



**COHESIFY**

The impact of EU Cohesion Policy  
on European Identification

# Cohesion policy implementation, performance and communication

## CASTILLA Y LEÓN (SPAIN)

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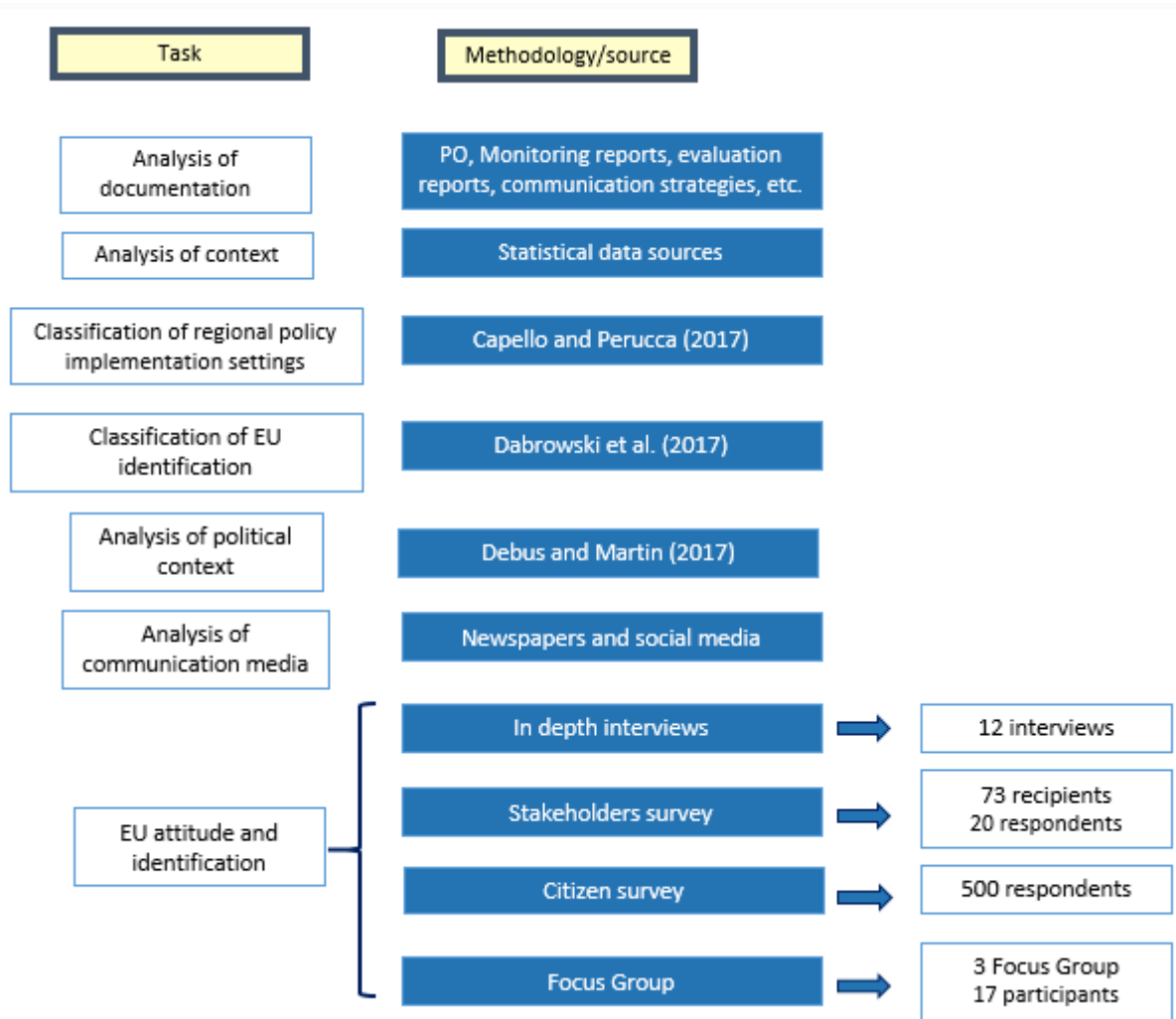
## 1. Introduction

Castilla y León is the largest autonomous community in Spain, with an area of 94,226 km<sup>2</sup> (even larger than the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg combined), and the sixth largest population despite having only 2,519,875 inhabitants. It is made up of 9 provinces with administrative capital in Valladolid.

The objective of this case study report is to present evidence collected through field work in Castilla y León. The work performed includes the following tasks:

- Analysis of existing documentation related to the ERDF and ESF Operational Programmes, as well as in their monitoring reports, evaluations, communication strategies and additional documentation. This detailed analysis has been carried out for both 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 periods.
- Analysis of the region's context information based on published and available statistics.
- Review of the classification of regional policy implementation settings carried out by Capello and Perucca (2017) in the framework of the Cohesify project.
- Classification of the region on the basis of the EU identification published in Dabrowski et al. (2017) and also developed within the framework of the Cohesify Project.
- Study of the political context based on the analysis of the national and subnational party manifestos made by Debus and Martin (2017).
- Analysis of the media in order to identify the importance that these communication tools give to European intervention in the region.
- In-depth interviews with members of the Funds Management Authorities, members of the Monitoring Committee, local economic and social partners as well as representatives of the local, regional and national government. These interviews were conducted in the summer of 2017.
- Survey of stakeholders on operational programmes and the implementation of European Funds in Castilla y León. A survey was sent to all members of the Monitoring Committees, local authorities, social, environmental and economic agents and other entities related to the European Funds in Castilla y León.
- Citizens' survey: a telephone survey was carried out among 500 citizens of Castile and Leon in order to study their identity with regard to the European Union and their knowledge of Cohesion Policy and its contribution to regional development.
- Focus group: 3 working groups with citizens were held. These working groups, made up of 5 to 8 people, discussed issues of awareness of the European Funds.

Figure 1. Structure of the work





## 2. Context and background

The Cohesify Project has analysed important aspects of the context surrounding each region. In the following sections, the region of Castilla y León is described in the current political, economic and social context.

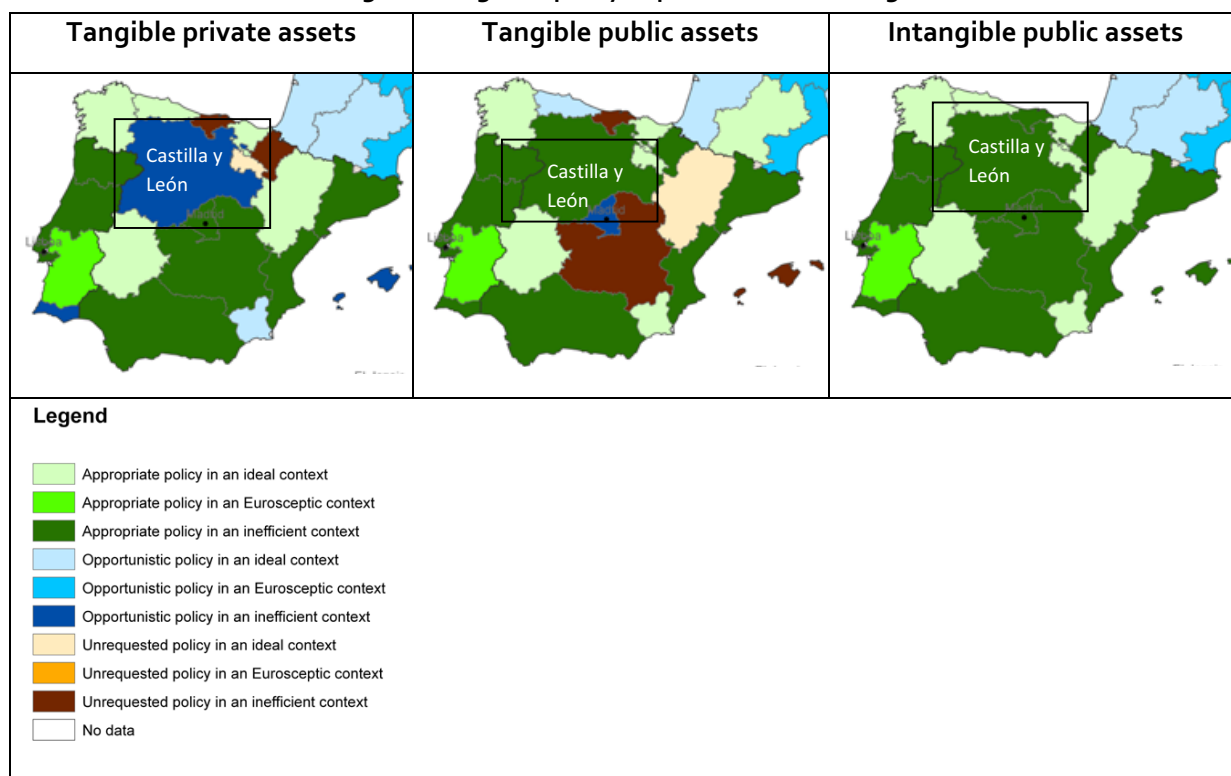
### 2.1 EU attitudes and identity

The goal of the analysis done in the WP2 of the Cohesify project is therefore to build a conceptual and empirical tool to investigate the relationship between CP and the citizens' support to EU values and institutions. In order to achieve this objective, we defined the policy implementation settings on two main dimensions, keeping into account both real and perceived needs and institutional contexts of EU regions.

The study identified for Castilla y León a situation of association between needs and institutional efficiency differentiated according to the type of support policies:

- Tangible private assets (e. g. business support): Opportunistic policy in an inefficient context.
- Tangible public assets (e.g., infrastructure): Policy appropriate in an inefficient context.
- Intangible public assets (e.g., social policies): Policy appropriate in an inefficient context.

Figure 2. Regional policy implementation settings



Source: WP2: Output 2.2

Understanding the definition of scenarios as

- Appropriate policy: this situation occurs when the regions shows a clear objective need in a certain policy field, irrespective of the perceived needs of the resident population. Citizens,

in fact, can perceive these policies as urgent or not but, if these actions are among the real needs of the region, their outcome will be positively evaluated by the population, even if in the beginning they were not considering these issues as priorities. Empirically, it is captured by a level of exposure higher than the EU average;

- Opportunistic policy: this case occurs whenever a perceived need arises in policy fields where the region does not have an objective need. In other words, policies of a certain kind are not necessary but the resident population requests them. The perceived impact of these kinds of actions (and as a consequence their indirect effect on EU identity) will be lower than in the previous case, since the change in social welfare generated by their implementation will be lower than what expected. Empirically, this situation takes place when the exposure is lower than the EU average, while the perceived desirability is higher.

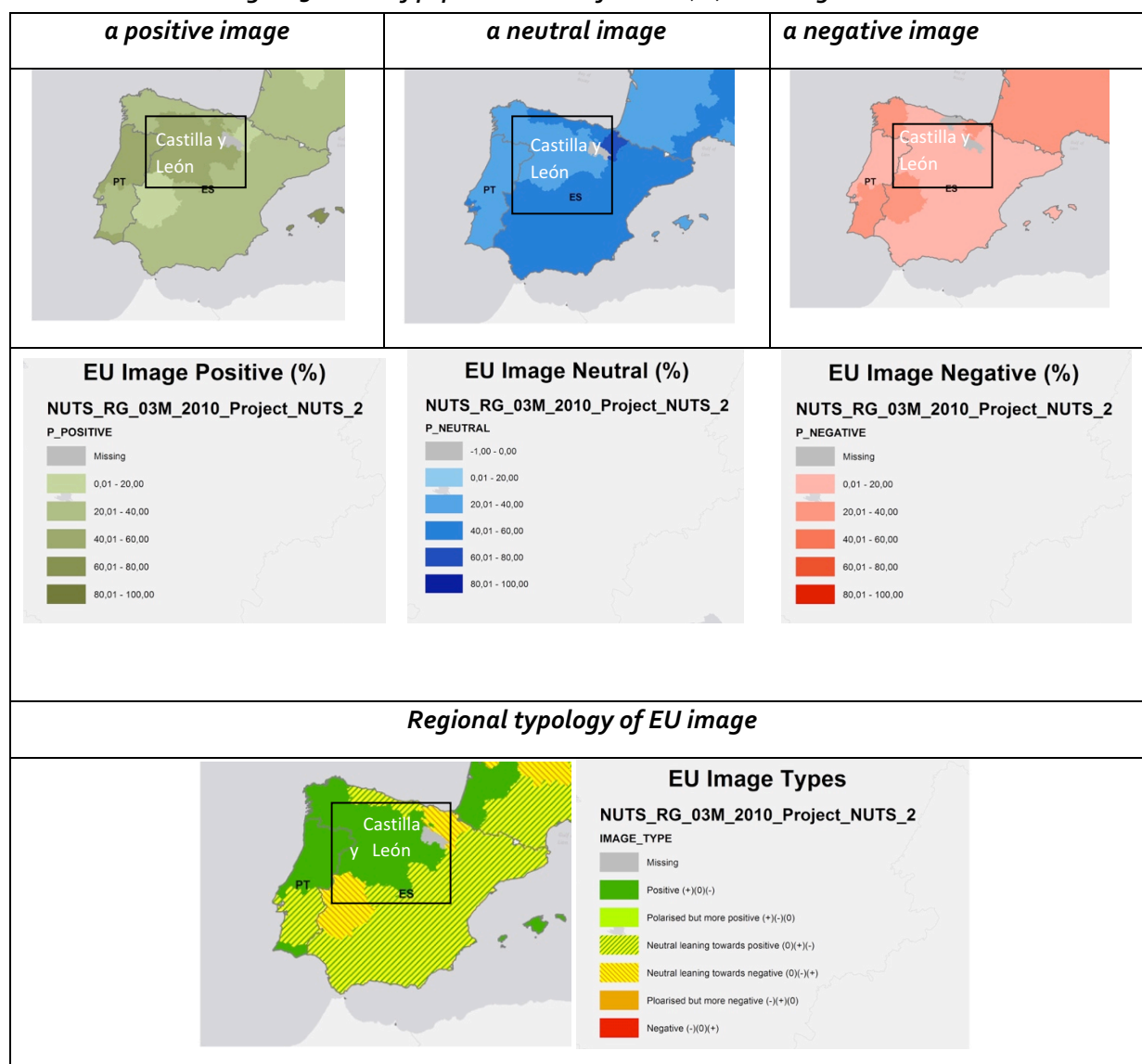
These situations, defined on the basis of sensitivity to Cohesion Policy, are combined with the main typology of institutional context provided by the analysis for Castilla y León:

- Inefficient context: in this context local governments are not particularly efficient. At the same time, their degree of EU acceptance can be either high or low. The assumption is that, in presence of inefficient local institutions, the support to the EU does not matter in explaining the impact of CP implementation on citizens' perceptions. Empirically, this situation is captured by a level of institutional efficiency lower than the EU average.

Once the main scenario on which public policies operate has been presented, **the identification of the EU in the region** under study has been analysed. Within the framework of the Cohesify project, an attempt has been made to review the territorial characteristics related to EU identities and to develop a territorial typology.

In the Eurobarometer surveys, interviewees are asked (in their local language) to express their current general opinion about EU image in terms of one of the following five options: (i) very positive; (ii) fairly positive; (iii) neutral; (iv) fairly negative; or (v) very negative. Respondents from northern Italy, Sicily, northern Portugal and part of north-west Spain (Castilla y León) consider that the EU has a more positive image. Some substantial variations in opinions about EU image can be seen across countries such as Germany and Spain. In Spain, a large proportion of survey respondents in Castilla y León consider the EU image to be positive especially when compared to respondents from neighbouring Extremadura where much fewer respondents share a similarly positive view about the EU's image.

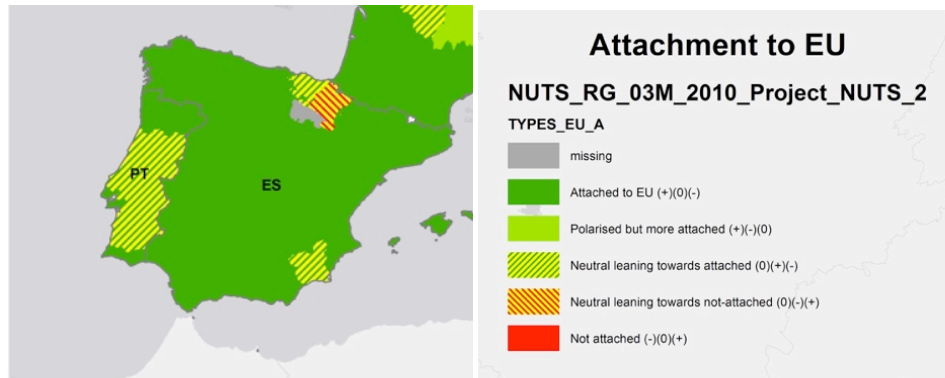
**Figure 3. Share of population with of the EU (%) at the regional level**



Source: WP2: Output 2.4

Furthermore, in Eurobarometer surveys, interviewees are invited to express their general opinion about their attachment to the European Union in terms of one of the following four options: (i) very attached; (ii) fairly attached; (iii) not very attached; and (iv) not at all attached. In this sense, Castilla y León is one of the regions in which a greater number of respondents feel attached to the EU. In general, in Spain, high proportions of respondents in much of the country feel attached to the EU (either very or fairly attached) but respondents in Comunidad Foral de Navarra and País Vasco do not share this level of attachment.

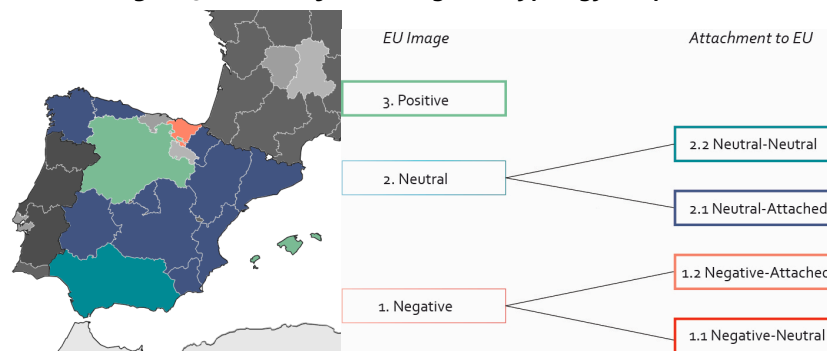
**Figure 4. Regional typology of attachment to the EU**



Source: WP2: Output 2.4

According to the two variables analysed (Figure 2 and 3), Castilla y León is included in the group of regions considered, due to its identification of the EU as positive. On average 47% of respondents declaring positive image of the EU, 39% neutral, and only 9% negative and on average 63% of respondents declaring being attached to the EU, 24% not very attached, and 9% not at all attached. This type corresponds to 13.6% of the overall sample.

**Figure 5. EU identification regional typology in Spain**



Source: WP2: Output 2.4

## 2.2 Political context

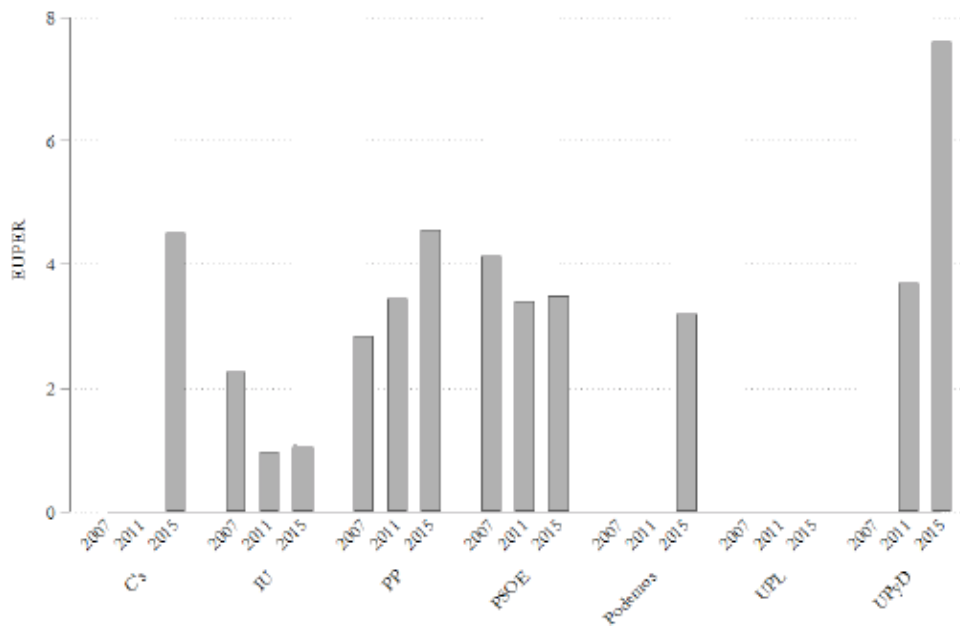
Sub-national parties in Castilla y León also adopt pro-EU positions and deviate to some extent from national parties' policy positions (see Table 1). However, parties in Castilla y León mention European issues to a lesser extent in their regional election manifestos than in other Spanish regions (see Figure 5)—with the UPL in 2011 not mentioning the EU at all—and with a clear focus on EU and European topics in general. EU Cohesion policy is not important to parties running for elections in Castilla y León (see Figure 6).

**Table 1. Regional party positions on European integration and EU Cohesion policy in Castilla y León**

Party	Election year	Policy positions	
		(a) European integration	(b) Cohesion policy
C's	2007	—	—
	2011	—	—
	2015	6.61	6.74
UPL	2007	—	—
	2011	4.98	5.66
	2015	—	—
IU	2007	4.81	6.69
	2011	4.19	6.78
	2015	5.15	6.78
PP	2007	7.08	6.58
	2011	6.77	6.72
	2015	7.19	6.84
PSOE	2007	5.86	6.70
	2011	6.38	6.73
	2015	6.18	6.85
UPyD	2007	—	—
	2011	5.58	6.51
	2015	6.03	6.74
Podemos	2007	—	—
	2011	—	—
	2015	5.24	6.85

Source: WP2: Output 2.5

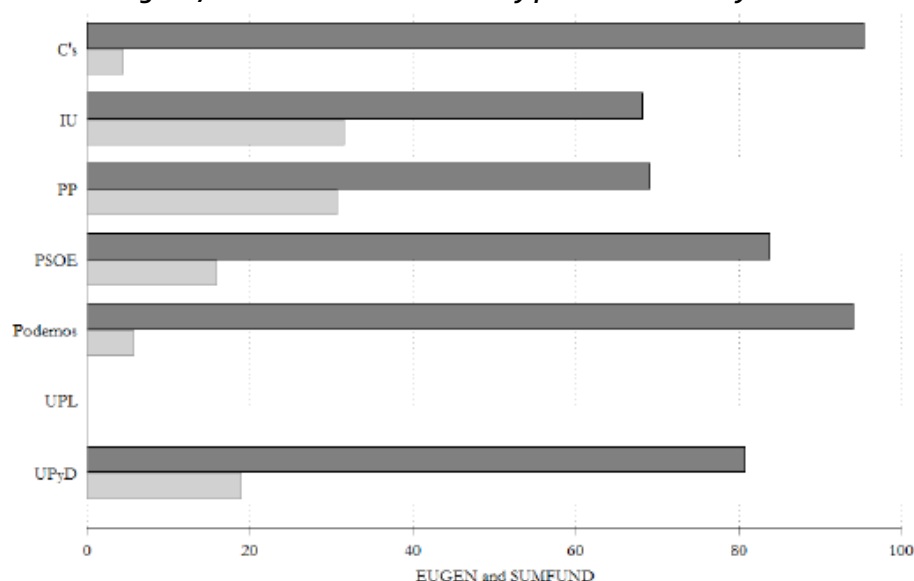
**Figure 6. EUPER<sub>1</sub> by parties by election year in Castilla y León**



Source: WP2: Output 2.5

<sup>1</sup> Percentage of a party's manifesto devoted to European issues and CP (EUPER),

**Figure 7. EUGEN<sup>2</sup> and SUMFUND<sup>3</sup> by parties in Castilla y León**



Source: WP2: Output 2.5

## 2.3 Regional and local governance

In view of the development of the programming periods for the European Funds 2007-2013 and the 2014-2020 period, an extensive diagnostic analysis was carried out in Castilla y León to identify the needs for intervention in the region. Some of the main conclusions reached at that time, which have guided the programming of actions, are then incorporated according to different areas of analysis and in a comparative manner between the two periods. This comparison allows us to know the evolution of the problems to be addressed then and now. Statistical data has also been updated, as from 2013, when the programming of the EIE 2014-2020 Funds began, there has been a change of trend in some of the main indicators that define the regional socio-economic situation.

### Demographic situation

In Castilla y León there is a distribution of the population with important differences between the different 9 provinces, with a very low population density, a regressive population pyramid and a high rate of ageing.

Added to this is a high rate of dependent population, being the dependency rate (population under 16 years of age or over 64 among the population aged 16 to 64) of 60.09% in 2017.

This situation, already reflected in the 2007-2014 programming period, is still present in the current 2014-2020, and the continued loss of population in Castilla y León is evident.

<sup>2</sup> Percentage of words a party devotes to EU/Europe in general (EUGEN)

<sup>3</sup> Percentage of words a party devotes to EU and CP funding in particular (SUMFUND),



Basic info	Castilla y León	Spain	Unit
Population [2008]	2541.7	45668.9	thous.
Population [2014]	2495.7	46512.2	thous.

Source: WP3. EUOREG

These problems have been identified as follows in the two periods:

Identified weaknesses (2007-2013)	Identified weaknesses (2014-2020)
A high population ageing rate entailing an increase in public expenditure and the need to pay special attention to strengthening labour and social policies adapted to the characteristics of this group.	Very unequal distribution of the population
Depopulation of rural areas and abandonment of agricultural and livestock farms, with the consequent isolation of smaller nuclei. Lack of generational relief in agricultural and livestock activities.	Population density is the second lowest in the state with an unequal demographic distribution and an ageing population.
	Castilla y León also presents a high degree of ageing: 23% of the population is over 65 years old.

Source: RegioPlus from the OP

The following objectives were defined in the two periods In order to address the problems identified,

Identified needs/objectives (2007-2013)	Identified needs/objectives (2014-2020)
Achieve sustainable local development that leads to greater economic, territorial and social cohesion, taking into account the special circumstances of the population (ageing of the population, depopulation of the territory, difficulties of access to training and new technologies, etc.).	Address demographic change through measures to boost employment and increase productivity and economic performance through investment in information and communication technologies, research and innovation.

Source: RegioPlus from the OP

## Economic macro

The evolution of GDP in Castilla y León has remained above the national total, with almost parallel growth, except in the years 2012 and 2013 which contracted from 1.1% to -2.1% to be below the national value for the first time in the last five years. From 2014 onwards, GDP growth is positive again, although slightly below the national value.

In general, the fall in activity in 2013 was higher than expected, with Castilla y León being cited as the cause of the slower than expected progress in the fiscal consolidation process in the region, but also the lower dynamism of exports of goods, affected by the recession in Europe and Spain and sectoral concentration.

GDP in the period 2007-2013 fell steadily as a result of the economic crisis. This evolution has conditioned the design of actions in the new programming period.

Basic info	Castilla y León	Spain	Unit
GDP [2008]	57092	1116207	mIn EUR
GDP [2014]	52348	1041160	mIn EUR

Source: WP3. EUROREG

The economic problems existing in the Castilian-Leonese production sector have been identified as follows in the two periods:

Identified weaknesses (2007-2013)	Identified weaknesses (2014-2020)
Productive fabric with a high percentage of SMEs and micro-SMEs, with a predominance of the services sector in activities aimed at final consumption.	Economy dependent on the services and trade sector

Source: RegioPlus from the OP

The following objectives were defined in the two periods In order to address the problems identified:

Identified needs/objectives (2007-2013)	Identified needs/objectives (2014-2020)
To promote and revitalise the regional economy of Castilla y León and increase the competitiveness of the Castilian and Leonese business fabric.	To favour the sustainability of companies, especially those with a high innovative component and the creation of new companies, both by developing investment projects and facilitating access to financing for such projects.

Source: RegioPlus from the OP

In 2013 the contraction of the regional economy continued, albeit at a lower intensity than in 2012 as a result of the absorption of the imbalances accumulated before the crisis, but also due to a weaker growth environment in the main European partners (more specifically in France, the main destination of regional car exports), the acceleration of the process of fiscal adjustment in the last half of the previous year and the continued fragmentation observed in the European financial system.

Castilla y León's productive structure is clearly dominated by the services sector in 2015 (68.9%), followed by Industry (21%), Construction (6.4%) and finally the primary sector. (3.8%).

As for Castilla y León's foreign trade, it has evolved positively over the years, and recently, according to data from the Ministry of Economy and Industry as the leader in the increase in exports at national level in 2016.

### **Labour market and other social aspects**

With regard to the active population and activity rate, in a dynamic clearly marked by the episode of economic crisis at regional, state and European level, the evolution of the active population in Castilla y León, although it has been unequal, has had its best data in 2012 and 2016. On the other hand, the activity rate of the population aged 16 and over stands at 55.10% in Castilla y León in 2016.

By sector of activity, 69.3% of the active population belongs to the service sector (INE 2016), logically given the importance of this sector in the economy. Far behind, a percentage of 17.0% belongs to industry, followed by 7.3% to agriculture and another 6.5% to construction.

With respect to the employed population and employment rate, the difference in employment rates between men and women in Castilla y León is considerable, 12.59 points (EPA, INE 2016), being 56.2% for women and 68.79% for men. The evolution of the employment rate in recent years until 2013 shows a decline from 65.87% in 2007 to 57.59% in 2013. From that date, the trend changes, with 62.77% in 2016.

Basic info	Castilla y León	Spain	Unit
Employment rate 16 to 64 years of age [2008]	64.99	65.44	%
Employment rate 16 to 64 years of age [2014]	58.74	56.78	%
Unemployment rate from 16 to 64 years old [2008]	9.68	11.31	%
Unemployment rate from 16 to 64 years old [2014]	20.86	24.56	%
Risk-of-poverty rate [2008]	17.5	19.8	%
Risk-of-poverty rate [2014]	20.4	22.2	%

Source: RegioPlus from INE. 2016

Data on the unemployed population and unemployment rate show a decline since 2014, occurring in both men and women. In 2016 the unemployment rate in Castilla y León stands at 16.00%, 14.32% for men and 18.02% for women.

The diagnosis of the situation of poverty and social exclusion indicates that in 2016 the rate of risk of poverty is 17.7%.

The immigrant population, which on 1 January 2017 accounted for 5.26% of the total in Castilla y León (Padrón, INE 2016), has dropped considerably since 2010 (1.36 percentage points).

The problems existing at employment and social level have been identified as follows in the two periods:

Identified weaknesses (2007-2013)	Identified weaknesses (2014-2020)
Employment rate away from the Lisbon objectives with gender imbalances.	High unemployment rate
	20.8% of the population is at risk of poverty or social exclusion

Source: RegioPlus from the OP

The following objectives were defined in the two periods in order to address the problems identified:

Identified needs/objectives (2007-2013)	Identified needs/objectives (2014-2020)
Implement inclusive employment policies that promote the participation of disadvantaged and inactive people.	Improve the employment rate through the promotion of indefinite employment, adaptation of people's qualifications to the needs of the labour market and encouragement of self-employment.
	To favour the insertion in the labour market of those people with greater difficulties of access to employment, such as people with disabilities and those who are in a situation of poverty and/or social exclusion, and to allow them to develop a professional activity under equal conditions.

Source: RegioPlus from the OP

### Level of education

49.51% of the population over 16 years of age in the region of Castilla y León reaches secondary education in 2016 (INE, 2016), which corresponds to the national average. In second place is the population with university degrees, with 25.72%, and finally, a short distance away, is the population with primary education (23.83%).

Basic info	Castilla y León	Spain	Unit
Population over 16 years of age reaching secondary education level [2008]	47.2	49.5	%
Population over 16 years of age reaching secondary education level [2014]	52.6	51.2	%
Percentage of early school leavers [2008]	23.0	31.9	%
Percentage of early school leavers [2014]	16.8	21.9	%

Source: RegioPlus from the State System of Indicators of Education (Includes population with first and second stage or second stage of secondary education)

In relation to lifelong learning, in 2016 the participation rate of the Castilian-Leonese population aged 25 to 64 in lifelong learning activities was 10.8%, above that of Spain and Europe.

The problems existing in the field of training have been identified as follows during the two periods:

Identified weaknesses (2007-2013)	Identified weaknesses (2014-2020)
Drop-out rate and levels of secondary education away from the Lisbon Goals	Early school leaving rate higher than EU-27

Source: RegioPlus from the OP

The following objectives were defined in the two periods In order to address the problems identified:

Identified needs/objectives (2007-2013)	Identified needs/objectives (2014-2020)
Encourage access to and permanence in the labour market by increasing levels of qualification and productivity	Reduction of the population with university studies, necessary investment in quality, efficiency and accessibility to higher education.
Improving and adapting education and training systems in line with the needs of society, the economy and business.	To contribute to improving the adequacy and coherence between the education system and the labour market, favouring and promoting collaboration between companies and educational institutions.

Source: RegioPlus from the OP

### ***Innovative activity and use of ICTs***

Provisional GDP figures for 2015 show that the intensity of R&D&I expenditure in Castilla y León is 0.99% of GDP, which is far from the EU 27 (2.03%).

Basic info	Castilla y León	Spain	Unit
Intensity of R&D expenditure (Total internal expenditure on R&D in relation to GDP) [2008]	1,27	1,35	%
Intensity of R&D expenditure (Total internal expenditure on R&D in relation to GDP) [2014]	1,01	1,24	%
Houses with broadband connection (ADSL, cable network, etc.) [2008]	34,0	43,6	%
Houses with broadband connection (ADSL, cable network, etc.) [2014]	67,6	73,0	%

Household ICT equipment and use is lower than the Spanish average, with the percentage of households with broadband connections standing at 76.5% in 2016 compared to 81.2% on average nationally.

The data still show that the use of ICT is reduced in companies with fewer than 10 people employed, with the percentage of companies with Internet connection and website in 2016 being 29.03%, compared to the national average of 31.47%.

The existing problems related to innovative activity and the use of ICTs have been identified as follows in the two periods:

Identified weaknesses (2007-2013)	Identified weaknesses (2014-2020)
Very large regional area making accessibility difficult and expensive, mainly in transport and ICTs.	Equipment and use of ICT in households below the Spanish average and, in any case, can be improved.
Investment effort in R&D in relation to GDP, far removed from the Lisbon Objectives.	R&D expenditure intensity outside the EU 27
Lack of development and use of new technologies and the initiation of R&D&I programmes	

*Source: RegioPlus from the OP*

The following objectives were defined in the two periods In order to address the problems identified:

Identified needs/objectives (2007-2013)	Identified needs/objectives (2014-2020)
To promote the activity in RTD+i.	Promoting "Innovation" as an engine of regional development that contributes to a change in the production model of Castilla y León
Improve access to finance for RTD activities and start-ups through innovative alternative instruments.	To promote the development of information and communication technologies as a means of promoting access to this resource as part of a clear strategy for the information society, which will make it possible to compete as a region in the new European digital single market defined by the Digital Agenda for Europe and in the new knowledge economy as a means of sustainable economic recovery.
Extend, disseminate and improve ICT services,	

Identified needs/objectives (2007-2013)	Identified needs/objectives (2014-2020)
guaranteeing their implementation in society as a whole and the availability of infrastructures and equipment.	

Source: RegioPlus from the OP

### Environment

In Castilla y León, the percentage of equivalent inhabitants with wastewater treatment in accordance with Directive 91/271/EEC has been reduced from 2008 to 2014, so it remains an area in which to work and which has been considered in the 2014-2020 programming.

Basic info	Castilla y León	Spain	Unit
Volume of treated wastewater [2008]	0.510	0.269	(m3/inhabitant/day)
Volume of treated wastewater [2014]	0.431	0.291	(m3/inhabitant/day)
Surface area under the Natura 2000 network [2008]	15.16	10.27	%
Surface area under the Natura 2000 network [2014]	26.12	27.20	%
Greenhouse Gas Emissions [2008]	39.73	408.982	Emissions of CO <sub>2</sub> -Eq (Kt))
Greenhouse Gas Emissions [2014]	33.21	328.926	Emissions of CO <sub>2</sub> -Eq (Kt))
Percentage of net generation of renewable energy sources in relation to total generation [2008]*	74.27	20.6	%
Percentage of net generation of renewable energy sources in relation to total generation [2014]*	78.00	40.9	%

\* Renewable energies in Spain, 2016. Red Eléctrica de España

The conservation and protection of natural heritage includes those contained in the Natura 2000 network. This Natura Network, made up of Sites of Community Interest (SCIs) and Special Protection Areas for Birds (SPAs), aims to help ensure biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and wildlife. In 2014 the land area of Castilla y León in Red Natura 2000 was 2,461,042 hectares representing 26.12% of the territory of the Community.

In relation to greenhouse gas emissions, in Castilla y León during the 2008-2014 period, regional emissions fell by -16.40% compared to -19.57% at the national level.

This trend has changed since 2008, with growth and declines since then. However, the balance sheet in the period analysed is positive because of its reduction compared to the reference year.

In the case of renewable energies, they maintain a fundamental role in the energy scenario of the region of Castilla y León. In this way, the production of electricity through renewables, hydropower and wind power is greater than all electricity consumption in the region, with a significant weight in national production by 2016 (22.8%) which places it as the leading Spanish region.

The existing environmental problems have been identified as follows in the two periods:

Identified weaknesses (2007-2013)	Identified weaknesses (2014-2020)
Dependence on road transport, which together with the radial distribution of the road network limits accessibility and aggravates the energy and environmental cost of road transport	Deficit energy balance



Greenhouse gas emissions, particularly CO <sub>2</sub> , far from the Lisbon and Gothenburg targets.	
Constant growth in the volume of urban waste generation.	

Source: RegioPlus from the OP

The following objectives were defined in the two periods In order to address the problems identified:

Identified needs/objectives (2007-2013)	Identified needs/objectives (2014-2020)
To optimize the efforts made in environmental matters as a vehicle for sustainable economic development, protecting and improving the environment.	Increase the use of indigenous renewable energy resources, reduce energy consumption, and improve the efficiency of such consumption, with the aim of generating technology-based economic activity, as well as reducing the energy bill of individuals and companies by increasing their competitiveness.
To take advantage of Castilla y León's energy potential by developing existing energy resources and renewable energy infrastructures.	To contribute to the conservation and protection of the environment by improving water management, environmental recovery and enhancement, as well as enhancing the value of the region's cultural and heritage resources.

Source: RegioPlus from the OP

### 3. Cohesion policy implementation and performance

#### 3.1. EU Cohesion policy strategic and implementation framework

From 2007, and as in the rest of Spanish regions, two programming periods of the Cohesion Policy have been implemented in Castilla y León that have led us to its current development:

1. 2007-2013 period. In order to ensure the coherence of the Community interventions within the framework of the "Regional competitiveness and employment" Objective, Castilla y León, a region identified as phasing in or with a growth effect for that period, designed a single strategy for structural ERDF and ESF interventions that was made up of, on the one hand, a common objectives tree for both Funds that considered the development of the NUTS 2 as a whole, and on the other hand, a few particular priorities of each intervention.

2. 2014-2020 period. This time as Castilla y León was a more developed region, two regional operational programmes of the ERDF and ESF were put into place taking into account the lessons learned from the 2007 - 2013 period. These programmes were framed on this occasion in the Association Agreement that reflects the joint strategy of the various funds in Spain, and has served as a guide for the preparation of the programmes.

The detail of the ERDF and ESF operational programmes in both periods is presented below.

##### **3.1.1. Regional Operational Programme for Castilla y León 2007-2013**

The final objective of the ERDF OP in this programming period was *"to converge with the European Union through economic growth and social development"*. This objective involved the promotion of development factors linked to the Lisbon Strategy: to renew the foundations for competitiveness, increase the potential for growth and productivity and strengthen social cohesion, through knowledge, innovation and optimisation of human capital.

Three main objectives that were complementary to each other were formulated to achieve this final objective, in particular:

- Final objective 1. Promote and revitalize the regional economy of Castilla y León.
- Final objective 2. Increase the competitiveness of the business fabric of Castilla y León.
- Final objective 3. Increase social and territorial cohesion through a commitment to strengthen human capital, quality and equality of opportunities in employment and social integration.

Six priorities for action in the field of the ERDF were programmed in order to achieve the defined objectives, geared primarily towards supporting business development and innovation, followed by investment in transport and energy and the environment.

In this way, efforts have been concentrated on support to investments in companies, the improvement of rail services, or R&D grants for SMES. Management and distribution of drinking water, promoting the protection of biodiversity and nature including Natura 2000 and the integrated projects for urban and rural regeneration (URBAN).

The revitalisation of the regional economy has been favoured through the strengthening of the competitiveness of companies, through investment projects such as the proper development of productive structures preserving the environment, support for investment micro-projects to

promote the creation of new companies at the same time as generating jobs or support for the international promotion of business activity and the initiation to export.

The support to SMES has focused also on R&D grants, thanks to the grants to companies to carry out projects for industrial research and/or experimental development.

In the field of the environment, the activities undertaken have contributed positively to improving the water quality for human consumption and guaranteeing its supply. In this area, the construction of infrastructures to supply of drinking water was opted for. This has also had a positive effect on the protection of biodiversity through actions in favour of preserving fauna and flora, restoration of degraded habitats or the construction and adaptation of interpretation centres to raise awareness and for public use, and for the preservation of species. Actions for the conditioning and recovery of rivers such as the Duero or the Tormes have also been of significant importance.

In the field of infrastructures, there has been a significant commitment to improving high-speed lines that run through Castilla y León. Finally, in the urban area to December 2014, 520 municipalities in Castilla y León had benefited from actions undertaken, including the urban rehabilitation, improvement of cultural facilities, the promotion of new technologies or the development and promotion of tourism resources. Of special relevance have been the projects developed in Palencia and Burgos, selected as URBAN projects.

The following table shows the indicative allocation of ERDF broken down by priority axes of the ERDF OP of Castilla y León 2007-2013, which amounted to more than 818 million euros during this period.

<i>Castilla y León EFDR ROP 2007-2013</i>		
<b>2007-2013</b>	<b>ERDF allocation (%)</b>	<b>ERDF allocation (€)</b>
AXIS 1. Development of the Knowledge Economy (R+D+I, the Information Society and ICT)	18.17	148,686,947
AXIS 2. Business Development and Innovation	24.78	202,728,294
AXIS 3. Environment, Natural Environment, Water Resources and risk prevention	22.90	187,354,760
AXIS 4. Transport and energy	23.62	193,247,525
AXIS 5. Local and urban sustainable development	10.30	84,256,289
AXIS 7. Technical assistance and strengthening institutional capacity	0.23	1,920,622
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>818,194,437</b>

On the other hand, the objectives of the ESF OP in the 2007-2013 period were shared with those already specified for the ERDF OP. In this case, in order to achieve the objectives defined, four priorities were programmed for action oriented mainly towards the reintegration into the labour market of disadvantaged people, the promotion of collaboration in employment matters, the application of preventive and active measures in the labour market and the development of human potential in the field of research and innovation.

The increase in territorial cohesion was favoured with measures in favour of the reintegration into work, such as the creation of insertion itineraries for young university graduates, those over 30 years old or women. Social and labour integration of people with disabilities or at risk of exclusion

was also favoured. To this was also added support in employment matters to undertake actions to support local employment initiatives and the promotion of priority sectors.

Support for innovation was shown by supporting the recruitment of research staff with a recent university degree.

The following table shows the indicative allocation of ESF broken down by priority axes of the ESF OP of Castilla y León 2007-2013, which amounted to more than 125 million euros in this period.

<i>Castilla y León EFS ROP 2007-2013</i>		
<b>2007-2013</b>	<b>ESF allocation (%)</b>	<b>ESF allocation (€)</b>
AXIS 1. Entrepreneurship and Adaptability	18.99	23,784,610
AXIS 2. Employability, social inclusion And equality between m and w	59.10	74,039,776
AXIS 3. Increase and improvement of human capital	20.72	25,962,470
AXIS 5. Technical assistance	1.19	1,490,051
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>125,276,907</b>

With regards to the ERDF, there is a general view obtained in the interviews that major issues and needs related to high cost permanent infrastructures have been solved and that their realisation would have been difficult to be viable without the contribution of the Cohesion Policy, as can be as transport infrastructures, buildings, scientific and technological buildings, innovation centres, etc.

On the other hand, from local authorities interviewed it is commented that thanks to the URBAN initiatives communication and understanding between the different departments has been able to be promoted. In general, the creation of networks and the transfer of innovation to boost the competitiveness of companies and regional entities has been able to develop.

On the other hand, the implementation of ESF has managed to foster communication, reintegration, employment and integration into the labour market.

### **3.1.3. Regional Operational Programme for Castilla y León 2014-2020**

The OPs of European Funds are framed at national level, in the Association Agreement, a document that sets out the joint strategy of the various funds in all of Spain.

The Managing Authority of the ERDF OP of Castilla y León is the Sub Directorate General for Management of the ERDF of the General Directorate of Community Funds of the Ministry of Finance and Public Service, while in the case of the ESF OP it is the Associate Sub-Directorate General for Management of the Unit for Administering the European Social Fund (UAESF) within the DG for Self-Employment, for Social Economy and for Social Responsibility of the Ministry of Employment and Social Security. However, in accordance with the Guidelines submitted by the Managing Authority for the ERDF Operational Programme in Spain, all Regional Operational Programmes shall have the Autonomous Administration as a whole as the Intermediate Organisation , while the coordination of the activities of the NUTS 2 as the Intermediate Organisation shall be borne by the body of that Administration with competence to do so, and in

the case of Castilla y León this is the Directorate-General for Budgets and Statistics of the Regional Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Government of Castilla y León.

The ERDF OP in this period was designed on the basis of 5 priority axes, plus the technical assistance axis, which include actions to address the needs identified in the regional context of Castilla y León. In particular, the following were defined:

- To encourage the implementation of projects of regional interest in research, development, demonstration, transfer and innovation.
- Provide and modernise research and innovation infrastructures.
- To promote the transfer of university-company knowledge.
- To promote entrepreneurship and the external opening up of the technological industry.
- Extend the high-speed broadband service.
- Implement digital public services.
- Improve ICT infrastructures.
- Awareness raising of the entrepreneurial spirit in the educational field.
- Support to companies with specialized services in innovation and internationalization.
- Promotion of technological investment by SMEs.
- Development of actions to facilitate business financing.
- Promotion of the use of renewable energies in order to increase their share of overall energy consumption.
- Promotion of energy saving and efficiency actions to achieve a reduction in the Autonomous Community's energy consumption in sectors as diverse as industry, transport, building and public services.
- Promotion of high-efficiency cogeneration of energy networks.
- Environmental recovery of degraded areas.
- Improved efficiency in water treatment.
- Valuation of the region's heritage resources for their economic exploitation and integral maintenance.

Each of the axes programmed was divided into Investment Priorities, which in turn have a number of Specific Objectives detailing the actions to be carried out in the 2014-2020 period.

The **ERDF OP** concentrates a significant part of its resources in the objectives represented by the aforementioned axes 1, 2 and 6 to boost research, technological development and innovation, improve the competitiveness of SMES and to preserve and promote the efficiency of the resources. To do this, in the field of research it is envisaged that actions are undertaken such as the provision and updating of infrastructures for research and innovation in research centres, purchase of equipment for universities, support for the transfer of knowledge from universities to companies or the specific support for the development of research projects.

For the enhancement of the competitiveness of SMES, during the 2014-2020 period it is envisaged that actions be carried out such as the support for businesses to be created by entrepreneurs, the development of advanced services for the entrepreneurs, activities in cooperation in Innovative Business Groupings and the support for the internationalisation of SMES.

In favour of the efficiency of the resources, major planned actions will be carried out in order to improve the deficiencies in sanitation and waste-water treatment infrastructures, to promote the integrity of the Cultural Heritage and promote the management, protection and maintenance of the soil, natural areas and their biodiversity.

The following table shows the indicative allocation of ERDF broken down by priority axes of the ERDF OP of Castilla y León 2014-2020, which amounted to more than 314 million euros.

<i>Castilla and León ERDF ROP 2007-2013</i>		
<b>2014-2020</b>	<b>Allocation (%)</b>	<b>Allocation (€)</b>
AXIS 1 Boost research, technological development and innovation	29.25%	91,947,597
AXIS 2 Improve the use and quality of ICT and access to it	7.85%	24,687,136
AXIS 3 Improve the competitiveness of SMEs	28.29%	88,939,215
AXIS 4 Support the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors	9.43%	29,646,289
AXIS 6 Preserve and protect the environment and promote resource efficiency	24.55%	77,182,982
Technical Assistance Axis	0.64%	2,000,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>314,403,219</b>

The **ESF OP** was designed on the basis of 3 priority axes, plus the Technical Assistance Area, which the same as in the case of the ERDF PO includes actions to address the needs identified in the regional context of Castilla y León. In this case, the needs to be addressed through the ESF are as follows:

- To counteract the decline in the employed population.
- Combat the prolonged decline in the employment rate since 2008.
- Addressing high unemployment, particularly among those over the age of 45 and women.
- Addressing the unequal distribution of the population that hinders access to basic services.
- Decrease the high rate of population at risk of poverty or social exclusion.
- Combat inequality between men and women in the workplace.
- Decrease in population with university studies, necessary investment in quality, efficiency and accessibility to higher education.
- Enhancing the capacity for innovation.

Each of the axes programmed was equally divided into Investment Priorities, which in turn have a number of Specific Objectives detailing the actions to be undertaken in the 2014-2020 period.

The ESF OP concentrates a significant portion of its resources in the objectives represented by the axes 1 and 2 relating to the promotion of sustainability and quality of employment and social inclusion, and the fight against poverty and all forms of discrimination.



To do this, in the field of Axis 1 actions are planned to be undertaken that are aimed at improving access to stable employment supplemented with practical work in companies, the promotion of employment of people with disabilities, or being employed in stable jobs, the launch of equality plans in companies, or awareness actions regarding this.

In terms of social inclusion and the fight against poverty, the major planned actions are directed at individual guidance for employment, the employability of women who are victims of gender violence, employment integration of people with disabilities or away from the labour market, or promoting recruitment among recipients of basic guaranteed income. Care for women with special needs is also planned on the grounds of gender and for other vulnerable groups.

The following table shows the indicative allocation of ESF broken down by priority axes of the ESF OP of Castilla y León 2014-2020, which amounted to more than 98 million euros.

<i>Castilla y León EFS ROP 2007-2013</i>		
<b>2014-2020</b>	<b>ESF allocation (%)</b>	<b>ESF allocation (€)</b>
AXIS 1 Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility	52.49%	51,814,244
AXIS 2 Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination;	27.09%	26,744,130
AXIS 3 Investment in education, training and improvement of professional skills and lifelong learning	18.89%	18,647,818
Technical Assistance AXIS	1.52%	1,500,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>98,706,192</b>

Finally, the following table shows that the ERDF OP of Castilla y León 2007-2013 accounted for 3.54% of the national allocation of ERDF, compared to 1.62% in the current period. In the case of the ESF this has gone from 1.55% to 1.30%.

<i>Total allocation</i>	<b>Castilla y León</b>	<b>Spain</b>	<b>Unit</b>
ERDF Allocation [2007-2013]	818,194,437	23,057,192,151	EUR
ERDF Allocation [2014-2020]	314,403,219	19,414,904,916	EUR
ESF Allocation [2007-2013]	125,276,907	8,057,328,822	EUR
ESF Allocation [2014-2020]	98,706,192	7,581,569,187	EUR

There have been no responses in the interviews for the 2014-2020 period since they are just beginning to put in place the OP due to the delay in the approval of the IO, among other factors.

### **3.1.4. Implementation framework and partnership structures**

In the 2007-2013 period Castilla y León also participated in the following Multi-regional programmes:

- Multi-regional Operational Programme of Knowledge-Based Economy 2007-2013 (ERDF).
- Multi-regional Operating Programme for R&D&I by and for the benefit of companies- Technology Fund, 2007-2013 (ERDF)
- Multi-regional Operational Programme of Technical Assistance 2007-2013 (ERDF).
- Multi-regional Operational Programme "Fight against Discrimination" 2007-2013 (ESF).
- Multi-regional Operational Programme for Adaptability and Employment 2007-2013 (ESF).
- Multi-regional Operational Programme of Technical Assistance and Cooperation 2007-2013 (ESF).

It also benefited from various European Territorial Cooperation Programmes, in particular:

- The Operational Programme of Cross-border Cooperation Spain - Portugal 2007-2013;
- The Operational Program of the South West European Space (2007-2013).
- The Operational Programme of the Interregional Cooperation Programme Interreg IV C 2007-2013.
- The Operational Programme "ESPON 2013 (European Network of Observation for Development and Territorial Cohesion)" (8022 kbytes).

In the current period 2014-2020, Castilla y León, participates in the following Multi-regional programmes for European Funds of national scope:

- Multi-regional OP for Sustainable Growth (ERDF).
- Multi-regional OP for Intelligent Growth (ERDF).
- Multi-regional OP for SME Initiative (ERDF).
- OP for Social Inclusion and Social Economy (ESF).
- OP for Youth Employment (ESF).
- OP for Employment, Training and Education (ESF).
- OP for Technical Assistance (ESF).

Finally, the European cooperation programmes that Castilla y León currently participates are the following:

- Operational Programme Interref V A Spain - Portugal 2014-2020;
- Transnational Cooperation Programme Interreg V-B of South West Europe (Interreg V-B SUDOE).
- Interreg Europe Operational Programme.

With regards to the key authorities in charge of the various phases associated with the management of the OP, the following tables summarise these and as can be seen there are no significant differences between the two periods.

The ERDF Governance Framework	
2007-2013	2014-2020
<b>Authorities</b>	<b>Authorities</b>
Managing Authority: Directorate General for	Managing Authority: Sub-Directorate General for

The ERDF Governance Framework	
2007-2013	2014-2020
Administration of the ERDF, located in the General Directorate for Community Funds of the Ministry of Finance and Public Administration	Management of the ERDF of the General Directorate of Community Funds
Certifying Authority: Payment Unit of the General Directorate of Community Funds	Certifying Authority: Deputy Director General of Certification and Payment of the D.G. Community Funds
Audit Authority: General Intervention Board of the State Administration (IGAE), under the Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations.	Audit Authority: General Intervention Board of the State Administration (IGAE) Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations
<b>Members of the Monitoring Committee (Bodies)</b>	<b>Members of the Monitoring Committee (Bodies)</b>
Directorate General (DG) of Community funds, of the Ministry of Economy and Finance.	DG of Community Funds, Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations
Sub-Directorate General (SG) of Administration of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) of the Ministry of Economy and Finance	D.G. of Budgets and Statistics. JCyL SG for Management of ERDF, Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations
SG for Administration of the ERDF. Ministry of Economy and Finance.	SG for Management of the ERDF, Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations
DG of Community Budgets and Funds, of the Regional Ministry of the Treasury of the Government of Castilla y León.	D.G. of Budgets and Statistics. JCyL
Regional Ministry of the Environment of the Government of Castilla y León,	D. G. of Quality and Environmental Sustainability. Regional Ministry for Development and the Environment JCyL
DG for Women of the Regional Ministry for Family and Equal Opportunities of the Government of Castilla y León	D.G. For Women. JCyL
SG for Territorial Programming and Evaluation of Community Programmes	SG for Territorial Programming and Evaluation of Community Programmes. D.G. Community Funds
SG for Certification and Payment of the General Directorate of Community Funds of the Ministry of Economy and Finance.	DG for Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission
SG for European Cohesion Funds and European Territorial Cooperation of the General Directorate of Community Funds of the Ministry of Economy and Finance.	Confederation of Business Organisations of CyL
Administrative Unit of the European Social Fund of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.	CCOO of Castilla y León
DG for Rural Development of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	UGT of Castilla y León
Ministry of the Environment	SDG for Certification and Payments, Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations
Confederation of Business Organisations of Castilla y León (CECALE)	Administrative Unit of the ESF (MEYSS)
CCOO and UGT of Castilla y León	Regional Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. JCyL
Economic and Social Council CyL	S.G. Programming and Coordination (MAGRAMA)
European Commission	Economic and Social Council CyL

ESF Governance Framework	
2007-2013	2014-2020
<i>Authorities</i>	<i>Authorities</i>
Managing Authority: Management Unit of the Administrative Unit of the European Social Fund	Managing Authority: The Associate Sub-Directorate General for Management of the Unit for Administering the European Social Fund (UAESF) within the DG of the Self-Employment, the Social Economy and the Social Responsibility of Companies
Certifying Authority: Certification Unit of the Unit for Administering the European Social Fund	Certifying Authority: The Associate Sub-Directorate General for Certification of the Unit for Administering the European Social Fund (UAESF) within the DG of the Self-Employment, the Social Economy and the Social Responsibility of Companies.
Audit Authority: The General Intervention Board of Castilla y León	Audit Authority: General Intervention Board of Castilla y León
<i>Members of the Monitoring Committee</i>	<i>Members of the Monitoring Committee</i>
ND	ND

The major importance that has been granted in the 2014-2020 period to participatory processes for the definition of the programmes should be highlighted, and that made it possible to have the contributions from the following bodies:

- 9 Provincial Councils
- 9 General Secretariats of the Government of Castilla y León,
- 8 Regional Ministries of the Government of Castilla y León,
- Universities of Castilla y León
- 273 companies
- 15 NGOs (including those for the Support of Employment of People with Disabilities)
- 10 Territorial Delegations
- Family Business Association
- Regional ERDFación of Municipalities and Provinces
- 45 Local Action Groups
- 14 Town Councils
- 17 Chambers of Commerce
- Regional ERDFación of Municipalities and Provinces
- CONFERCO, CECAL
- CSI-CSIF, UGT, Comisiones Obreras
- Economic and Social Council

The main participation structure for the entire programming period remains the Monitoring Committee of the OP, whose members have been identified in the previous table, with the role played by the thematic networks also being important in Spain. The description of the thematic networks planned for the 2014-2020 period is incorporated in Chapter 3.2.2.

In the 2014-2020 programming period, the Managing Authority of all ERDF OP in Spain was the Sub-Directorate General for Management of the ERDF of the General Directorate of Community Funds of the Ministry of Finance and Public Service, with the Government of Castilla y León being the body that acts as Intermediate Organisation for the ERDF OP in our region.

In the case of the ESF PO, it is the Associate Sub-Directorate General for Management of the Unit for Administering the European Social Fund (UAFSE) of the Directorate General for Autonomous Work, Social Economy and Social Responsibility of Companies of the Ministry of Employment and Social Security, which acts as the Managing Authority of all the regional OP in Spain, with there being five Intermediate Organisation in Castilla y León, with the Directorate General for Budgets and Statistics being the Intermediate Organisation Coordinator of the four remaining ones.

In this way, the procedures are implemented at national level for possible reviews of the OP and the necessary instructions and provisions needed to ensure consistency and uniformity of criteria in the management of the OP are distributed, while the Intermediate Organisations carry out all other duties established by the regulations for the managing authorities under the approval and supervision of the national Managing Authorities.

In the field of information and communication the Managing Authorities of the Programmes have a number of obligations and responsibilities, as specified in Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Arts. 115 to 117 and Annex XII, paragraph 2 for the 2014-2020 period. This duty is provided, in the case of Spain by the Sub-Directorate General for Management of the EFRD of the General Directorate of Community Funds of the Ministry of Finance and Public Administration

To this end, and in compliance with the provisions of Art. 117(3) of that Regulation, the Managing Authorities shall designate a person responsible for information and communication at Operational Programme level. The Intermediate Organisations are responsible for the implementation of the Communication Strategies.

In addition, driven by the Managing Authority a Spanish group of Information and Advertising Managers (GERIP) has been set up, consisting of the officials responsible for this matter that represent the managing authorities of the EFS and the ERDF and the NUTS 2.

In the case of the EFS the responsibilities in communication matters in Spain fall on the Administrative Unit of the EFS.

The Monitoring Committee is defined as the clearest structure for the discussion of the Operational Programmes. This mainly deals with issues related to the implementation and monitoring of the OP. Complementary to this Committee are the technical working groups on specific topics.

At local level, collaboration and communication is promoted between town councils and especially from the Central Administration. These local entities are represented in the RIU (Network of Urban Initiatives).

In the field of communication, there is also a Committee for Information and Communication at regional level that is the forum that deals with the advances in this matter. On the other hand, there are national networks of GERIP and GRECO-AGE (Group of National Administration Communication Managers). All decisions adopted are made in close collaboration between all the intermediate organisations and collaborators of the OP within both networks.

## 3.2. Assessment of performance

### 3.2.1 Programme performance

Under the programming period 2007-2013 Castilla y León was a phasing-in region. This distinction is reflected in total allocations, expressed in per capita terms. The region has received 0.7 thous EUR for the 2007-2013 programming period.

Thematic structure [NUTS-2, 2007-13, ERDF+CF]	Castilla y León	Spain
<b>% of allocation</b>		
Category A "Innovative environment": business support, human resources, IT infrastructure and services, research and technology	36.9%	35.5%
Category B "Basic infrastructure": energy, environment and natural resources, transport infrastructure	57.5%	53.1%
Category C "Quality of life": social infrastructure, tourism and culture, urban and rural regeneration	5.4%	9.8%
<b>Rate of absorption [in 2014]</b>		
Category A "Innovative environment": business support, human resources, IT infrastructure and services, research and technology	127.6%	62.8%
Category B "Basic infrastructure": energy, environment and natural resources, transport infrastructure	69.2%	79.5%
Category C "Quality of life": social infrastructure, tourism and culture, urban and rural regeneration	81.7%	73.0%

\* % of allocation does not add to 1, because the "technical assistance" is not included in any of the categories.

The thematic structure of allocation shows with Category B responsible for over 50% of the total allocations, and Category A receiving over 1/3 of the funds. The funds dedicated to investments in quality of life in Castilla y León's responsible for over 5.4%.

The rate of absorption under the Category A. Castilla y León shows a significant overspending in this field, noting a rate of absorption of 127.6%, double the value of the national average. The absorption rates for the two remaining categories are more balanced. However, against the pattern visible at the national level, the region have absorption rates higher in the Category C, rather than in the Category B.

Regional OP [ERDF]	Castilla y León	Spain	Unit
<b>Allocations to Regional OPs</b>			
Allocation 2007-2013	940.5	20,462.7	mIn EUR
Allocation 2014-2020	314.4	9,148.9	mIn EUR
Ratio [period 2014-2020 to 2007-2013]	0.33	0.45	ratio
<b>Reported achievements: period 2007-2013 [as in 2013]</b>			
Jobs created	7,568	75,438	jobs
Reconstructed roads	no data	2,458	km
Start-ups supported	1,660	9,963	number
Additional population served by water projects	114,499	1,928,976	persons
Cooperation projects enterprises-research institutions	1,127	9,961	projects
Direct investment aid projects to SME	5,100	61,213	projects



The allocations to Regional OPs has fallen significantly when the last two programming periods are concerned. A similar, though less pronounced decline, was observed at the country level, where the share of ERDF funds channelled through Regional OPs has fallen from 67% to 47% in the programming period 2014-2020.

The reported achievements suggest that the Regional OP in Castilla y León led to a significant number of jobs being created and seems to be cost-effective in this regard. The region perform well when compared with the total number of jobs created in Spain during this period (one should bear in mind that the data on achievements for the national level is taken from a different source, and thus may not be fully comparable with regional data). Castilla y Leon seems to outperform Andalucía with regard to supporting start-ups and implementing projects of cooperation between enterprises and research institutions.

**Interviewees stress** clear results have not yet been achieved in the 2014-2020 period due to their late start-up. In 2017-2013 the challenges marked for each OP were achieved. In the case of ERDF innovation, the development of new information and communication technologies, business sustainability, and the use of indigenous renewable energy resources was promoted and this contributed to the conservation and protection of the environment.

With regards to EFS, the rate of employment improved, integration into the labour market was boosted together with a contribution of coherence between the education system and the labour market.

At local level, in those municipalities where URBAN projects have been implemented during the 2007-2013 period, the benefits have been very important in the neighbourhoods where the project was implemented. At neighbourhood level new infrastructures were carried out that have encouraged citizen participation, integration, rehabilitation and have improved citizen coexistence.

The budgetary restrictions that have been applied to all levels of public administrations during the economic crisis have had a major impact on the management of the Operational Programmes for the 2007-2013 period. The crisis has also had a negative impact on the activity of companies, so that their demand for investment support measures has also been influenced.

However, there have been changes and adjustments in the operational programmes, which have made it possible to achieve adequate levels of financial implementation in both ERDF and ESF.

Interviewees stress in principle they are considered adequate structures, but always taking into account the communication and coordination actions required for the proper operation of the funds. This can be one of the main challenges. Adequate coordination between authorities and operators is being difficult in the 2014-2020 period.

In general, the interviewees considered the compliance of the regulations, the implementation of the OP, spending the funds and communication and dissemination tasks.

**According to stakeholder survey respondents** at municipality level, in general, the surveyed population considers that the funds have been very well used (10%), well (40%) or acceptable (30%). 15% of them confirm that they do not know how the funds have been used.

At regional level, the population is more aware and positive: very well used (20%), well (55%) and acceptable (15%).

	Very well	Well	Acceptable	Poorly	Very poorly	Don't know
<b>Your municipality</b>	10%	40%	30%	5%	0%	15%
<b>Your region</b>	20%	55%	15%	5%	0%	5%

Source: N=20

Similarly, there appears to be an increasing lack of knowledge at municipality level (15%) compared to 5% who do not know or do not answer at regional level. In this way, at municipality level it is considered that 10% of the funds have been completely reinforced, 25% largely and 40% in some way. At regional level, these same data acquired the following values 15%, 40% and 25%.

	Completely	Largely	In some way	Not much	Not at all	Don't know
<b>Your municipality</b>	10%	25%	40%	5%	5%	15%
<b>Your region</b>	15%	40%	25%	10%	5%	5%

Source: N=20

According to the results of the survey, the greatest intervention of the Cohesion Policy has been to reduce the differences in the development of the different regions, followed by the contribution to minimize the differences between Spain and other countries of the European Union.

15% of respondents consider that the differences between rural and urban areas have increased.

	Differences in the development level between poorer and richer regions in your country	Differences in the development level between rural and urban areas in your region	Differences in the development level between poorer and richer areas in your region	Differences in the development level between your country and other European Union Member states
<b>Decreased</b>	25.00%	15.00%	20.00%	15.00%
<b>Somewhat decreased</b>	30.00%	25.00%	20.00%	30.00%
<b>Had no impact</b>	10.00%	20.00%	20.00%	10.00%
<b>Somewhat increased</b>	15.00%	15.00%	20.00%	20.00%
<b>Increased</b>	10.00%	15.00%	10.00%	15.00%
<b>Don't know</b>	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%
<b>Total</b>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Source: N=20

Problems most often identified as significant or very significant are: the excessive audit and control of the Project (70%), the excessive cumbersome reporting (65%) and the problems with obtaining financing such as complicated rules for submitting applications (60%).

On the other hand, the following are cited as minor problems the poor cooperation between project partners (35%), the difficult access to credit (30%) and the lack of capacity (30%).

	Scarcity of Cohesion policy funds	Problems with obtaining Cohesion policy financing such as complicated rules for submitting applications	Excessive, cumbersome reporting	Unclear objectives for evaluating project results	Poor cooperation between project partners	Excessive audit and control during or after the project completion	Lack of funds for own contribution (co-financing)	Difficult access to credit and/or loans for own contribution	Lack of capacity such as qualified staff
<b>Very significant</b>	10%	30%	40%	15%	5%	40%	15%	10%	20%
<b>Significant</b>	25%	30%	25%	30%	30%	30%	25%	15%	15%
<b>Average</b>	45%	25%	30%	35%	20%	25%	30%	25%	25%
<b>Insignificant</b>	10%	0%	0%	10%	20%	0%	20%	20%	20%
<b>No at all</b>	0%	5%	0%	5%	15%	0%	0%	10%	10%
<b>Don't know</b>	10%	10%	5%	5%	10%	5%	10%	20%	10%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: N=20

The greatest agreement shown by the people participating in the survey is that the Cohesion policy funds finance those investment projects which your municipality/region needs the most (65%) and that the administration has been delivered in an efficient (65%).

On the other hand, there is disagreement about the statements made about the irregularities in spending the Funds (75%) and the fraud, such as corruption or nepotism (70%).

	Cohesion policy funds finance those investment projects which your municipality/region needs the most	In your municipality/region Cohesion policy funding goes to investment projects which are most valued by the local residents	There are many irregularities in spending Cohesion policy funds due to non-compliance with EU rules	Fraud, such as corruption or nepotism, is common in spending Cohesion policy funds	There have been many positive changes in your municipality/region thanks to Cohesion policy funds, which would not have been achieved without the funds	The spending of Cohesion policy funds is adequately controlled	The money from Cohesion policy funds is in most cases wasted on the wrong projects	The administration of Cohesion policy has been delivered in an efficient
<b>Strongly agree</b>	25%	20%	0%	5%	25%	25%	10%	25%
<b>Agree</b>	40%	5%	10%	5%	35%	35%	25%	40%
<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	20%	40%	10%	10%	25%	25%	25%	10%
<b>Disagree</b>	5%	25%	45%	35%	10%	15%	15%	15%

<b>Strongly disagree</b>	10%	5%	30%	35%	5%	0%	25%	5%
<b>Don't know</b>	0%	5%	5%	10%	0%	0%	0%	5%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: N=20

The greatest agreement is given in the statement about the monitoring and evaluation reports provide adequate information on the implementation and performance of the programme/s (55%).

The 50% of respondents said the monitoring and evaluation reports of the programme/s are easy to understand.

	The monitoring and evaluation reports provide adequate information on the implementation and performance of the programme/s	The monitoring and evaluation reports of the programme/s are easily accessible	The monitoring and evaluation reports of the programme/s are easy to understand	The monitoring and evaluation report results are used to improve policy-making and implementation
<b>Strongly agree</b>	20%	5%	0%	5%
<b>Agree</b>	35%	25%	20%	30%
<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	15%	30%	30%	30%
<b>Disagree</b>	25%	35%	40%	25%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	5%	5%	10%	10%
<b>Don't know</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: N=20

It is worth noting that 100% of the respondents said they participated in training sessions on communication, followed by management in a high percentage (90%). In general, Castilla y León has a high level of participation in training sessions.

	Management	Control	Monitoring	Evaluation	Communication	Nobody participated in such events
<b>Yes</b>	90%	55%	50%	50%	100%	0%
<b>No</b>	10%	45%	50%	50%	0%	100%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: N=20

### 3.2.2 Partnership

The thematic networks coordinate the main policies financed in the national OP. They respond to the principle of coordination, partnership and multilevel governance. In relation to the ERDF and the ESF, the following stand out in Spain:

- R+D+I Policy Network: Integrated on a permanent basis by the bodies responsible for R+D+I policies of the National Administration and the NUTS 2, and the European

Commission. With the occasional participation of other agents and main actors linked to the sector. Allows the actions supported by the ERDF programmes within the TO1 (EECTI AND RIS3) to be coordinated, as well as with Horizon 2020, Marie Curie, ERA-NET, COSME, etc.

- Environmental Authorities Network: Integrated on a permanent basis by the bodies responsible for management of ESI and environmental funds in the National Administration and the NUTS 2, and the European Commission. Allows the actions supported by the ERDF programmes to be coordinated within the TO4, 5 and 6, as well as these with programmes such as LIFE+. The network also oversees the compliance and observance of the crosscutting principle of Climate Change.
- Equality between Women and Men Policies Network. Aims to contribute to the real and effective integration of equality of opportunities between women and men in the interventions of the ERDF, ESF and the Cohesion Fund. It is integrated by the bodies responsible for R+D+I policies for equality in the National Administration and the NUTS 2, and the European Commission.
- Communication Networks: the National Administration and the NUTS 2 form the GERIP (Spanish group of Information and Advertising Managers), formed by those responsible in the field of information and publicity of the Regional Administrations and those nominated by the Managing Authorities of the various Funds (ERDF and ESF). It also gives continuity to the GRECO-AGE Communication Network, formed by the ERDF managing bodies of the National Administration and the Local Entities.
- Urban Initiatives Network: Integrated on a permanent basis by the bodies responsible for urban policies in the National Administration, the NUTS 2, the Federation of Municipalities and Provinces, and representatives of town councils. In the case of this OP, as there is no urban section, the participation in this Network is not yet decided.

At Castilla y León level, the constitution of a Regional Committee is envisaged for the Coordination of ESI Funds, in which the coordination of the different regional programmes financed with the ESI Funds will be established. A least one meeting per year will be held where the major advances will be pooled and the lines of work for the following year will be set out.

**Interviewees stress** in general that the Monitoring Committee meetings are participatory and any of those attending can contribute their opinion. All documents that are presented at the meetings are the subject of discussion and subsequent approval.

In the meetings of the different thematic networks, those attending can take part in the discussions and express their views regarding the matters discussed. However, these meetings are not open to civil society but are intended to the participation of technical staff.

On the other hand, each time public policies are being opened out to citizens. In the case of some of the ESF actions there is a transparency portal where all the plans are posted for citizens to have an opinion on all the issues. This web site is visited by students, where all the logos are displayed.

**According to stakeholder survey respondents:** The way the programme partnership operates is inclusive, open and fair (60%) and the operation of the programme's partnership principle facilitates a shared understanding and shared commitment by partners to achieving the

programme's objectives (55%). On the contrary, the greatest disagreement is for affirmation: partners are only interested in promoting their own organisational and financial interests (40%).

	The way the programme partnership operates is inclusive, open and fair	The operation of the programme's partnership principle facilitates a shared understanding and shared commitment by partners to achieving the programme's objectives	Partners are only interested in promoting their own organisational and financial interests
<b>Strongly agree</b>	10%	15%	5%
<b>Agree</b>	50%	40%	25%
<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	15%	30%	20%
<b>Disagree</b>	15%	5%	30%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	10%	0%	10%
<b>Don't know</b>	0%	10%	10%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%

Source: N=20

### 3.3. Assessment of added value

Aspects are taken into account such as the added value in financial terms, the extension of the importance given in the programming of the ESI funds at the beginning of partnership and multi-level governance, and monitoring and evaluation methodologies that promote an efficient use of financial resources are taken into account to analyse the added value of the Operational Programmes of European Funds in Castilla y León.

The additional support that the ESI Funds represent in financial terms to commit to certain actions is highlighted, amongst which are included the following:

- Actions relating to innovation and promotion of R+D and the knowledge society that allow the capacity in research, technological development and innovation to be strengthened, to promote the entrepreneurial spirit and boost the creation and development of business projects.
- Actions to promote the use and research in the field of renewable energies such as solar or biomass.
- Sustainable development actions at local level, focusing mainly on integrated projects for urban and rural regeneration.

Another of the notable aspects of the added value of the ESI Funds, is their contribution in the field of economic and social cohesion. In this sense, within the scope of the economic crisis that we have suffered in the past few years, the actions in the field of employment and social integration have had, if anything, much more relevance than in other previous stages of implementation of European aid.

The application of the partnership principle is also a fundamental pillar on which the programming process is based, highlighting the participation of numerous organisations and the consensus reached between all of them at the time of carrying out the programming process for the actions to be undertaken in the 2007-2013 period, and intensively in the current 2014-2020.

Finally, monitoring and evaluation methodologies are an improvement of the effectiveness of the implementation of the financial resources, taking into account the following aspects:

- The monitoring of the actions offers a higher level of information that allows the analysis to be addressed regarding the correct development of the programmes. The existence of productivity and results indicators allows a rigorous monitoring of the actions that adds more information compared to other programmes funded by national and/or regional funds that do not provide for this type of analysis in their development.
- With regard to the evaluation system that accompanies the ESI Funds, its development over several programming periods has made it possible to implement an evaluation culture that has led to transfer them to other programmes financed with Public Funds. In this line, setting specific times for reflection, it is consolidated as one of the best options to value the scope of the planned objectives and the subsequent decision-making that allows the correction of the problems detected.

## 4 Cohesion policy communication

### 4.1 Approach to communication

Both in the 2007-2013 period, as in the current 2014-2020, Castilla y León has opted for a joint communication strategy for the ERDF and ESF funds. Among the objectives that have guided the communication strategies of the European Funds, both in the 2017-2013 period as in 2014-2020, are to emphasise the role of the ESI Funds and ensure transparency in the management of the Funds. However, in the current programming period there is a greater emphasis on the role of beneficiaries for the dissemination of the achievements.

Communication strategies/plans 2007-2013		
Main objectives	Measures	Target groups
Highlighting the role played by the Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation act of the Operational Programmes.</li> <li>• Evaluation of the Operational Programmes</li> <li>• Preparation of documents describing the Programmes.</li> <li>• Preparation of the informative leaflets of the Programmes.</li> <li>• Advice and guidance.</li> <li>• Preparation of a "Practical Instruction".</li> <li>• Monitoring of compliance by the managing centres of the provisions for information and publicity in the notices of the actions</li> <li>• In the resolutions or awards of actions that are to be co-financed, reference to the Funds.</li> <li>• Beneficiaries must ensure that whenever an operation is financed with funds from the Operational Programme it must meet the requirements of article 8 of chapter II of the Regulation 1828/2006.</li> <li>• Holding of training courses.</li> <li>• Control of compliance of the regulatory standards</li> <li>• Annual informational activity.</li> <li>• Organisation by the managing authorities of an annual joint activity for all OPs.</li> <li>• Raising the European Union flag</li> <li>• Publication of the list of beneficiaries</li> <li>• Publicity campaign</li> <li>• Theme days and specific training.</li> <li>• Maintenance of the Websites of the Managing Authorities and of the Government of Castilla y León.</li> <li>• Editing of the European Documentation Gazette.</li> <li>• Permanent audiovisual compilation.</li> <li>• Video summary of the implementation of the Programmes.</li> </ul>	Actual beneficiaries
Ensure the transparency of grants from the Funds.		Potential recipients (regional and local Administration, SMEs, non-profit entities, organisations, training centres)
To publicise the role played by the NUTS 2 and the General Administration of the State in the management of European Funds		Public opinion in general



Communication strategies/plans 2014-2020		
Main objectives	Measures	Target groups
To maintain continuity in information tasks with respect to the previous period, putting more emphasis on the role of beneficiaries in the communication process.	<p>MEASURE 1.1. Specific actions for the preparation of Accessible materials.</p> <p>MEASURE 1.2. Publication of the OP in digital format.</p> <p>MEASURE 1.3. Advice and guidance from the Intermediate Organisation of the OP towards the managing bodies.</p> <p>MEASURE 1.4: Advice and guidance by the managing bodies.</p> <p>MEASURE 1.5. Specific actions will be carried out by the managers to prepare the materials accessible to persons with disabilities.</p> <p>MEASURE 2.1: The managing authority shall provide an IT tool that will be downloaded from the single portal.</p> <p>MEASURE 2.2: Holding of training courses.</p> <p>MEASURE 2.3: Organisation of specific workshops/seminars.</p> <p>MEASURE 2.4. Consolidation of the work carried out by the networks responsible for publicity.</p> <p>MEASURE 2.5. Publication and dissemination of templates for the preparation of good practice sheets of ERDF projects by the beneficiaries.</p> <p>MEASURE 2.6: Control of compliance of the regulatory standards</p> <p>MEASURE 2.7: Advice and guidance.</p> <p>MEASURE 2.8: Monitoring of compliance by the managing centres of the provisions for information and publicity in the notices of the actions</p> <p>MEASURE 2.9: The resolutions or awards of actions that are to be co-financed shall include the following paragraphs.</p> <p>MEASURE 2.10: Beneficiaries must ensure that whenever an operation is financed with funds from the Operational Programme it must meet the requirements of Annex XII of Regulation 1303/2013.</p> <p>MEASURE 2.11: Monitoring of compliance with the regulatory standards by the management bodies.</p>	Potential beneficiaries
To ensure transparency in the management of the OPs through publicity of grants from the ERDF and ESF operational programmes, using new methods and communication tools.	<p>MEASURE 3.1: The Managing Authorities will organise an annual important information activity.</p> <p>MEASURE 3.2. Activities for the celebration of Europe Day.</p> <p>MEASURE 3.3: Publication on the website of the Managing Authorities of the list of operations.</p> <p>MEASURE 3.4: Consolidation of the single website of the Managing Authorities</p> <p>MEASURE 3.5: Consolidation of the good practices database</p> <p>MEASURE 3.6: Raising the European Union flag</p> <p>MEASURE 3.7: Presentation act of the Operational Programmes.</p> <p>MEASURE 3.8: Digital editing of the Operating Programmes</p> <p>MEASURE 3.9: Theme days and specific seminars for training.</p> <p>MEASURE 3.10: Participation of the Intermediate Organisation of the ERDF and ESF OP in seminars</p> <p>MEASURE 3.11: Maintenance of the European Funds section of the Website of the Government of Castilla y León.</p> <p>MEASURE 3.12: Digital edition of a newsletter on European information.</p> <p>MEASURE 3.13: Permanent audiovisual compilation.</p> <p>MEASURE 3.14: Publicity campaign</p> <p>MEASURE 3.15: European Funds seminars in schools.</p> <p>MEASURE 3.16: Programming of specific actions with a view of highlighting both the start and the completion of "star" projects</p> <p>MEASURE 3.17. Whilst the operation is carried out, the beneficiary assumes the responsibility to inform the whole of the citizenship of the receipt of the co-financing.</p> <p>MEASURE 3.18. Publication of the calls for grants in the BOCYL.</p>	Beneficiaries
		Public in general

The budget devoted to the communication actions has meant 0.30% of the total budget for the ERDF and ESF regional OP in the 2007-2013 period, while in the current 2014-2020 it has increased

to 0.46% of the OPs, evidence of increased importance assigned to the dissemination of the actions undertaken.

<i>Total allocation</i>	<b>Castilla y León</b>	<b>Unit</b>
Allocation [2007-2013]	2,900,000 (1,800,000 ERDF and 1,100,000 ESF)	EUR
Allocation [2014-2020]	1,896,028 (50% ERDF and 50% ESF)	EUR

To assess the effectiveness of communication strategies, all the Spanish regions had the definition of performance indicators and results from their start, as shown in the following table.

<i>Monitoring indicators in the Communication strategies/plans PO ERDF y ESF - Castilla y León</i>					
<b>Output indicators</b>	<i>Estimated 2007-2013</i>	<i>Estimated 2014-2020</i>	<b>Result indicators</b>	<i>Estimated 2007-2013</i>	<i>Estimated 2014-2020</i>
Activities and Public Events (No.)	328	122	(No) Participants	24,600	9,434
Dissemination Actions (No.)	439	771			
External Publications Undertaken (No.)	140	284	% of publications distributed/edited	100	100
			Distribution Points	141	77
Websites (No.)	3	8	Visits	155,000	150,000
Advertising supports (No.)	758	11,860			
Internal documentation distributed (No.)	86	1,292	% Organisations Covered	100	100
Information and Publicity Networks (No.)	2	4	Meetings	37	94
			Participants	91	60

The governance model for communication in Castilla y León was supported at national level by the communication network GERIP composed of persons responsible in the field of communication of the Regional Communication Plans. This group, which is kept in the current programming period, not only has an impact in the organisation and implementation of the different Communication Strategies, but also in all the monitoring and evaluation activities for these. In addition, this network enables the exchange of good practices and experiences in the field of information and publicity.

In GERIP network agreement was reached for both the strategic lines to be followed by the regional communication strategies, as well as the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms used by the Spanish regions. In particular, there was agreement for:

- The definition of common indicators of implementation, results and impact.
- The definition of the criteria of good practices common to all strategies, and their annual compilation for the entire OP.
- The definition of an evaluation system throughout the period with two major milestones: mid-term evaluation and final evaluation of the communication strategies.

Similarly, the National Managing Authority has set up GRECO-AGE, a network integrated by those responsible in the field of communication of the managing bodies of the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund of the National Administration, which serves as a channel to inform and make decisions in matters relating to information and publicity in the scope of their competencies within each Operational Programme.

From the 2007-2013 period, each OP developed a slogan and a logo that is used in all communications. The slogan that was agreed in Spain for all programmes was adopted by the national Managing Authority "A way of making Europe". In addition, Castilla y León adopted the slogan "Europe drives our growth" which is currently maintained.

<b>Governance framework in the Communication</b>	
<b>2007-2013</b>	<b>2014-2020</b>
<b><i>Communication networks</i></b>	<b><i>Communication networks</i></b>
INFORM (European Commission)	INFORM (European Commission)
INIO (European Commission)	INIO (European Commission)
GERIP (National)	GERIP (National)
GRECO-AGE (National)	GRECO-AGE (National)
	Regional communication network of Castilla y León
<b><i>Bodies responsible for implementation of the measures</i></b>	<b><i>Bodies responsible for implementation of the measures</i></b>
The Managing Authority for the ERDF, represented by the Sub-Directorate General of ERDF of the Directorate General for Community Funds of the Ministry of Economy and Finance.	Directorate General for Community Funds Ministry of Economy and Finance
The Managing Authority for the ESF, represented by the Unit for Administering the European Social Fund, of the DG for Social Economy, Self-Employment and the ESF, for the Ministry of Labour and Immigration (UAFSE)	Associate Sub-Directorate for Management of the Unit for Administering the European Social Fund (UAESF) Ministry of Employment and Immigration
The regional Intermediate Organisation of the ERDF and ESF Operational Programmes, represented by the Directorate General for Budgets and Funds of the Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Government of Castilla y León.	Directorate General for Budgets and Statistics
Those Intermediate Organisations appointed by the Directorate General for Community Funds that appear in the ERDF Operational Programme of Castilla y León	Care Service for People with Disabilities. Management of Social Services.
Those Intermediate Organisations designated by the Directorate General for Budgets and Community Funds of the Ministry of Finance of the Government of Castilla y León, which appear in the ERDF Operational Programme	Social Inclusion Services Management of Social Services.
Those Organisations that are defined in the ESF Operational Programme of Castilla y León, and that support the management of the Directorate General for Budgets and Community Funds of the Ministry of Finance of the Government of Castilla y León	Public Employment Service - ESF
The beneficiaries	D.G. For Women.
	D.G. of the Youth Institute
	D.G. Vocational Training and Special Regime
	D.G. for Innovation and Educational Equity
	D.G. Universities and Research - ESF
	Agricultural Technological Institute (ITACyL)

Governance framework in the Communication	
2007-2013	2014-2020
	D.G. Roads and infrastructure
	Service for the Restoration of Historical Heritage. D.G. Cultural Heritage.
	Service for Planning and Studies. D.G. Cultural Heritage.
	D.G. For Quality and Environmental Sustainability
	D.G. Telecommunications
	Agency for Innovation, Funding and Business Internationalisation of Castilla y León
	Agency for Innovation, Funding and Business Internationalisation of Castilla y León
	Service for Educational Statistics, Processing of Educational Information. D.G. For School Education Policy.
	Service for Programming and Investments. D.G. School Education Policy.
	D.G. Universities and Research - ERDF
	REGIONAL ENERGY BODY
	D.G for Energy and Mines
	Regional Health Management
	D.G. Industry and Competitiveness
	General Secretariat - Regional Ministry of Economy and Finance
	Public Employment Service - ERDF
	Environmental Infrastructure Public Company of Castilla y León

As novelties for the new period, the Government of Castilla y León, has set up a communication network for the 2014-2020 period where all agencies that participate in the ERDF and ESF OP will form part of it, in addition to the Intermediate Organisation, and which will allow the coordination and exchange of information in the communication strategy development area to be maintained at regional level. In the scope of this network, there will be at least as many annual meetings as meetings of the national GERIP network, with the objective of transmitting to the managers that agreed in it.

With regards to the Management model, communication managers have been established for this current period in all managing organisations that participate in the ERDF and ESF OP that are in addition to those already defined for the communication strategy at national and regional level.

**Interviewees stress** that during the 2007-2013 period, the Communication Plan of the EFRD and ESF Operational Programmes of Castilla y León was prepared in coordination with the rest of national and regional authorities in Spain, in line with the provisions laid down in the Regulations.

In the 2014-2020 period, following the line of work that began in the period preceding the time to prepare the Communication Strategy of the EFRD and ESF Operational Programmes of Castilla y León, a greater involvement of the management bodies that participate in the OP and a greater visibility of the projects considered as good practice was opted for.

The Communication Policy has become, from the 2007-2013 period a priority element of the Operational Programmes, granting a leading role both in the own management tasks, as well as in monitoring and evaluation.

In fact, the volume of resources, both financial and human, over time has increased. For this period, Communication Strategies, as has been agreed in the GERIP, dedicated 0.3% of total grants to communication tasks.

This importance is reflected in the incorporation to the Annual Implementation Reports and meetings of the Monitoring Committees of a particular space which reflects the progress made in the implementation of the Strategy /Communication Plan.

In general, all the participants in the interviews are aware of the importance that is being given to communication with the passage of time.

On the other hand, it is confirmed that only that which has been the subject of effective and efficient financial management can be disseminated and communicated. Therefore, communication is considered a priority, but to a lesser degree than the responsibilities arising from the management of the OPs.

**According to stakeholder survey respondents**, in relation to the communication tools proposed, television (65%), videos (50%) and publicity campaigns on TV and radio (50%) are the least used to disseminate Cohesion Funds. Without a doubt, the most used tools are boards or billboards with the EU flag (90%), followed by the web (80%), workshops (65%), newsletters (55%), and press releases (55%).

	TV	Radio	Local and regional newspapers	National newspapers	Workshops, seminars	Brochures, leaflets, newsletters	Press releases	Program me website	Film clips/videos	Plaques/billboard with EU flag	Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Youtube)	Publicity campaigns on television and/or radio
<b>Never</b>	25%	15%	5%	25%	15%	5%	5%	10%	25%	5%	10%	25%
<b>Rarely</b>	40%	25%	20%	15%	10%	30%	10%	10%	25%	0%	25%	25%
<b>Sometimes</b>	35%	40%	35%	30%	10%	10%	30%	0%	25%	5%	25%	30%
<b>Often</b>	0%	10%	35%	20%	30%	15%	30%	35%	15%	30%	20%	10%
<b>Very often</b>	0%	10%	5%	10%	35%	40%	25%	45%	10%	60%	20%	10%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: N=20

## 4.2 Assessment of effectiveness of communication strategies

As has been mentioned, to assess the effectiveness of the communication strategies there are implementation and results indicators. The effectiveness of these indicators has been analysed in the two evaluation years of the communication strategies made in 2010 and 2013.

These indicators have been allowed to carry out the annual monitoring of the strategies from the 2007-2013 period, and are maintained in the current 2014-2020. The Managing Authority designed a computer application (INFOCO) that has facilitated the collection and analysis of data to monitor these indicators.

<i>Progress of the monitoring indicators of the Communication strategies/plans PO ERDF y ESF - Castilla y León</i>							
Output indicator	Estimated 2007-2013	% Implementation (2013)	Estimated 2014-2020	Result indicators	Estimated 2007-2013	% Implementation (2013)	Estimated 2014-2020
Activities and Public Events (No.)	328	83.75%	122	(No) Participants	24,600	71.60%	9,434
Dissemination Actions (No.)	439	81.35%	771				
External Publications Undertaken (No.)	140	103.55%	284	% of publications distributed/edited	100	98.80%	100
				Distribution Points	141	71.60%	77
Websites (No.)	3	100%	8	Visits	155,000	63.90%	150,000
Advertising supports (No.)	758	93.35%	11,860				
Internal documentation distributed (No.)	86	90.39%	1,292	% Organisations Covered	100	97.80%	100
Information and Publicity Networks (No.)	2	100%	4	Meetings	37	85.20%	94
				Participants	91	89.50%	60

The Final Communication Evaluation conducted in 2013 noted that, although the degree of implementation of the achievement indicators presented an average of over 90%, which extrapolated to the entire period would lead to the conclusion that it would end with a success rate of almost 100%, it was pointed out that it would be necessary to carry out actions and measures until the end of 2013.

With regard to the results indicators, they offered disparate implementation rates in 2013, which, though on average exceeded 80% of implementation, only two of them exceeded it. In any case, it was expected that the targets set for 2013 would be reached.

The definition of impact indicators was also carried out, whose calculation undertaken in the interim and final evaluations of the communication, and that have made it possible to assess the impact of the communication strategies in Spain. However, in the 2007-2013 period the impact indicators did not have a target value.

These indicators allow the effects or more long-term consequences of actions in the field of information and communication to be measured, and whether those effects are attributable to such

interventions. In the 2014-2020 period it has been decided to set a target value for these indicators taking into account the results achieved in the previous period.

Impact indicators	Estimated 2007-2013	Implementation (2010)	Implementation (2013)	Estimated 2014- 2020
Degree of knowledge of existing obligations in the programming, management, monitoring, control, evaluation and information and communication (%)	NP	77.00%	86.37%	88%
Rate of satisfaction, which indicates the valuation of the beneficiaries/Intermediate Organisations and/or managers or participants with respect to the information provided	NP	71.15%	75.75%	78%
Utility rate of the actions	NP	77.43%	95.17%	97%
Degree of knowledge of the Cohesion Policy funds (ERDF, ESF) (%)	NP	69.56%	70.05%	72%
Degree of knowledge of the role played by the European Union (%)	NP	77.26%	79.07%	81%

In general, the results obtained in the indicators that measure the impact of the Communication Plan are quite high, a result that was valued very positively in the Final Evaluation of the Communication Plan conducted in 2013. These values have led, in turn, to a challenge of defining programming values for the 2014-2020 period.

Thus, the evaluations carried out in the 2007-2013 period highlight positive aspects such as the achievement of the objectives set for the planned actions. This has highlighted the significant number of dissemination actions developed, events, publications, posters indicating EU funding, and support for the development of European Funds websites and communication networks as essential points in communication policy. As a result of these actions, an important diffusion of the work of the European Funds has been achieved, reflected in the number of attendees to the events held, the number of distribution points used in the dissemination of publications or the significant number of visits to the websites developed by the bodies involved in the management of the OPs. In this way, it has been possible to increase awareness of the European Funds and the EU's role in Castilla y León, as seen in the evolution of impact indicators, although it is still considered necessary to continue working so that the information reaches all population groups.

The negative points identified on which further work is needed include the need to involve the media more closely in disseminating the EU's role, including that of the political class, and to make the added value of Cohesion Policy visible in areas such as cooperation, education and transparency.

Beyond the evaluations made for the Communication Plans, as provided for in the 2014-2020 period for 2019 and 2023, the inclusion of information related to the communication of European Funds is produced in the annual implementation reports of the Operational Programmes. These reports contain a chapter dedicated to presenting the progress in the application of the Communications Strategy, providing qualitative and quantitative information on the information and publicity measures undertaken; the means of communication used; the provisions relating to the publication, electronic or by other means, from the list of beneficiaries, operations, and public funds allocated;

the degree of physical and financial implementation of the measures of the Plan (monitoring indicators), in addition to the cases of good practice.

**Interviewees stress** there is no common response to the activities that have been the more and less effective, but there is a common feeling outside of the Administration that the efforts are not enough and that the message does not reach the population.

However, it is noted that homogenisation in the application of the regulatory standards in communication matters has facilitated that their application have been more effective.

On the one hand, it is said that the advertisements on television, newspapers or radio are those that have a greater visibility, followed by interpersonal communication and dissemination through the internet. In this sense one interviewee also noted that in their projects the web is what has the most impact. 77u

Among the most effective measures in the improvement of visibility of the measures co-financed by the ESF are communication networks, as well as the measures adopted and promoted by the Intermediate Organisations and own beneficiaries due to their greater proximity to specific groups. On the other hand, mouth-to-mouth has proved to be a significant element of knowledge.

At the same time, among the activities with the greatest impact can be highlighted the best practices databases, based on criteria set forth within the GERIP, and which constitute a point of reference for the European institutions.

**According to stakeholder survey respondents**, Except for the administrative capacity and resources dedicated to communication activities, most of the 30% are satisfied with the rest of statements. The most commonly agreed upon is the support from the EC on communication.

	The way Cohesion policy is communicated to citizens	The branding and messages used to communicate Cohesion policy	The use of human interest/personal stories	The support from the European Commission on communication	The targeting of different groups with different communication tools	The administrative capacity and resources dedicated to communication activities
<b>Very satisfied</b>	5%	10%	10%	10%	0%	0%
<b>Satisfied</b>	30%	25%	20%	35%	40%	25%
<b>Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied</b>	35%	45%	35%	25%	40%	30%
<b>Unsatisfied</b>	30%	20%	25%	25%	15%	35%
<b>Very unsatisfied</b>	0%	0%	0%	5%	5%	10%
<b>Don't know</b>	0%	0%	10%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: N=20

According to more than 50% of respondents, communication efforts are effective in all areas raised in the question. Perhaps the greatest inefficiency is in fostering good working relations with the media and press to reach the general public.



	Conveying the achievements of Cohesion Policy programmes overall and the role of the EU	Conveying the achievements of co-funded projects and the role of the EU	Using social media to promote the programme and projects (e.g. Twitter, Youtube, Facebook)	Fostering good working relations with the media and press to reach the general public
<b>Very effective</b>	5%	10%	10%	10%
<b>Effective</b>	55%	50%	45%	50%
<b>Neither effective nor ineffective</b>	20%	20%	20%	10%
<b>Ineffective</b>	5%	5%	10%	10%
<b>Very ineffective</b>	10%	10%	10%	20%
<b>Don't know</b>	5%	5%	0%	0%
<b>Not used</b>	0%	0%	5%	0%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: N=20

### 4.3 Good practice examples

The criteria of good practices in the 2014-2020 period are oriented to the selection of projects. However, given the experience of the 2007-2013 period in which good practices for communication and good practices for projects were differentiated in the annual reports, it was decided that communication remains an essential criterion for the selection of a project as good practice.

Below are the criteria that will allow an approximation to the criterion of "good practices" of actions co-financed in the 2014-2020 period. Therefore, any action that responds to these criteria may be considered as such for all purposes.

#### Good practice criteria for assessing communication measures

Criteria	Description
<i>Criterion 1. The role of the Funds has been duly disseminated</i>	The role of the ERDF or the ESF in the action has been duly disseminated among the beneficiaries, potential beneficiaries and the general public. Everything carried out for the communication of the said action must be presented.
<i>Criterion 2. The action incorporates innovative elements</i>	It will be necessary to highlight the innovative character of the action, which may be linked to the methodologies, technologies or processes, to the services provided and the various tools used to put it into operation. Consideration will also be given to innovation in connection with the territory or field of implementation and target audience
<i>Criterion 3. Adequacy of the results obtained to the objectives set</i>	The main objectives must be highlighted, showing the added value of having received the European Funds, indicating if all of them are being complied with and emphasis on what types of activities and results can be attributed to the project: Impact in physical, quantitative, qualitative terms

Criteria	Description
<i>Criterion 4. Contribution to the resolution of a problem or weakness detected in the framework of the implementation</i>	It is accurate to describe to what problem does the project presented respond to and how its implementation favours the development of the territory and/or target audience.
<i>Criterion 5. High degree of coverage of the target population</i>	Its scope must be mentioned, not only on the direct beneficiaries, but also on the general population.
<i>Criterion 6. Consideration of the horizontal criteria</i>	Consideration of the horizontal criteria of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, as well as corporate social responsibility and environmental sustainability. How these criteria have been applied in the corresponding intervention must be indicated.
<i>Criterion 7. Synergies with other policies or instruments of public intervention</i>	The fact of whether the action has strengthened the performance of other funds shall be taken into account (regional, national, European) and has contributed to enhance the positive aspects of it.

It should be noted that in order an action can comply with the criterion referring to the dissemination of the role of the Funds, it is necessary to put in value the role of the European funds in it. To do this, the most appropriate communication tools listed in the communication indicators must be used. Without this, this criterion is not considered fulfilled and therefore the action may not be a "Good Practice".

In the evaluation reports provided for in the years 2019 and 2023, the evaluation teams should present their opinion about the Good Practices presented up to the time of the report, indicating what are the strong points of those submitted and suggesting ways of improvement, in the event that this is considered appropriate.

The Good Practices for communication of the ERDF and ESF OP selected in the 2010 and 2013 assessments are listed below, which include the holding of public events, creation of publications and websites, publicity campaigns, networking and guidance documents. In particular, until 2010 the good practices highlighted were the following:

- Annual public event for the year 2008 in which a number of companies were awarded the distinction "Best of Castilla y León" recognising them as Collaborating Entities in Equal Opportunities between Men and Women.
- Dissemination of co-financing by the ERDF to extend the cover of digital terrestrial television in Phase I with informative plaques in the main towns covered.
- Creation of a website to include all the aspects related to the ERDF in the Town Council of Palencia.
- Customised communication to the person working with the co-financing in their employment contract by the ESF.
- Constitution of the GERIP Network "Spanish group of Information and Advertising Managers".
- Preparation in the GERIP network of the "General Guide for Monitoring and Evaluation of Communication Plans of the ERDF Operational Programmes, Cohesion Fund and ESF 2007-2013".

- Publication on the public website of the Aena Contracting Portal of all the notices of invitation to tender for contracting files requiring concurrency, with reference to those co-financed by the ERDF.
- Internal Information Seminars conducted by the ICEX, to report on the obligations in the field of communication in the current programming period (2007-2013).

In the second half of the programming period, the communication actions were the following:

- Heritage website for Castilla y León.
- Structural Funds course
- Publication by the European Commission of Seven Lives of the History of a Researcher of Castilla y León beneficiary of the European Social Fund.

**Interviewees stress** some good practices such as:

- ✓ The good communication practices regarding that which is the external market and to comply with the regulations, in the TQ programme (transfer of knowledge and company), the university foundations are doing very important work. They have 400 page communication dossiers. Of particular note is the Foundation of the University of Salamanca, is especially good in communication issues.
- ✓ One of the good practices of selected communication as such in the 2007-2013 period, has been the courses organised by the Directorate General for Budgets and Statistics, both regarding the ERDF and the ESF, which includes, among others, a module referring to communication. These 25 hour long courses are addressed to all those who are involved in the management of the FFEE, so that through their work, they can also disseminate the main co-financed operations.
- ✓ Also highlighted as a good practice of communication is the website for the Directorate-General for Heritage, whose actions are framed within the ERDF Operational Programme 2007-2013.
- ✓ Actions in the 2007-2013 have also been emphasised such as information campaigns and educational activities in the 2007-2013 period on the actions and results of the interventions of the ERDF, ESF, FC OPs and those linked to Cross-border Cooperation Spain - Portugal. In the framework of this campaign, there was an advertisement for television, radio, press publications and posters in different formats, which were distributed.
- ✓ A very good example is that of EOI that illustrated, took possession of certain metro stations and covered them and explained how many entrepreneurs this had enabled and to how many people its training had reached.
- ✓ The Gypsy Secretariat Foundation has also carried out some very good campaigns in the framework of the ESF.
- ✓ Campaign "A diversidade suma ao teu equipo" of the Spanish Red Cross (Galicia Suma-Convergence Region-Galicia).
- ✓ Direct marketing/emailing campaign: "able" from the ONCE foundation.
- ✓ Promotion of New Technologies of Information and Communication, to facilitate greater and better participation of women as active subjects and not as mere spectators carried out by the Women's Institute.

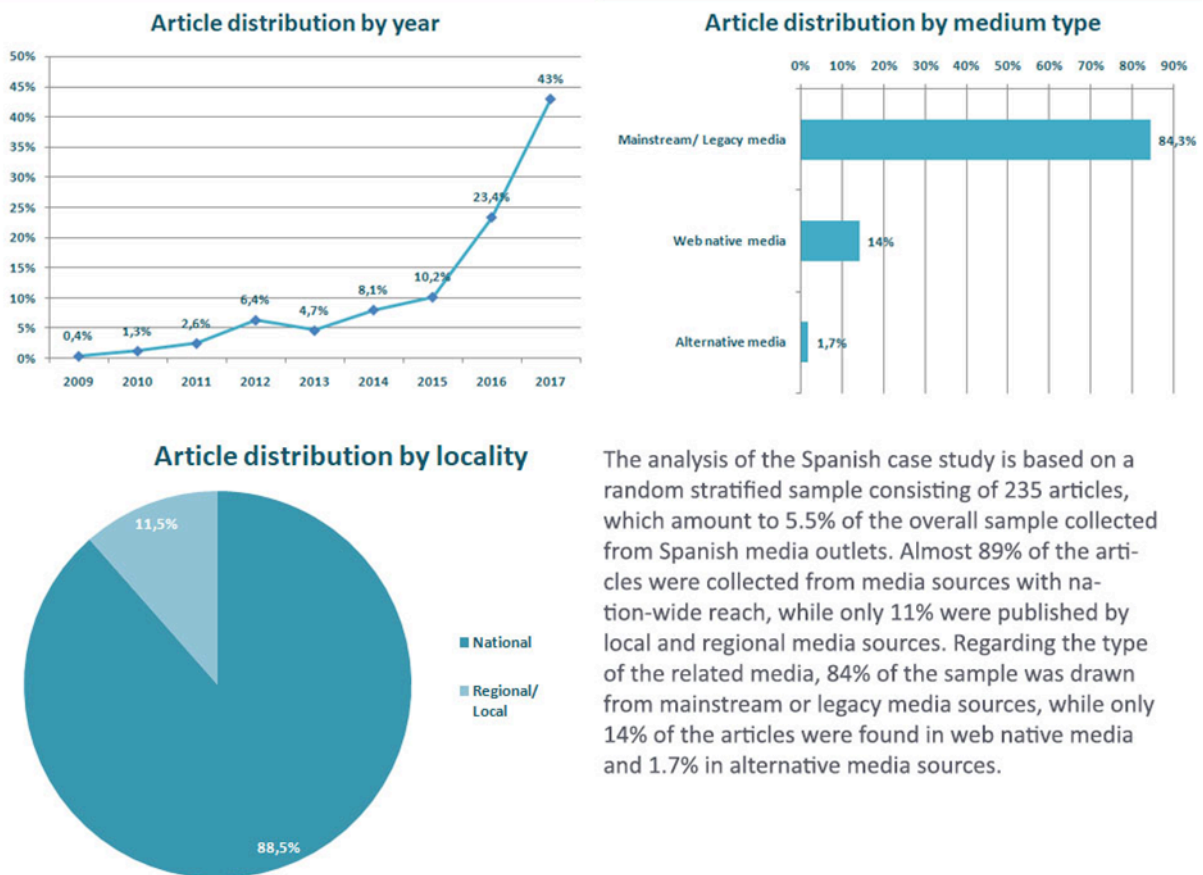
- ✓ Etc.

The population interviewed suggests:

- ✓ Transmitting specific, measurable results is what is of interest to citizens. Measuring those results in the ESF area is very complicated, in ERDF it is simpler. The cost in internal management that the application of European funds has for the Administrations should also be measured, as in many cases the balance would be negative. Public officials assume the extra management of the European funds as part of their work activity, and superiors are unaware of the scope and depth of the management. The cost in human resources to verify European funds is excessive and does not, in many cases, compensate the amounts received.
- ✓ Citizens must not come to understand, to the greatest extent, the achievements of the cohesion policy. What should be clear is that the EU has put money in that action that benefits them, because that can be quick and easy to understand, and I think that it is sufficient for the awareness of the contribution of cohesion policy.

## 4.4 Media framing of Cohesion policy

**Figure 3.10.1**  **Spain**



The framing analysis of the Spanish sample reveals that most of the analysed articles frame EU Cohesion Policy in economic terms as the “Economic consequences” general frame is dominant in 31.5% of the sample, as shown in Figure 3.10.2. Another 22% of the analysed items place emphasis on the implications of EU Cohesion policy on citizens’ “Quality of life” (Frame 2), 11% focused on the “Incompetence of local/ national authorities”, while 17% contained no framing. However, it should be noted that the Spanish media applied the “Power” frame in 7.2% of the analysed items, which is higher than most of the case studies that were analysed. This is mostly due to the 6.4% of the articles that applied the “Political leverage” subframe (5.1) suggesting that EU Cohesion policy is used by European authorities to put pressure on national governments, as shown in the subframe analysis in Figure 3.10.3, and indicates a critical stance of the Spanish media towards European institutions and officials.

### Dominant Frame Frequencies (Spain) (v= 235)

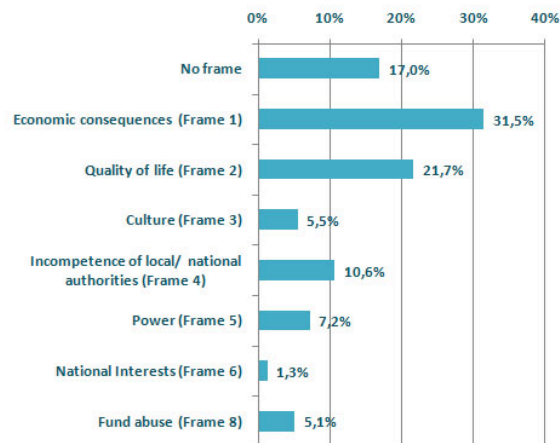


Figure 3.10.2  
Dominant frame frequencies in Spanish media

### Dominant Subframe Frequencies (Spain) (v= 235)

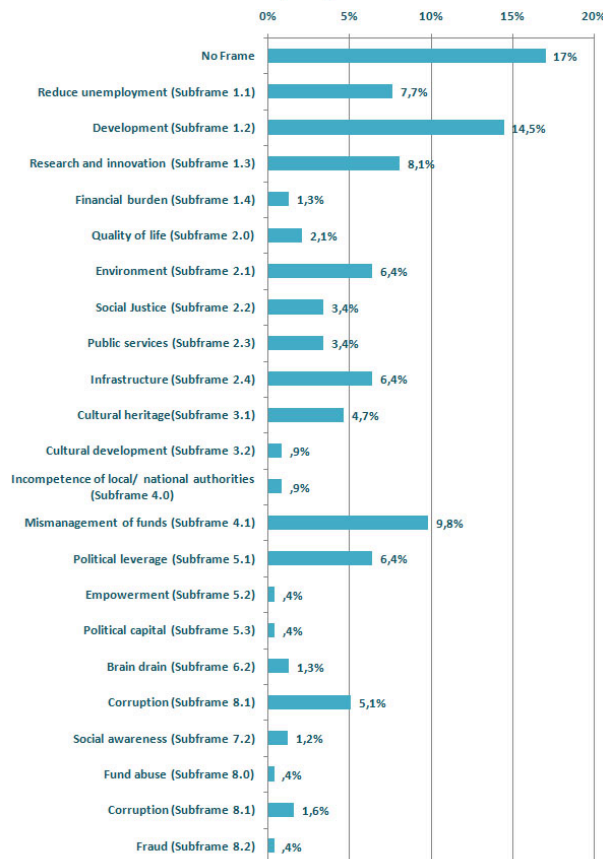
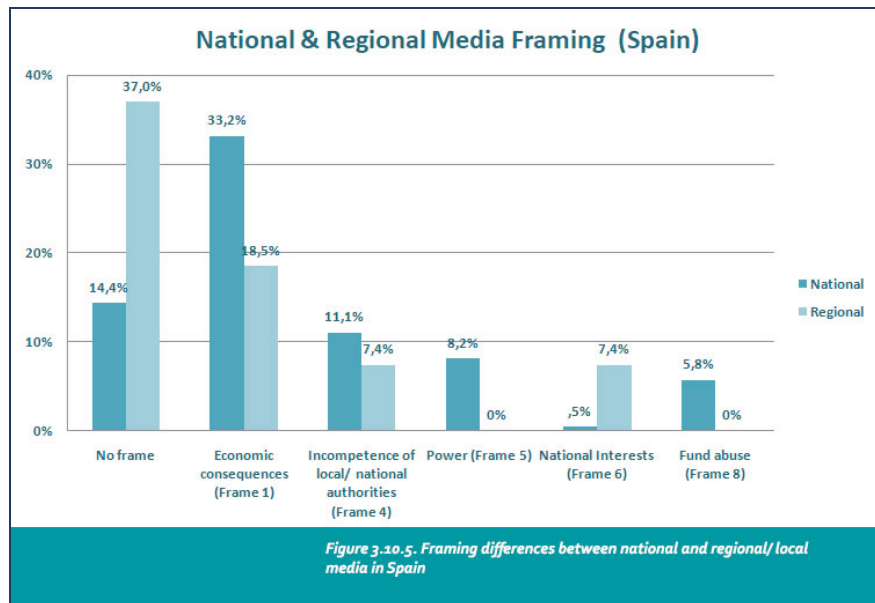


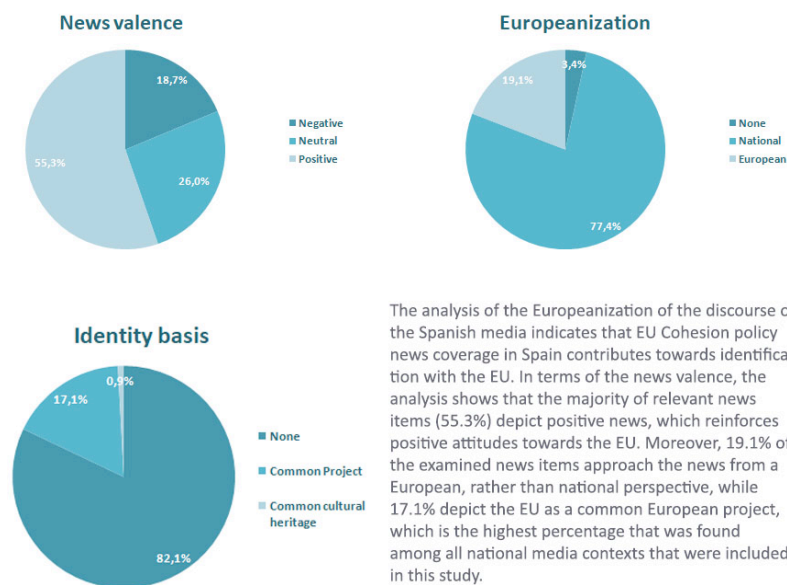
Figure 3.10.3  
Dominant subframe frequencies in Spanish media

The framing analysis of the Spanish media revealed several differences between national and regional media, as shown in Figure 3.10.5. One striking difference is that regional media tend to refrain from applying any frames in their presentation of the news twice as often as national media. In addition, regional media also employ the “National interests” frame (6) in 7.4% of the cases, while

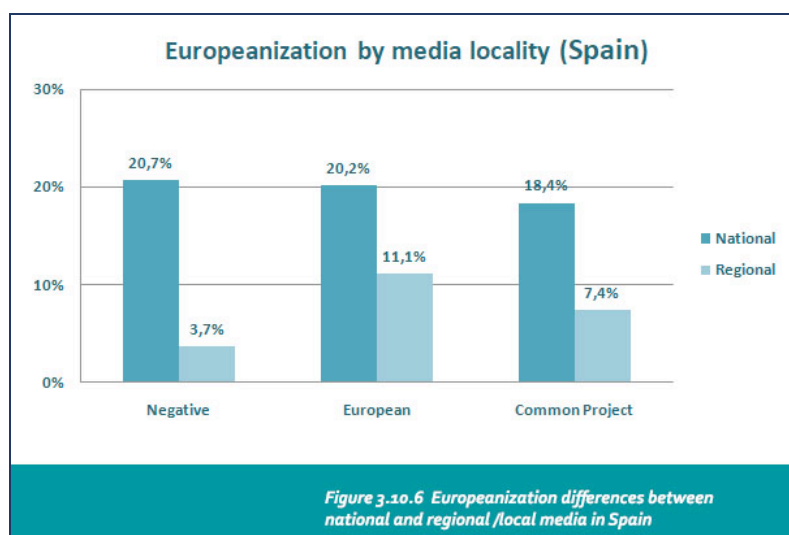
in national media Frame 6 is nearly inexistent. On the contrary, national media primarily interpret EU Cohesion policy related news in terms of its implications on the economy (Frame 1). Additionally, national media employ Frame 4 (“Incompetence of local/national authorities”) more often than regional media, while they also employ the “Power” frame and the “Fund abuse” frame. The latter two do not appear at all in Spanish regional media coverage.



**Figure 3.10.4** 🇪🇸 **Spain - Europeanization variables**



Several differences were identified in respect of the Europeanisation variables between national and regional media in the Spanish landscape, as Figure 3.10.6 illustrates. Firstly, it should be noted that national media tend to present more negative news in relation to EU Cohesion policy, a fact that entails negative connotations in relation to the EU. However, national media tend to approach news from a European perspective more often than regional media, and depict Europe as a common European project twice as often as regional media outlets.



In no case have **the interviews** mentioned that the tone is negative, but that it is neutral or positive. On the one hand, from the media not much importance is given to information on co-financing. But on the other hand, a positive effect can be considered if one takes into account the improvement that has taken place in the sense of belonging in recent years, despite the context of euroscepticism observed.

**According to stakeholder survey respondents**, not all respondents have direct relationship with the media. However, the relationship most commented on is through the usual press releases and even publications in newspapers.

Some tools are used more than others depending on the project, but generically should be highlighted:

- ✓ Communications with press releases, articles in local or regional newspapers.
- ✓ Website of the government of CyL and the Regional Ministry in particular, or their own website if the project has one.
- ✓ In some cases, forums or events have been organised.
- ✓ Merchandising.
- ✓ In some cases there have been regional campaigns on television and on the radio.

Except in specific projects, social networks have not been used to promote programme achievements and interactive engagement with stakeholders. In this context, it is noted that the existing constraints in relation to access to ICT (for example, social networking), represent a clear limitation in terms of maximizing the impact of the communication strategy, particularly among the younger population that is precisely one of the groups with less awareness of the Cohesion Policy



According to **stakeholder survey** respondents, in general more than 70% of respondents feel that all the communication tools proposed are effective. It is striking that 85% of them consider television to be efficient, when it is one of the least used tools.

	TV	Radio	Local and regional newspapers	National newspapers	Programme website	Video/film clips and presentations	Plaques /billboard with EU flag	Social media	Media /publicity campaigns on TV or radio	Press releases	Brochures, leaflets, newsletters, other publications	Events
<b>Very effective</b>	40%	25%	25%	25%	15%	20%	30%	30%	40%	20%	20%	30%
<b>Effective</b>	45%	60%	55%	55%	50%	35%	45%	40%	35%	55%	45%	40%
<b>Neither effective nor ineffective</b>	0%	5%	5%	5%	15%	25%	25%	20%	20%	10%	5%	25%
<b>Ineffective</b>	5%	5%	5%	10%	15%	5%	0%	0%	5%	10%	15%	0%
<b>Very ineffective</b>	5%	5%	5%	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	5%	5%	0%
<b>Don't know</b>	0%	0%	5%	5%	5%	10%	0%	10%	0%	0%	5%	5%
<b>Not used in my region</b>	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: N=20

In general, 75% of participants agree with communication measures are in increasing citizens awareness of EU Cohesion Policy except Citizens mistrust Cohesion policy communication activities and messages or consider them to be propaganda (35%). Respondents therefore consider that communication activities contribute to the citizens' awareness of EU Cohesion Policy.

	The communication activities have led to an increased awareness among citizens of the contribution of Cohesion policy to regional and local development	The communication activities of Cohesion policy funds increase the sense of belonging of citizens to the European Union	The communication activities of Cohesion policy funds contribute to increasing citizens' support for the European Union	Citizens mistrust Cohesion policy communication activities and messages or consider them to be propaganda
<b>Strongly agree</b>	30%	40%	30%	5%
<b>Agree</b>	45%	35%	45%	30%
<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	10%	15%	15%	10%
<b>Disagree</b>	10%	10%	10%	50%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	5%	0%	0%	5%
<b>Don't know</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: N=20

## 4.5 Implications for citizens CP perceptions and attitudes to the EU

Interviewees stress of ways of improving the communication of EU policy objectives and results to the public there have been several comments received in this regard::

- ✓ It is considered that continuing to maintain the co-financing cartel is important because the EU logo is identified quickly.
- ✓ The disregard by politicians has a direct influence as it undermines the citizens' interest in these matters.
- ✓ We must begin to communicate from below, working with children in schools.
- ✓ In the local newspaper (special for European funds).
- ✓ Consider new communication channels based on social networks, taking advantage of new existing technologies, supply publications, brochures, leaflets, etc...that are edited on paper by an electronic publication and try to make Good Practices not just remain in their mere dissemination but to look for instruments to be applied in similar circumstances in geographically separated sites.
- ✓ To encourage journalists to include European co-financing in their news.
- ✓ Communicate the importance and the role of the European Funds in the development of Spain and in the consolidation of companies, the creation of infrastructures, as well.

There was a comparable question in the stakeholder survey in which the respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements. The statement that the communication activities of Cohesion policy funds contribute to increasing citizens support for the European Union was the most agreed with, whereas the statement that citizens mistrust Cohesion policy communication activities and messages or consider them to be propaganda showed lowest level of agreement by the respondents.

## 5. Citizens views of Cohesion policy and the EU

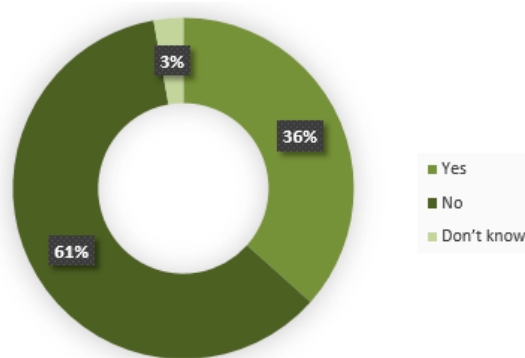
### 5.1 Survey results

During this period, there has been no survey of the population under the Cohesion Policy in Spain. Partly because the evaluation of the Operational Programmes Communication Strategies is planned for 2019.

Within the framework of the Cohesify Project, a survey of 500 citizens of Castilla y León has been carried out with the ultimate aim of discovering their perception of Cohesion policy and their sense of identity vis-à-vis the European Union.

Below are some of the results obtained in the survey:

- 61% of the 500 participants in the survey have not heard of projects financed by European Funds, a high and worrying value which shows that project communication is not being as effective as it should be.



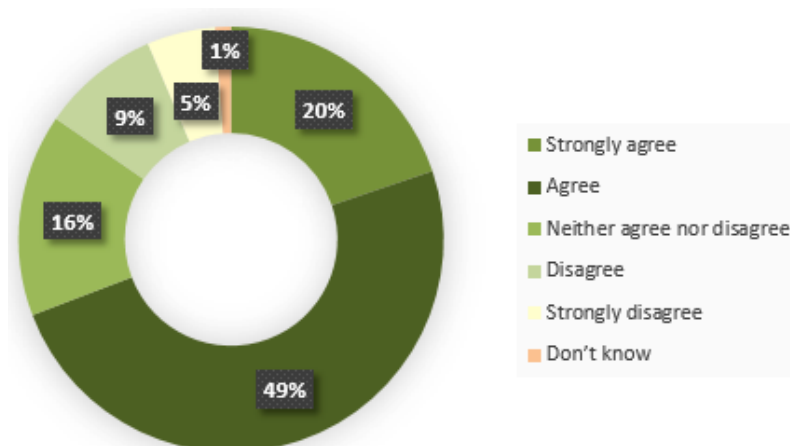
Source: 500

- As in the stakeholder survey, the most effective way to publicise Cohesion Fund projects is through billboards and local newspapers. To publicise nearby projects, local television, press and radio are equally more effective than these national media outlets.

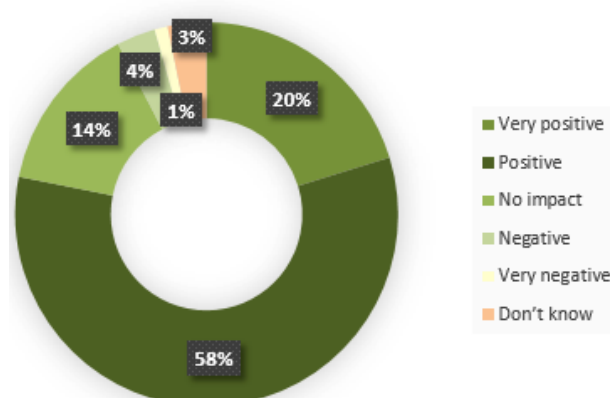
	Yes	No	Don't Know
National newspapers	51.9%	48.1%	0%
Local newspapers	72.1%	27.9%	0%
National TV	54.1%	44.3%	1.6%
Local TV	59%	40.4%	0.5%
National radio	37.2%	61.2%	1.6%
Local radio	43.7%	53.6%	2.7%
Internet	48.1%	51.9%	0%
Social media	25.1%	74.3%	0.5%
Billboard	63.4%	35%	1.6%

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Workplace	29%	70.5%	0.5%
Personal experience	57.4%	41.5%	1.1%
Other	11.5%	85.2%	2.7%
Total	100%	100%	100%

- Overall, there is a positive appreciation in relation to the benefit of joining the European Union: 69% of those surveyed agree with the statement made.



- As in the previous answer, the impact of the European Funds in Castilla y León is perceived positively in 69% of the responses obtained after the anonymous survey of 500 citizens.



- Among those who responded that the impact of the European Funds is not negative 34 people specified the reasons for their response. The most indicated are the allocation to the wrong projects, bad management and corruption among officials and beneficiaries.

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Not enough funding	50%	47.1%	2.9%
Allocation to the wrong projects	70.6%	23.5%	5.9%
Bad management	70.6%	23.5%	5.9%
Not executed on time	58.8%	29.4%	11.8%
Corruption among government officials awarding EU tenders	70.6%	23.5%	5.9%
Corruption among beneficiaries of EU funds	70.6%	20.6%	8.8%
Other reasons	35.7%	64.3%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: 34

- A total of 143 responses to the question *"Why do you think there was a positive impact?"* have been compiled. It is considered that the reason why the impact is positive is because the funds are concentrated on the most necessary projects for the territory of Castilla y León.

	Yes	No	Refused	Don't Know
Extensive funding	54.5%	36.4%	1.4%	7.7%
Allocation to the right projects	70.6%	18.9%	0.7%	9.8%
Good management	48.3%	39.2%	0%	12.6%
Executed on time	42.7%	28.7%	0%	28.7%
No corruption among government officials awarding tenders	25.2%	44.1%	0%	30.8%
No corruption among beneficiaries of EU funds	30.8%	42.0%	2.1%	25.2%
Other reasons	54.7%	43.8%	1.6%	0%

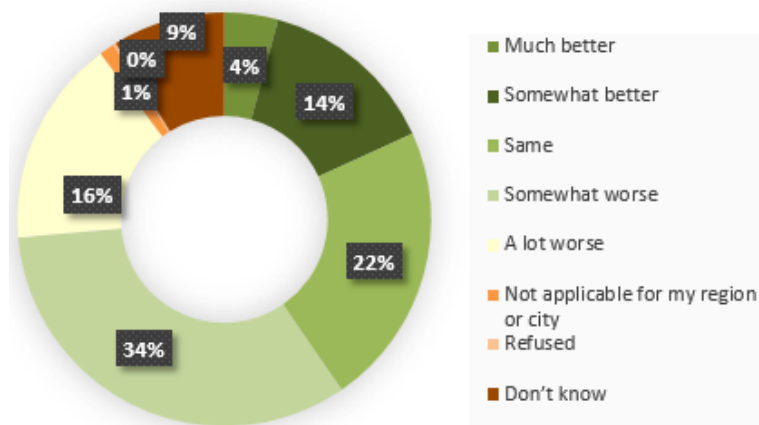
Source: 143

- All the funds are almost equally well known in Castilla y León (around 65%), perhaps the least known is the Cohesion Fund, given that in addition in the period 2014-2020 these funds have not been implemented in Spain.

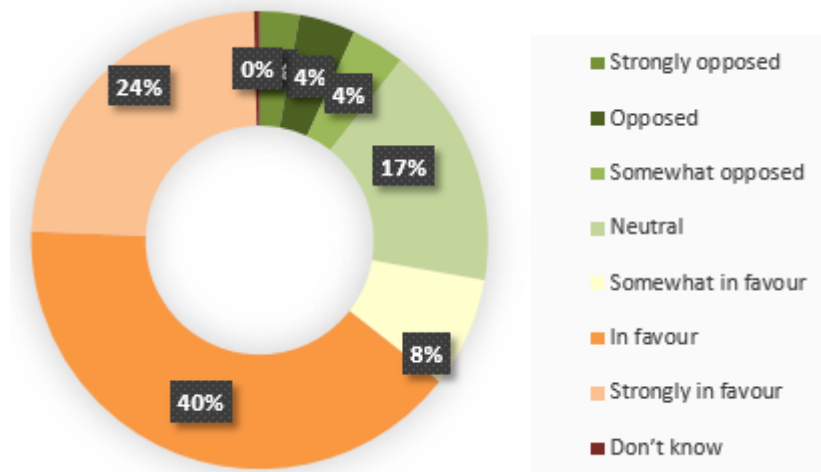
	Yes	No	Don't Know
ERDF	65.4%	33.6%	1%
Cohesion Fund	61.4%	38.6%	0%
ESF	68.2%	31%	0.8%

Source: 500

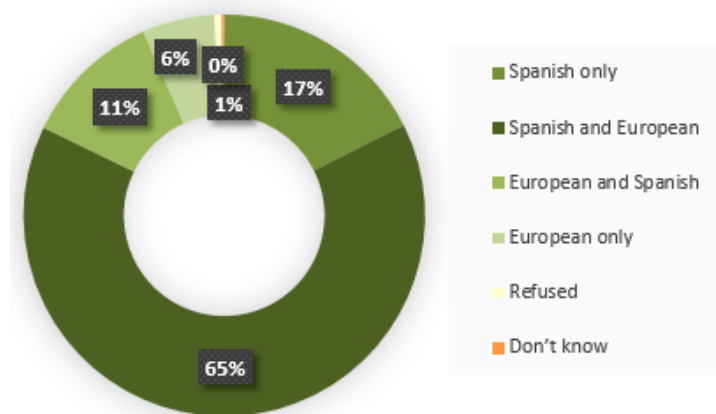
- 49.4% of the surveyed opinion that the development of Castilla y León would have been worse without the intervention of the European Funds, 22% believes that regional development would have been the same and 18.4% believes that the evolution of the NUTS 2 would have improved without these funds.



- 71.8% of respondents were in favour of European integration, 17.2% were neutral and 10.6 opposed to a greater or lesser degree (2.8% strongly opposed). Therefore, in general, the position is open to the European Union.



- Of the 500 respondents, 64.6% feel Spanish first and at the same time European and 17.6% feel only Spanish. In addition, 11.2% feel European in the first place and Spanish afterwards and 5.8 % feel only European.



## 5.2 Focus group results

### Summary of focus groups discussions

#### **Cohesion Policy**

Focus groups participants had heard of the term “Cohesion policy” before, but were unaware of its meaning. In one of the groups (ES 3) participants said they were more familiar with the term “EU funds”. The ESF and ERDF (including Interreg) were mentioned spontaneously in two of the groups by three participants (ES 1 and ES 3). One of the participants worked at a firm that had received ERDF support, while another participant knew that some job positions in a Spanish municipality were co-financed with ESF. The source of knowledge of Interreg was not explained.

The majority of participants could name a project or area they believed had received EU funding (see Table 1). Besides infrastructure projects (roads, airports, and sewage treatment plants), participants mentioned business support, energy projects, tourism and job support.

Table 1. Participants' reference to projects' co-financed by EU funds

Energy/Unspecified project in wind energy, energy efficient street lighting
Airport infrastructure
Urban regeneration
Support for businesses
Zoopark
Tourism/Rural tourism accommodation
Research projects supported by ERDF
EU Information point
Training and job support provided by ESF
Interreg
LIFE projects
Mediterranean Corridor

In all the groups, there was a positive assessment of the impact of the projects. Participants admitted that they do not pay enough attention in their everyday life to give a detailed appraisal of the projects. In this respect, it is not surprising that many believed there was not enough information about the projects and they expected to see more publicity from the EU.

### **European identity**

According to the participants in Castile and León, Europeans share a common territory. They are united through a common history, culture and values (human rights and democracy), and EU related activities and freedoms, such as the ability to travel and trade and the euro. In constructing the notion of European identity, participants employed both cultural and civic identity markers. Nevertheless, culture and territory were also thought to be elements that can diminish a common sense of Europeanness among Europeans. For example, participants said that Spain shares linguistic roots and customs with other Mediterranean countries in contrast to Northern and Central European countries, highlighting a sort of North and South division that was also employed in other focus groups in different countries. In relation to the EU, participants thought that being European meant belonging to a community where there are different nationalities, which cooperate to solve common problems but not necessarily implying a transfer of loyalty. Such a representation is closer to the notion of an intergovernmental Europe rather than a supranational entity.

### **European identity and Cohesion policy**



When discussing the role of Cohesion policy in European identity, participants did not dispute its potential to contribute to the European identity, but emphasised that this depends on increasing the visibility of of Cohesion policy so that citizens become more aware of its existence. For these reasons, they considered communication and education as important elements of the European identity building process more generally.

## 6. Conclusions

### 6.1 Key findings and scientific conclusions

#### A. Conclusions on the implementation of Cohesion Policy

1. The study carried out on the implementation of regional policy in Castilla y León shows an **inefficient initial context that makes it difficult to achieve results** in all areas. Opportunistic guidance is identified in company policies. However, in the same context, actions aimed at infrastructures or social policies have been appropriate according to the needs detected.
2. The analysis of the political manifestos shows that **Cohesion Policy has not been a recurring theme used at political level**. In general, parties often do not include a clear focus on European issues in their political agendas.
3. The **regional context** influencing the design of the European Funds Operational Programmes has been characterised by the following issues:
  - Socio-economic context: unequal distribution of the population, prevalence of small businesses and lack of competitiveness of enterprises.
  - In social matters, high unemployment, gender imbalances, high drop-out rates, and the lack of connection between the education system and the productive system.
  - Low investment in innovation and shortcomings in the use of new technologies.
  - The dependency on road transport, the increase in the generation of waste and greenhouse gas emissions, stand out as environmental problems.
4. In order to address the problems identified, the **ERDF OP** 2007-2013 focused mainly on **business development and innovation, transport and energy actions and environmental aspects**. In the case of the **ESF OP**, the budget was earmarked for improving **employability**. In the period 2014-2020 the actions are being oriented towards the same areas, due to a similar regional context marked by the economic crisis.
5. Multi-regional programmes at national level have increased the budgets of ERDF and ESF funds in Castilla y León. However, **the budget for regional operational programmes has decreased considerably** from 2007-2013 to 2014-2020, especially in the case of ERDF.
6. In regard to the **achievements** after the implementation of the OPs:
  - Castilla y León has shown an excess of expenditure on innovation compared to its absorption capacity. Compared to the national average, Castilla y León has achieved higher financial absorption ratios in investments related to improving the quality of life, but worse results in investment in basic infrastructures.
  - Significant results have been achieved in the period 2007-2013 in the creation of employment (7568 jobs created) and of companies (1660 Start-ups supported) and in the promotion of cooperation between companies and research centres (1,127 cooperation projects).
7. The support of **national thematic networks** of European Funds has facilitated the management of OPs and implementation at regional level.

#### B. Conclusions on the Communication Policy

1. In general, **Castilla y León's communication strategies in the period 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 have fulfilled all communication requirements**. They include guidelines established

at national level through the Group of Information and Publicity Managers (GERIP), concrete objectives, measures, a monitoring and evaluation system and a concrete budget.

2. **The monitoring system, following the indications of the GERIP**, uses the same indicators from the beginning of the 2007-2013 period, and these indicators are associated with target values. This makes it possible to calculate the effectiveness of strategies and make comparisons between regions and periods in Spain. The monitoring system has performance and outcome indicators, which are compiled annually, and impact indicators, which are calculated through population surveys, coinciding with the two planned evaluation exercises per period.
3. **The budget allocated for communication in Castilla y León** has been reduced in the period 2014-2020. In the latter programming period, it has been calculated on the basis of a percentage of the total budget of the Operational Programmes.
4. In the period 2014-2020 a **regional communication network** has been created (Castilla y León Communication Network). This network complements and distributes the information dealt at national level in GERIP and in the Group of National Communications Officers (GRECO-AGE).
5. Much progress has been made in raising **the awareness of the technicians involved in the management of the funds** about the importance of **highlighting the achievements of the European Funds**. However, the political class still gives priority in communicating its own contribution over that of the European.
6. **The involvement of the media in disseminating the European contribution** to regional development has so far not been achieved. The media analysis carried out reveals the critical view of the European Union, often disseminated by its pressure on national governments. However, the national media show a vision of the EU as a common project far beyond what has been seen in the media in other countries. One of the results is that around 70% of the population surveyed have a positive view of EU membership and feel European.
7. Although the surveys carried out in the Communication Evaluations reflected an increase in public awareness of the European Funds, the survey carried out under the Cohesify project shows that to date **61% of respondents had not heard of projects financed by the European Funds**.
8. **Local newspapers, billboards and local television** have been among the most effective tools of communication.

## 6.2 Policy implications and recommendations

### A. Recommendations on the implementation of Cohesion Policy

1. Prior to the implementation of the post-2020 Cohesion Policy, carry out a study **identifying the causes of inefficiency in the implementation of European Funds** in certain areas. This allows for the design concrete actions in the new strategies to overcome the problems detected.
2. The lack of information, concern and knowledge about European issues among citizens is reflected in the low presence of European issues on regional political agendas and manifestos. Because of that, **communication policy must be strengthened** so that European affairs are of interest of the public.
3. In view of the expected reduction in the regional allocation of European funds, it is necessary to reflect on the new direction that programming strategies should take from 2020 onwards. In this way, it is necessary to **analyse whether the criteria for**

**concentration of investment should be further adapted to regional specificities** in order to maximise the impact of the fund.

4. Given the improvement in socio-economic indicators following the economic crisis, it is necessary to **review the analysis of the regional context**.
5. Once it has been shown to be effective in creating jobs and promoting collaboration between companies and research centres, **take advantage of the synergies generated to achieve specific objectives in strategic sectors** of Castilla y León.
6. Continue to work on **regional networks** to translate the agreements reached at national level into all areas that are addressed by the European Funds at regional level.

## B. Recommendations on communication policy

1. **Enhance the work of the new regional communication network** in translating national decisions to regional technicians and promoting coordination of communication at all levels. Disseminate successful communication actions and encourage the development of new actions through this regional network
2. **Raise awareness of the importance of communicating European contribution**, not only in the field of the management of European Funds. Greater effort to work with the media and the political class, which are not usually given priority in the dissemination of co-financed actions to the European contribution.
3. Once the implementation of strategy evaluations has been successfully addressed and results have been obtained, try to take a further step towards **the evaluation of concrete actions**, in order to have more information on their success and adapt the message.
4. **Promote good communication practices** that have worked in other European regions in view of the negative results of the citizens' survey. Some examples are:
  - Conferences that have an impact on the dissemination of project results, and attended by politicians and the media such as:
  - Annual communication events in the locations of projects financed by European Funds;
  - Open days of projects supported by European Funds.
  - Use of social networks to improve interconnection with citizens.
5. To **promote communication actions identified as most effective by the population**, such as the local press, billboards or local television channels, and others identified by fund managers such as working with children in schools and taking advantage of new technologies.
6. **Achieve greater involvement of the managing and beneficiary bodies in drawing up best practice** sheets highlighting European support for regional development and the success of projects.
7. To **value the European contribution to intangible actions**, such as education, the promotion of inter-agency cooperation or progress in the control and transparency of procedures.

## 7. Annex

### Annex 1: List of interviewees

Interview	Date	Type of organisation	Role
1	14.06.17	Regional state institution	Technical Advisor
2	26.06.17	Local government	ERDF officer
3	9.06.17	Regional state institution, Managing Authority	Management Authority
4	27.06.17	Monitoring Committee. Regional state institution	Service Coordinator
5	25.07.17	Monitoring Committee. Regional state institution	Service Coordinator
6	26.07.17	Social partner	Technical Advisor
7	27.06.17	National government	National Communication Officer
8	19.06.17	Economic partner	Technical Advisor
9	27.06.17	National government. Monitoring Committee	Head of Department
10	15.06.17	National government	European Social Fund Officer
11	14.07.17	National government	European Social Fund Communication Officer
12	02.07.17	National government	Environmental Officer

### Annex 2: Focus groups in Castilla y León

Three focus groups with 18 participants were conducted in the Spanish region of Castile and Leon:

FG	Location	Date	Number of participants	Number of female participants	Age range (min age)	Age range (max age)
ES 1	Salamanca	23/10/2017	5	2	30	42
ES 2	Salamanca	24/10/2017	6	4	22	25
ES 3	Salamanca	10/11/2017	6	3	33	66

## Annex 3: Stakeholders survey

Region	Contacts	All responses		Full responses (FR)	
	<i>count</i>	<i>count</i>	<i>[%]</i>	<i>count</i>	<i>[%]</i>
Andalucía	77	38	49,4%	20	26,0%
Total all regions	2191	803	36,6%	400	18,3%

## Annex 4: References

### *Communication strategies and plans*

The Communication Plan for the ERDF and ESF OPs of Castile-Leon 2007-2013

Communication Strategy for the Castile-Leon 2014-2020 ERDF and ESF

### *Programme documents*

Castilla y León European Regional Development Fund Programme 2007-13

Castilla y León European Social Fund Programme 2007-13

Castilla y León European Regional Development Fund Programme 2014-20

Castilla y León European Social Fund Programme 2014-20

### *AIRs*

Castilla y León European Regional Development Fund Programme 2007-13 Annual implementation report (2007)

Castilla y León European Regional Development Fund Programme 2007-13 Annual implementation report (2008)

Castilla y León European Regional Development Fund Programme 2007-13 Annual implementation report (2009)

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Castilla y León European Social Fund Programme 2007-13 Annual implementation report (2013)

Castilla y León European Social Fund Programme 2007-13 Annual implementation report (2014)

### *Evaluations*

Evaluation of the Communication Plan of the ERDF OP and ESF for Castile-Leon 2007-2010

Communication Plan Evaluation of the PO of FEDER and FSE from Castile-Leon 2007-2013