and NGOs.
Ireland	Reducing food waste	An interviewee explained that the Managing Authority works with a non-profit organisation called Food Cloud, whose main purpose is to reduce food waste nationally. Food Cloud distributes FEAD food to charities, and charities are able to collect both FEAD food and the food collected by Food Cloud to prevent food waste. Food Cloud also makes efforts to raise charities' awareness about food waste, which has been quite successful as a study found that 3/4 of charities involved in FEAD were aware of food waste.

Country	Inspiring aspect	Description
Italy	Adjustments to FEAD due to changing context	According to the Italian case study (Annex 8), adjustments were made by the Italian Managing Authority, who expanded the scope of FEAD support to include recipients that had not been previously assisted by FEAD. This was done by suspending the previous limit of 40% continuous, non-occasional recipients, and to include several additional entities among its partner organisations to distribute food aid to match the increased demand for support. To enable this process, a network of municipal operational centres (<i>Centri Operativi Comunali</i> , COC) was established to replace the organisations that closed during the pandemic and support the collection of food products and their distribution to municipalities and people in need.
Malta	Efficient administrative system	Interview data reveals that the MA introduced a barcode system whereby each entitlement letter that was sent to end recipients had a unique barcode with claimant details. Prior to this system, any misplaced entitlement letters would take about two working days to be reissued. The barcode system helped to quickly identify end recipients even in the case of missing letters and thus reduced delays in end recipients receiving their FEAD support entitlements. It also led to a more effective system of record keeping.
Netherlands	Expanding eligibility criteria	The objective of the Dutch FEAD operations was to reduce the loneliness of elderly people. However, the strict income eligibility criteria left many of the target group out, especially those with a slightly higher income than the threshold allowed, yet still experiencing loneliness and social isolation. This led to some of the partner libraries themselves funding the participation of elderly people who did not meet the FEAD criteria, meaning the needs of this target group were better met and showing the crucial role of local organisations involved in FEAD delivery. This expansion of eligibility criteria meant that more elderly people could be included in the project, combatting loneliness – a condition not just limited to those in poverty - more effectively.
Netherlands	Facilitating access to support through transport passes	Evidence provided in the Dutch case study (Annex 8) shows how collaboration with other initiatives supporting low-income individuals was an effective outreach strategy. The FEAD beneficiary organisations in the Netherlands decided to collaborate with the authorities in charge of distributing city passes – Stadspas (Amsterdam), Rotterdampas (Rotterdam), U-pas (Utrecht), and Ooievaarspas (The Hague) – that were offered by municipalities to increase accessibility to cultural and recreation activities of people with lower incomes or limited resources. Many elderly people that fell within the eligibility criteria of FEAD already received the city passes and were familiar with the concept of the passes and how to use them. This outreach strategy was very effective at reaching the desired the target group and facilitating their transportation to the libraries offering the FEAD support.
Romania	Use of indirect delivery method (e-vouchers)	The Romanian case study (Annex 8) provides detailed evidence on the use of indirect delivery methods in the country. The e-voucher system was piloted in Romania between 2017-2019 to facilitate procurement procedures for food and hygiene packages. The vouchers simplified the process of providing FEAD support by removing the need for distribution and storage costs, but also facilitated accessibility to a more diverse range of products within end recipients' local community. More than 300,000 voucher cards were issued and used, and more than 2,000 POS (Points of Sale) were introduced in rural areas, laying the foundation for a digitisation

Country	Inspiring aspect	Description
		<p>model with immediate positive effects in the local community. At the same time, the programme helped small restaurant owners to maintain their business during the COVID-19 pandemic, by allowing recipients of e-vouchers to purchase food products and meals from them while adhering to social distancing rules. Between 2021 and 2022 over half a million people (521,634) benefitted from the social e-vouchers in Romania (particularly mothers who had given birth since 2022 and their newborns, foreign citizens or stateless persons (from the zone of armed conflict in Ukraine). Of these 221,196 were children under the age of 15, 296,822 persons over the age of 65, 63,713 women, and 5,502 homeless people.</p>
Spain	Full geographical coverage from distributing organisations	<p>According to interview data, the decision to utilise the broad reach of the Red Cross in Spain to have distribution centres and a storage warehouse in each province meant that FEAD support was more easily delivered to all FEAD recipients, even those living in remote areas. All types of social organisations (neighbourhood, cultural, town councils, foundations) were used to ensure delivery to individuals. The Red Cross way of working (as a partner organisation and a distributing organisation) meant that they worked more closely with the target groups and were better able to understand how they could help them beyond food aid and basic material assistance (e.g. women victims of violence, elderly people alone).</p>
Sweden	Identifying target group needs	<p>As explained in the Swedish case study (Annex 8), researcher networks were set up in Sweden for FEAD in order to better identify target groups for the operation programme. The network comprised of The Migration Studies Delegation (Delmi), the Research Council for Health, Work and Welfare (Forte) and the Swedish Research Council. This network provided a platform to produce knowledge regarding the needs of the target group: namely, EU and EEA citizens who are not economically active and who are temporarily in Sweden and not entitled to social assistance benefits under the Social Services Act, other than emergency aid. The researcher network meetings happened twice a year and were identified as an arena for learning between researchers, public officials, and practitioners from the civil society. Representatives of the FEAD OP state that such learning processes are perceived to have contributed to capacity-building of civil society regarding how to provide information to vulnerable individuals outside society, which was highly relevant to FEAD objectives.</p>

Source: Ecorys, 2024, compiled from interviews, case study and focus group data from the study.

ANNEX XIII: FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY REPORT

Below a summary of the key findings that emerged from the discussions during the two focus groups held on 26 June (OP II) and 1 July (OP I) 2024. Section 1 provides a final list of the participants and section 2 summarises the discussions held under each evaluation criterion and section 3 presents the discussion on lessons learned from FEAD implementation.

1. List of participants

Table A. 100 – List of participants in OP I and OP II focus groups

Country	Stakeholder type	Organisation
OP I focus group		
Belgium	Managing Authority	Federal Public Service for Social Integration, fight against Poverty
Bulgaria	Managing Authority	International Cooperation, Programmes and European Integration Directorate, Social Assistance Agency
Czechia	Managing Authority	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
Greece	Managing Authority	National Institute of Labour and Human Resources
Ireland	Partner Organisation	FoodCloud
Latvia	Partner Organisation	Samaritans Association of Latvia
Latvia	Managing Authority	Ministry of Welfare
Lithuania	Managing Authority	Ministry of Social Security and Labour
Malta	Partner Organisation	Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS)
Poland	Managing Authority	Ministry for family and social policy
Romania	Managing Authority	General Directorate European Programmes Human Capital, Ministry of Investments and European Projects
Romania	Managing Authority	General Directorate European Programmes Human Capital, Ministry of Investments and European Projects
Romania	Managing Authority	General Directorate European Programmes Human Capital, Ministry of Investments and European Projects
Slovenia	Managing Authority	Ministry for Labour, Family, Social affairs and Equal opportunities
EU	DG EMPL	Unit D5
EU	DG EMPL	Unit C4
EU	DG EMPL	Unit D1
EU	DG EMPL	Unit B5
EU	DG EMPL	Unit B4
EU	DG EMPL	Unit E5
EU	DG EMPL	Unit G5
EU	DG EMPL	Unit G5
EU	EU NGO	FEBA
EU	EU NGO	FEBA
OP II focus group		
Germany	Managing Authority	Federal Ministry for Employment and Social Affairs

Country	Stakeholder type	Organisation
Germany	Partner Organisation	Hildegard-Lagrenne-Stiftung für Bildung, Inklusion und Teilhabe von Sinti und Roma in Deutschland
Netherlands	Managing Authority	Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment
Netherlands	Managing Authority	Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment
Sweden	Partner Organisation	City of Göteborg
Sweden	Partner Organisation	City of Göteborg
Sweden	Partner Organisation	Forte
EU	DG EMPL	Unit E4
EU	DG EMPL	Unit D3
EU	DG EMPL	Unit G5
EU	DG EMPL	Unit B4

2. Summary of the discussions and lessons learned

The focus groups were structured by evaluation criterion. For each criterion, the key findings were presented by the study team, following which an open discussion ensued, guided by key questions (see Focus Group Agendas in Annex 1).

2.1. Effectiveness

OP I

- Overall, participants agreed with the findings on effectiveness. A **facilitating factor** of effectiveness was the involvement of local authorities and communicating with stakeholders throughout a whole country. Furthermore, through the FEAD Network (later Community), many **mutual learning** meetings were organised for Member States to learn from one another through sharing good practices, which were very helpful in understanding challenges and finding solutions. Participants stressed that it would be helpful to further emphasise the importance of these mutual learning opportunities in the final report.
- **Civil society organisations** have also played an important role in FEAD. This should be further emphasised in the findings, as without civil society, FEAD would not have had the same results. This is particularly due to the trust civil society organisations were able to create working with end recipients who may not trust social services/municipalities.
- A **hindering factor** of effectiveness of the Fund was the lack of clarity among FEAD stakeholders regarding the accompanying measures and how they can be best designed to meet the needs of the target groups. Participants shared the view that this problem remains under the ESF+.
- A specific **hindering factor** in Estonia was the **dependence on the individual capabilities of each municipality** implementing FEAD. This resulted in differences in effectiveness when reaching target groups across the country.
- When looking at the **reach of target groups**, participants stressed that it is important to consider the fact that due to the respect of the dignity of end recipients, specific data regarding gender, ethnicity, religious beliefs, migrant status etc. may not have been recorded, which means that specific vulnerable sub-populations may not have been counted accurately thus skewing the data.
- An **unintended result** of FEAD in Slovenia was that due to the extensive FEAD distribution networks set up in the country, during floods in August 2023, two FEAD POs based in the regions that were cut off due to the flooding were able to help individuals on the spot.
- The **horizontal principles** were generally promoted during the public procurement for food and hygiene items.

- In Czechia, the principles pertaining to **food waste and climate change** were in particular promoted to ensure FEAD products were produced ecologically.
- In Estonia and Ireland, the **food waste principle** was implemented particularly well through the redistribution of surplus food. It would have been nice to see this done more systematically in other countries. As a note – in Ireland the redistribution of food was not funded through FEAD, rather through the existing work of the POs.
- In Greece, the **partnership principle** was well implemented thanks to the close cooperation between FEAD stakeholders. For the respect of dignity of participants, all end recipients continued to receive their food packages during Covid safely. On the principle of non-discrimination, the MA used the national GMI scheme (minimum income) to find participants who are on the verge of poverty; using the GMI also helped them to find harder to reach groups such as Roma and the elderly. To reduce food waste, surplus food went to soup kitchens, also reaching those who did not fall in the GMI criteria.

OP II

- A **facilitating factor** of effectiveness of FEAD which should be further stressed in the final report is the **transnational learning** that could take place. For example, Swedish project organisers visited Bulgaria and Romania in order to understand the needs of the target group of Swedish operations (EU migrants, primarily from these two countries), how to better integrate them into Swedish systems (schools, PES) as well to understand where discrimination exists in the system so that FEAD operations could better address their needs.
- As asserted in the findings, **working with NGOs** was a clear facilitating factor for FEAD as this showed FEAD participants that wider society wanted to help them (NGOs working with local municipalities/government sends a strong signal and facilitated trust).
- A German foundation working against racism and discrimination against Roma highlighted that discrimination is often a cause of poverty, with Roma individuals sometimes forced into begging/structural poverty and exclusion because of how they are regarded in society. FEAD contributed to **breaking down these negative narratives** for groups that are often discriminated against, including Roma and homeless persons. This in turn led to capacity building among the organisations providing FEAD support in terms of understanding how to break down these barriers more effectively and reduce bias.
- Another example of **capacity building** was in the Netherlands where the libraries (beneficiary organisations) reached out to other civil society organisations working with the elderly in order to better understand the needs of the target group.
- Participants held the view that the **implementation of FEAD could have been improved** through a combination of OP I and OP II. This would have facilitated the social inclusion activities under OP II by providing a more holistic package of support. For example, providing healthcare information (in Sweden under OP II) was very effective but hindered by the fact that beneficiaries were not able to practically respond to other health needs of FEAD participants – e.g., to buy/provide a thermos for participants.
- In Germany, the MA highlighted that early implementation of FEAD was complex because it was a new fund separate to ESF. They highlighted that the integration into ESF+ is thus a welcome one.
- The **flexibility of FEAD** was very important to OP II countries, as it allowed them to accompany participants more effectively and as needs changed over time. For example, in Germany, the FEAD operation initially provided counselling for six months but when it emerged that participants required more support, the OP was changed to allow social workers to accompany participants for one year. In the Netherlands too, changes were made to the OP throughout the programming period, and most significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Participants also explained the reason that REACT-EU was not used in their countries for FEAD: **REACT-EU was more of a top up than to be used for new activities**, which is why OP II countries made no use of it, as their FEAD operations were already over by the time the fund was introduced.

2.2. Efficiency

OPI

- **Cost-effectiveness increased over time** on the accompanying measures. There was a divergence of views however on whether additional funds for accompanying measures would have increased or decreased effectiveness and efficiency of the fund. On the one hand, the lack of dedicated funding for accompanying measures led to innovation and collaboration with stakeholders, and discussions on how to increase reach, thus supporting cost-effectiveness. POs also found ways to collaborate with national schemes (e.g. in western Greece) to involve FEAD end recipients alongside other individuals. On the other hand, had there been more funding available for accompanying measures, more people could have been reached or a better-quality end product delivered.
- Through the FEAD Network/Community meetings, Member States had the chance to visit different countries and see how their operational programmes were managed. This allowed for learning on how to deliver operations cost-effectively.
- A Maltese representative highlighted the importance of acknowledging that HR duties were always assigned to POs. Therefore, the cost-effectiveness calculations do not take into account the resources that POs provide in terms of staffing to run the FEAD programme. In addition, while FEAD funds to POs are allocated for procurement and transportation, storage often remains to be financed by POs themselves, thus reducing costs at the level of the fund.
- There were mixed views on the cost-effectiveness of **public procurement**. For food delivery, fixed rates seemed more reliable than public procurement. In the case of Estonia, it could have been useful to also use these fixed rates for donated food delivery. Furthermore, public procurement has been found to cause delays. However, it was confirmed that the final prices are lower than those in shops – increasing efficiency of FEAD.
- Participants held the view that the flat rates that civil society organisations received under FEAD were not high enough. Up to 7% would be needed to cover costs including logistics.
- On vouchers, the question was raised as to whether the amount individuals can purchase using vouchers is in fact less than the food received through public procurement procedures (given the discounts available), as it is unclear if such comparisons also take into account transport costs and storage.
- A wider discussion on **vouchers** led to differing views:
 - It was suggested that the use of vouchers can cause **stigma** as everyone in a supermarket will recognise that the individual is using a voucher to purchase their food products. Another participant disagreed stating that feedback from monitoring committees (in Estonia) is very positive as end recipients are able to **choose the food products** they want and need themselves.
 - MAs present in the meeting shared that they find vouchers **less bureaucratic** to implement, resulting in a lower administrative burden. Furthermore, due to the **costs associated with implementation** for food banks, some have turned to private companies to do this for them, thus leading to private companies profiting over food aid delivery.
 - However, vouchers **remove human interaction** thus shortening the long-term impact of food and basic material aid in terms of building trust and bringing end recipients into other social inclusion measures.
 - Ultimately, **voucher schemes and their effectiveness depend on how the scheme is implemented**. In Lithuania, the voucher is a card and it allows end recipients the freedom to buy the food that they want. During the 2014-2020 programming period, the MA received negative feedback from the target group regarding the contents of the food package. Vouchers also help with reducing food waste.
- In terms of **monitoring and reporting**, the discussion highlighted that data collection and operating in the interests of audits can be problematic for POs as it represents a high administrative burden and can

also reduce trust among end recipients, as well as reduce flexibility when catering to the specific needs of end recipients.

- There was also gold-plating because of national audits (collection of end recipient signatures), which was burdensome. However, in Greece, these national audit requirements led to the creation of a digital tool to collect these signatures (innovation) and the result of this is Greece now having very good and high-quality monitoring data.

OP II

- Regarding **cost-effectiveness**, participants from Denmark highlighted that a lot could be done with little funding to help EU migrants find their way in the Danish system. This was aided by the fact that a new system did not need to be created, rather participants were directed towards the national system.
- In terms of the use of **volunteers** as a factor for increasing efficiency, for OP II countries volunteers were not crucial/not used in operations as widely as in OP I. Neither Germany, the Netherlands nor Sweden used volunteers extensively, instead delivering FEAD through paid staff, i.e., social workers, library employees or staff of NGOs or the City, respectively. However, in some Swedish operations and in Denmark, volunteers were used which did help the cost-effectiveness of FEAD. It was at times difficult to find them, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Regarding **administrative burden**, this was reduced in the Netherlands by introducing a standardised end user survey at the start of participation and then at the end of participation in the FEAD project (typically after a year), so they could monitor exactly who was participating and what their experience of the FEAD support was.
- In the Netherlands, despite the use of flat rates, beneficiaries still experienced a high level of administrative burden.
- In Sweden, the administrative burden was manageable, and this helped towards **increasing trust** with participants too as there was no requirement to ask participants to sign a document every time they received support which can decrease trust. Furthermore, having staff who could speak Romanian was very helpful in building trust too.
- An **initial hindering factor** of FEAD at the start of the programming period was the fact it was not included under the Common Provisions Regulation of the EU, meaning that simplified cost options were not possible at first. This led to many delays on expenditure declarations which delayed reimbursement processes. This was then changed, making the funding much easier to use.
- During the FEAD Network/Community meetings, administrative burden was raised often by many different countries, however the **bigger issue at hand was the reimbursement of costs** which sometimes excluded or disadvantaged smaller organisations wanting to run FEAD projects (in Germany).
- Another factor **hindering efficiency was the challenge of finding qualified people** to deliver FEAD support. In some cases, individuals from the target groups provided FEAD support themselves, but it was not always easy to recognise their qualifications which presented an additional administrative burden.
- A **facilitating factor** of efficiency was the fact that municipalities and social welfare organisations were cooperating from the start, which led to capacity building.

2.3. Coherence

OP I

- Overall, there were few comments on the findings on coherence as **participants largely agreed** with them.
- An example of coherence with national measures can be seen in Greece, where there was a **high degree of complementarity** with the accompanying measures through the GMI (national scheme) with which

they are connected (income support, connection with social inclusion services, activation services for integration into the labour market).

- Participants also commented on the relative ease of integration of FEAD into the current ESF+ programme.
- Participants called for additional recognition of the work carried out by volunteers and the role this has played in encouraging **active collaboration of different organisations** at the national level. This collaboration has resulted in better **complementarity** between different EU funded projects in the social policy arena (including ESF).

OP II

- Discussions on coherence focused on the ESF+. There were different views on whether it has been positive to move FEAD under the **ESF+** in the 2021-2027 programming period.
 - In Sweden, participants highlighted that the merger of FEAD into ESF+ means there is no dedicated ESF+ funding to reach the poorest people in society or EU migrants. This is linked to national decisions not to include these target groups in the new programme (EU migrants are now ineligible). Without FEAD, there is no EU money to reach these target groups, with all the work now done by NGOs.
 - In Germany, from the perspective of the MA, FEAD-type support has been enhanced under ESF+. People working on the provision of food and basic material assistance under ESF+ (specific objective m) now have much more contact with colleagues working on mainstream ESF+ operations and are learning from each other about how to improve interaction with participants on the ground. EU migrants are still a target group of ESF+ in Germany, with this in part the result of strong community level involvement in ESF+ in Germany.

2.4. Relevance

OP I

- FEAD has been **very relevant to the needs of end recipients**, and this has largely been facilitated by the trust that has been created by those working on the ground.
- There was some discussion about the relevance of income-based **eligibility criteria**:
 - In Malta, the eligibility criteria were very strict and clearly defined and if an individual fell even marginally outside these parameters, they were excluded from FEAD support. This also meant that new cohorts of people who may have been in need of FEAD support later in the FEAD programme were not supported due to the pre-defined nature of the criteria (e.g., after Covid- 19, or those leaving prison). It must be noted, however, that national food distribution structures aimed to capture a much wider group.
 - In Czechia, it was felt that strict criteria would make it more difficult to reach the most vulnerable. Therefore, they allowed POs to determine the target groups at the local level which helped to reach homeless people very well in the country.
 - Belgium also had an eligibility threshold, but an element of flexibility was later introduced to account for those who were just above the poverty line by using a means tested system (“available income”).
- An **additional target group** that emerged following the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis has been students.

OP II

- In general, Member States agreed with the findings.

- A factor supporting relevance was gaining feedback from beneficiaries and participants themselves.
 - In the Netherlands, income-based eligibility criteria were used initially. However, following feedback from beneficiary organisations that many elderly people were excluded from FEAD support as a result of the criteria, criteria were made more flexible: libraries administering the support were able to accept all individuals that wanted to join the FEAD activities.
- In Sweden (specifically, City of Göteborg), a workshop was held with participants between the first and second round of FEAD in order to gather their feedback and adjust FEAD support better to their needs. Changes implemented as a result of this were involving men in health discussion sessions previously targeted only towards women and setting up a form of analogue Facebook.
- Another factor supporting relevance was using social workers/staff that could speak the language of the target group. In Germany, the MA found using workers who could speak the native language of the participants and streetworkers helped ensure the actions were relevant to their needs and created trust.
- In the future, relevance could be increased by including more low threshold labour market entry points.
- ESF+ still seems to be relevant to the changes seen in terms of demography and climate change.

2.5. EU added value

OP I

- The key element of added value provided by FEAD was **consistency**. FEAD provided long life products regularly and meant that food banks did not have to rely on the fluctuations of supermarket donations. In Ireland, for example, FEAD provided around 50% of food bank supply. From the end recipient perspective, it meant they could come every fortnight and receive the same items that they needed.
- It was however noted that the regularity of delivery of FEAD products also came with the **burden of storage**.
- In Czechia, the **content of the food packages** was more important than the volume of food received in terms of reaching the target groups, showing the importance of tailoring packages to the needs of specific groups.
- Regarding **scope effects**, in Ireland, new target groups who they had not previously been supported by food distribution programmes came to the attention of FEAD providers and were able to receive FEAD support.
- In terms of **role effects**, in Greece, the FEAD programme was the first time food aid and basic material assistance had been targeted towards the most deprived and children in an organised way throughout the whole country. Regional schemes did exist, but this national level of organisation was new.

OP II

- There was overall agreement on the **volume and scope effects** findings.
- On the **role effects**, the Netherlands were unsure that there was much innovation in the activities before the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, new activities were created out of necessity.
- Given the lack of focus on the FEAD target groups by local government (Sweden), it was crucial to have EU funding in order to **support EU migrants more systematically** beyond the work done by NGOs.

2.6. Visibility

OP I

- More **social marketing** could be helpful (radio, TV) as end recipients often do not read newspapers.
- Some examples of visibility actions included:
 - In Malta, they tend to use word of mouth as an effective means of promotion about FEAD and its activities. There are no EU flags to reduce stigmatisation.
 - In Slovenia, the MA organised specific events to explain to people about the FEAD programming periods, and the importance of volunteers in FEAD support. They also provided booklets about social rights and services to end recipients at the food banks.

OP II

- The finding that the **general public** was not made very aware of FEAD activities in OP II countries was contested. In the Netherlands, large posters about the FEAD support for the elderly were put up in front of libraries that were visible to everyone. In Germany, public relations were left to the project leaders.
- More **targeted visibility actions** include radio campaigns and YouTube videos to attract participants in the Netherlands
- Regarding the visibility of FEAD more generally, it is important to note that FEAD was built bottom-up and the POs were responsible for the visibility actions. It was remarked that posters may not have been very useful. In Germany there were some press releases, but nothing was visible in the newspapers or on the radio.
- A discussion also took place around the fact that participants of FEAD in OP II countries were often the subject of discrimination in the media/in society – particularly in the case of migrants targeted in Denmark, Germany and Sweden. This could thus explain the lower level of visibility given to the fund, in light of the need to protect participants from further discrimination/stigmatisation.

3. Lessons learned

Following the discussions by evaluation criterion, participants were asked to provide any final views on the lessons learned from FEAD to close the focus group. These are summarised in the section that follows.

OP I

- It would be useful in the future to do a **cost analysis of vouchers**, as costs of procurement in comparison to the costs of implementation of vouchers may not have been done before.
- Complementarity between different funds is difficult to achieve and it would be helpful to **increase synergies between other measures that aim to help those in situations of poverty**, as food aid is not enough. Now, without a dedicated fund for food aid (due to FEAD being merged into ESF+), this stable source of food for food banks is not guaranteed and other forms of food aid (donations) are diminishing, hence the need for cooperation on other poverty reduction measures.
- A big strength of FEAD was communication and the **FEAD Network/community meetings**. This has now been lost with some participants highlighting a sense of exclusion from the ESF+ meetings of those working on social inclusion topics.

OP II

- FEAD can help create awareness of those in need and who they really are (reducing negative stereotypes).
- It is important to be able to use EU money on social inclusion in a **flexible** way to meet the needs of the target groups best.
- Efforts should be made to make FEAD operations **sustainable** by for example providing municipalities with the resources and support to continue the work done by FEAD.

- To implement FEAD OP II projects efficiently, **trust** among the participants is crucial (e.g., importance of social workers/volunteers speaking the mother tongue of participants).
- A good tradition of cooperation between state and non-state actors has been very important to the success of FEAD. A legal obligation to do this can support this, but it must also be backed up by willingness and interest of the organisations involved.
- The **integration of FEAD into the ESF+** both enhances the possibilities of a more integrated low threshold support, as well as poses a risk to leaving out specific target groups.
- National policy rather than the EU decision to integrate FEAD under ESF+ may prevent the most vulnerable target groups from being targeted, showing the importance of national politics in the administration of EU funds as well.