

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002143/24
to the Commission
Lynn Boylan (The Left)
(17 October 2024)**

Subject: Disparities in workers' payments covered under EU funds

In Ireland, there are two employment paths for personal assistants and note takers who assist third-level students with disabilities. Those employed directly by Education and Training Boards are paid through SOLAS, the designated intermediate body for Ireland's European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) programme for employment, inclusion, skills and training. Those employed by individual third-level institutions are paid through the Higher Education Authority's Fund for Students with Disabilities, which is also financed under the ESF+.

Personal assistants paid through SOLAS earn EUR 21 per hour. Those paid through the Fund for Students with Disabilities are paid EUR 14.50 per hour. Both funding streams come from the ESF+.

1. Are there rules around the allocation of ESF+ funding that aim to guarantee equality of pay for the same work across different funding programmes?
2. Has the Commission provided guidance to Ireland or other Member States about how to ensure equal pay across ESF+ funding programmes?

Submitted: 17.10.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Mînzatu on behalf of the European Commission
(17 December 2024)**

The Third Level Access activity (which included the Fund for Student Disabilities (FSD)) ceased being co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) 2014-2020 Operational Programme in 2018.

The salaries of personal assistants employed by the Higher Education Authority and by the Education and Training Boards are not co-financed by European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) for the 2021-2027 programming period.

Starting with the 2020-2021 academic year, SOLAS assumed sole responsibility for the management of the FSD, including the drafting and issuing of guidelines.

1. In the EU, wages are regulated on a national level with the participation of social partners and in full respect of and after taking into account EU law. While Directive 2023/970 ⁽¹⁾ calls on Member States to apply and support the principle of equal pay for equal work, there are no EU requirements that could guarantee equality of pay for the same work across different funding programmes. The responsibility for equal pay therefore lies on the national level.
2. In the 2021-2027 programming period, the Commission has not issued guidance on how to ensure equal pay across ESF+ funded programmes to Ireland or other Member States.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2023/970/oj>