



Strategic Plan 2016-2020

Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS)

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PART 1. Strategic vision for 2016-2020

A. Mission statement

The Structural Reforms Support Service (SRSS) is a new central service within the Secretariat-General, which has been in operation since 1 July 2015. It is responsible for steering and coordinating technical support for individual Member States (MS) in cooperation with other Commission services, other Member States and/or other international organisations. The emphasis is on the provision of support for the preparation and implementation of growth-enhancing institutional, structural and administrative reforms in MS. The SRSS operates upon request from the Member State.

In addition to providing and coordinating the provision of support for reforms in Member States, the SRSS coordinates the Commission's efforts to support the process led by the United Nations for the reunification of Cyprus. The SRSS is also responsible for the implementation of the EU Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community and for monitoring the application of the Green Line Regulation.

The SRSS, in close collaboration with the relevant Commission services and EU agencies, supports the Greek Authorities on migration management. The Head of the SRSS is the EU-coordinator for the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement on migration, reporting directly to the President of the Commission.

B. Operating context

Over the past years, Europe has suffered a deep economic and financial crisis. Many Member States are undergoing adjustment processes to correct macroeconomic imbalances accumulated in the past and many are facing the challenge of low potential growth. Effective implementation of structural reforms, timely and adequate transposition of the Union acquis and efficient and effective use of the EU funds are vital for encouraging investment, unlocking the growth potential, raising living standards and supporting the process of convergence in the EU.

In June 2015, the College decided - drawing on the expertise and know-how of the Task Force for Greece and the Support Group for Cyprus, amongst others, and recognising that winding down and re-creating task forces would result in an important loss of expertise, practical knowledge and efficiency - to set up a new service, the Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS), under the responsibility of Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union.

In February 2016, the SRSS received a special assignment for coordinating all the Commission's efforts to support Cyprus settlement talks under United Nations' auspices and for ensuring the implementation of EU Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community¹. The Task Force for the Turkish Cypriot community was transferred from the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) to the Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS).

¹ Minutes of the 2157th meeting of the Commission held in Brussels (Berlaymont) on 17 February 2016 PV(2016) 2157 final.

The Aid Programme focuses on the social and economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community with particular emphasis on the economic integration of the island, on improving contacts between the two communities and with the EU, and on preparation for the *acquis communautaire*.

The 2016 Annual Growth Survey recognised the efforts of Member States to modernise their economies and to address macroeconomic imbalances identified in previous years but also stressed that areas of concern remained and that new challenges were emerging. In this context, the Commission accompanied the Annual Growth Survey by a proposal for funding the provision of technical support to Member States: the proposal for a Regulation on the establishment of the Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP) for the period 2017 to 2020². Following the political agreement with the European Parliament and Council of Ministers reached in February 2017³, the SRSP is expected to be adopted and enter into force as soon as possible in spring 2017.

The financial resources managed by the SRSS currently stem from the centrally-managed technical assistance budget of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)⁴, the Preparatory Action for "Capacity development and institution building to support the implementation of economic reforms" (2016) and the Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community⁵. From mid-2017 further financial resources will come from the dedicated budget line to be established under the above-mentioned Regulation establishing the Structural Reform Support Programme.

c. Strategy

By supporting the implementation of structural reforms by Member States, the SRSS contributes indirectly to several general objectives and, consequently, also to the policy priorities of the Commission. However, the SRSS - acting as technical support provider - has no direct responsibility for the policies and reforms put in place by the Member States. The SRSS contributes actively to strengthening the overall capacity of Member States requesting support to prepare and implement growth-enhancing institutional, structural and administrative reforms and, in this context, contributes to the general objective 1 - A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment.

² Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the Structural Reform Support Programme for the period 2017 to 2020 and amending Regulations (EU) No 1303/2013 and (EU) No 1305/2013 {SWD(2015) 750 final} 2015/0263 (COD).

³ European Commission press release "Political agreement reached on Structural Reform Support Programme – a new tool to help Member States implement reforms", Brussels, 8 February 2017, available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-233_en.htm

⁴ These include resource of Article 25 "Management of technical assistance for Member States with temporary budgetary difficulties" of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006).

⁵ Council Regulation (EC) No 389/2006 of 27 February 2006 establishing an instrument of financial support for encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community and amending Council Regulation (EC) No 2667/2000 on the European Agency for Reconstruction.

1) A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment

Specific objective 1.1: Help Member States to prepare and implement growth-enhancing administrative and structural reforms, in particular in the context of EU economic governance processes and the implementation of EU law, through the provision of relevant technical support

In this respect, the support activities accompany the efforts of the Member States, and are complementary to other programmes and policies at national, European Union and international levels.

In order to support the achievement of the objective, the Commission presented a proposal for the Preparatory Action "Capacity development and institution building to support the implementation of economic reforms", which was adopted by the Budget Authority for 2016 budget, and a proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP) for the period 2017 to 2020, which was adopted by the Commission on 26 November 2015. Following the political agreement with the European Parliament and Council of Ministers reached in February 2017⁶, the SRSP is expected to be adopted as soon as possible in spring 2017.

Through the Preparatory Action and the SRSP, once adopted, the Service will contribute to the achievement of common goals of supporting economic recovery, job creation, boosting Europe's competitiveness and stimulating investment in the real economy. The SRSS will do this by coordinating and providing tailor-made support for the most important structural reforms in Member States in line with the key policy objectives of the Union and the findings and recommendations in the framework of the European Semester. The SRSS adds value to and complements existing assistance measures by focusing on aspects of support that are linked in particular to providing advice and technical expertise on the ground, i.e. accompanying the national authorities of the requesting Member States throughout the reform process or in specific phases of this process (scoping, prioritising, designing, road-mapping, implementing and evaluating). The support is mutually agreed between the Commission and the Member State concerned.

Through the activities described in this section, the SRSS contributes to the achievement of the general objective 'a new boost for jobs, growth and investment'. The effects of this work, combined with the implementation of growth-enhancing policies at European and national levels, should have a positive impact over the longer term on growth and employment, as reflected in the impact indicators chosen.

⁶ European Commission press release "Political agreement reached on Structural Reform Support Programme – a new tool to help Member States implement reforms", Brussels, 8 February 2017, available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-233_en.htm

Specific objective 1.2: Efficient steering and coordination of technical support provision to Member States across different Commission services as well as with respect to external actors in the field

Coordination of support to Member States, in close cooperation with other Commission services, other Member States and/or other international organisations, is part of the SRSS mandate. This activity is to be aligned with the existing structures established by the Secretariat-General in the European Semester process. The SRSS will complement existing resources for capacity building and technical support available within other Union funding programmes, as well as technical support and other actions financed by the Union funds. The SRSS will contribute to the different working groups already established, such as those in the framework of the European Semester, and will establish and steer new inter-DG networks in line with the coordination mechanism that has been agreed with all the relevant Director Generals.⁷

As a consequence, beneficiary Member State may make progress with respect to structural reform by benefitting from coordinated, coherent and effective support to prepare and implement reforms, particularly those set out in the European Semester country-specific recommendations.

Specific objective 1.3: Provision of assistance to the Turkish Cypriot community and efficient coordination of the Commission's efforts to support the process led by the United Nations for the reunification of Cyprus

The EU supports the negotiations (under the auspices of the UN) between the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities, which aim to reach a comprehensive settlement leading to the re-unification of the island.

The SRSS delivers assistance to the Turkish Cypriot community (TCC) under Council Regulation (EC) No 389/2006 (the "Aid Programme").

The SRSS is responsible for the monitoring of the application of the Green Line Regulation⁸, which sets out the terms under which persons and goods can cross the ceasefire line in Cyprus.

The Aid Programme is implemented in the areas of the Republic of Cyprus in which the Government of the Republic of Cyprus does not exercise effective control and where the application of the *acquis* is temporarily suspended pursuant to Protocol 10 of the Treaty of Accession.

This implies that the Commission operates in a unique political, legal and diplomatic context. *Ad hoc* arrangements are needed to implement the programme, while respecting the principles of sound financial management.

⁷ Ares(2017)986516 Note on technical support coordination mechanism.

⁸ Council Regulation (EC) 866/2004 of 29 April on a regime under Article 2 of Protocol 10 to the Act of Accession (known as the "Green Line Regulation").

The Aid Programme focuses on the social and economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community. It targets a wide range of beneficiaries such as students, farmers, civil society actors, schools, businesses and villages. It supports investments that help to support the Turkish Cypriot community in adhering to EU standards, such as those in the environmental sector. It also helps the Turkish Cypriot community prepare for the implementation of EU law, once a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue is agreed, and for the economic and social integration of the island.

The SRSS is responsible for continuing to pursue the general objective of facilitating the reunification of Cyprus by encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community, with particular emphasis on the economic integration of the island, on improving contacts between the Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities and with the EU, and to prepare the Turkish Cypriot community for the application of EU law following a settlement of the Cyprus issue.

The SRSS will continue to be actively engaged in providing support to the settlement process under the auspices of the United Nations.

PERFORMANCE TABLES

<i>General objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment</i>		
Impact indicator: Employment rate population aged 20-64 Source of the data: Eurostat		
Baseline (2014)	Target 2020	
69.2%	At least 75%	
Specific objective 1.1: Help Member States to prepare and implement growth-enhancing administrative and structural reforms, in particular in the context of EU economic governance processes and the implementation of EU law, through the provision of relevant technical support		Related to spending programme: yes
Result indicator: The extent to which the support provided helps Member States prepare and implement structural reforms, inter alia, reforms related to Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs). This indicator measures – for each Member State concerned - the help of technical support in the preparation and implementation of reforms (notably but not exclusively those indicated in the CSRs) based on the assessment carried out by the SRSS. The assessment may also benefit from the feedback of the Member States and of the "country support teams", which are part of the Commission coordination mechanism. Source of data: Country support teams (quantitative and qualitative information); consultation with Member States, missions and reporting on support projects, other data.		
Baseline* (2015)	Interim	Milestone⁹ Target 2020
	2018 (year)	
The baseline cannot be estimated as this is a new service, providing a new typology of activities. The SRSS started providing support to Member States (other than Greece and Cyprus) in 2016; the SRSP is expected to be adopted as soon as possible in spring 2017.	Increasing extent (baseline and methodology will be developed accordingly with the result indicator and objective set)	Increasing extent
Planned evaluations: Ex-post evaluation of the activities of the Task Force for Greece (TFGR) – Follow up of Recommendation no. 6 of Court of Auditors Special Report 19/2015; interim evaluation by mid-2019 and ex-post evaluation by end of December 2021 as provided for in the COM proposal on the SRSP		

⁹ The column should be deleted if only short-and medium term (less than 3 years) targets are set.

Specific objective 1.2: Efficient steering and coordination of technical support provision to Member States across different Commission services as well as with respect to external actors in the field		Related to spending programme: yes
Result indicator: Feedback on the efficiency of the coordination mechanism Source of data: SRSS monitoring data, information available from Commission coordination mechanism, other data.		
Baseline (2015)	Target 2020	
The baseline cannot be estimated as this is new service providing a new typology of activities	Positive assessment (by internal and/or external stakeholders) of the efficiency of the coordination mechanism	
Planned evaluations: An interim evaluation by mid-2019 and an ex-post evaluation by end of December 2021 as provided for in the COM proposal on the SRSP		
Specific objective 1.3 : Provision of assistance to the Turkish Cypriot community and efficient coordination of the Commission's efforts to support the process led by the United Nations for the reunification of Cyprus		Related to spending programme: yes
Result indicator 1: Tendency to trust the EU as an institution (category: Turkish Cypriot community(TCc)) Source of data: Eurobarometer		
Baseline (Eurobarometer 84 - 2015)	Interim Milestone (2018)	Target (2020)
51%	56%	60%
Result indicator 2: Feedback on the efficiency of the coordination mechanism for the activities of the Commission related to support of the UN-led process for the reunification of Cyprus Source of the data: DGs focal points, coordination mechanism and SRSS monitoring data.		
Baseline (2015)	Target (2020)	
The baseline cannot be estimated. The coordination mechanism is being established.	Positive assessment by the members of the coordination mechanism	
Result Indicator 3: Number of enterprises having received EU support in the form of a grant Source of data: KOBIGEM/EUPSO		
Baseline (2015)	Interim Milestone (2017)	Target (2020)
330	370	420

D. Key performance indicators (KPIs)

Among the result indicators for the specific objectives, the SRSS has identified the following key performance indicators:

- Under Specific objective 1.1 : The extent to which the support provided helps Member States to prepare and implement structural reforms, inter alia, reforms related to Country-Specific Recommendations;
- Under Specific objective 1.2: Feedback on the efficiency of the coordination mechanism;
- Under Specific objective 1.3: Number of enterprises having received EU support in the form of a grant.

PART 2. Organisational management

A. Human Resource Management

As described in Sections A and B, the Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) is a recently-created service, which started its activities on the 1st of July 2015.

The staff of the SRSS is composed of officials, seconded national experts, temporary staff members, contract staff members and special advisers. Part of this staff comes from the staff of the former Task Force for Greece (TFGR) and the Support Group for Cyprus (SGCY).

Moreover, on the 17/02/2016, the European Commission decided to transfer the 'Task Force for the Turkish Cypriot community', to the Structural Reform Support Service. The 'Task Force for the Turkish Cypriot community' was set up in 2004 in the Directorate-General for Enlargement and was transferred to the Directorate-General for Regional Policy in 2014. The 'Task Force for the Turkish Cypriot community' became part of the SRSS on 30 March 2016.

The support provided by the SRSS requires a high level of competence, flexibility and motivation from staff. In order to be able to assist Member States in implementing growth-enhancing institutional, structural and administrative reforms within the time-frames set, the SRSS has set up an organisational structure allowing for efficient information flow throughout the organisation, which enables timely management decisions. Staff of the SRSS is given high level of autonomy and responsibility.

Objective: Effective deployment of its resources in support of the delivery of the Commission's priorities and core business; a competent and engaged workforce, which is led by an effective and gender-balanced management and which can deploy its full potential within supportive and healthy working conditions.

Note: SRSS establishment plan adopted on 01/06/2016

Indicator 1: Percentage of female representation in middle management

Source of data: Analytic Platform

Baseline 2016 20%	Target 2020 40%
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Indicator 2: Percentage of staff who feel that the Commission cares about their well-being¹⁰

Source of data: Commission staff survey

Baseline EC: 2014: 34.9%	Target To be above Commission's average score in future staff surveys
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Indicator 3: Staff engagement index

Source of data: Commission staff survey

Baseline	Target 2020
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¹⁰ This indicator may be replaced by a fit@work index on which DG HR is currently working.

EC 2014: 65 %	To be above Commission's average score in future staff surveys
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B. Financial Management: Internal control and risk management

Based on the provisions of the Financial Regulation, the Authorising Officer shall put in place an organisational structure and an internal control system having regard to the risks associated with the management environment, their cost-effectiveness, and the nature of the actions financed.

Because of the SRSS inclusion within the SG structure, a series of activities is coordinated with or performed by the SG in order to avoid duplication and ensure effective performance of financial and control activities. In this context, the SRSS is responsible for the preparation and validation of all financial transactions under the **operational appropriations**, while the SG provides assistance in respect of the **administrative appropriations (global envelope)** and accounting activities.

Following the nomination of its own Authorising Officer by Delegation, from the 1st of January 2016, the SRSS has been responsible for budgetary planning and implementation and the adoption of the corresponding financing decisions.

The SRSS organisational management is complemented by an internal control system based on risk assessment and reporting in the Annual Activity Report.

In the period 2016-2020, the SRSS will operate in line with the above requirements by implementing and, if necessary, creating or reinforcing its internal control system to ensure the legality and regularity of its financial transactions, sound financial management and fraud prevention and detection.

Overarching objective: The Authorising Officer by Delegation should have reasonable assurance that resources have been used in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions including prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities.

Objective 1 : Effective and reliable internal control system giving the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and the regularity of the underlying transactions

Indicator 1: Estimated residual error rate¹¹

Where necessary specific residual error rates would be calculated for each programme managed or for expenditure with a common risk profile.

Source of data: SRSS Annual Activity Report

Baseline	Target
2016: New activity	<i>Below the materiality criteria every year (< 2%)</i>

Indicator 2: Estimated overall amount at risk for the year for the entire budget under the DGs responsibility.

Source of data: SRSS Annual Activity Report

Baseline	Target
2016: New activity	<i>None</i>

Indicator 3: Estimated future corrections

Source of data: SRSS Annual Activity Report

Baseline	Target
2016: New activity	<i>None</i>

Objective 2 (mandatory): Effective and reliable internal control system in line with sound financial management.

Indicator 1: Conclusion reached on cost effectiveness of controls

Source of data: SRSS Annual Activity Report

Baseline (year)	Target
2016: New activity	Conclusion to be reached on the basis of the estimation of costs of controls as a percentage of the overall payments in a year (tbd)

Objective 3: Minimisation of the risk of fraud through application of effective anti-fraud measures, integrated in all activities of the DG, based on the DG's anti-fraud strategy (AFS) aimed at the prevention, detection and correction of fraud.

Indicator 1: Updated anti-fraud strategy of SRSS, elaborated on the basis of the methodology provided by OLAF

Source of data: SRSS Annual Activity Report

Baseline	Interim Milestone	Target
<i>New activity</i>	<i>2017 Establishment of an Anti-Fraud Strategy (AFS) for the SRSS</i>	<i>Update of the AFS every three years (i.e.2020)</i>

¹¹ For the definition, see the first annex to the AAR instructions 2014 "Key definitions for determining amounts at risk" at <https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/budgweb/EN/rep/aar/Documents/aar-standing-instructions.pdf>.

C. Better Regulation

The SRSS is committed to helping to ensure that EU policy objectives are achieved effectively and efficiently. The principles of Better Regulation are applied across all areas of the Service. The elements of Better Regulation that relate to evaluation are co-ordinated and monitored by the SRSS Evaluation Function. This is in line with the Commission's evaluation standards. The standards require each DG to have an evaluation function responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring evaluation activities, promoting quality of evaluation and organisational learning and assisting the central services in the implementation of the Commission's evaluation policy. SRSS evaluations follow the requirements of Directives and Regulations in place. The SRSS is also responsible for the ex-post evaluation of the activities of the Task Force for Greece (TFGR). The mandate of the TFGR expired on June 30, 2015 and the new Structural Reform Support Service was set up on July 1, 2015.

Objective: Prepare new policy initiatives and manage the EU acquis in line with better regulation practices to ensure that EU policy objectives are achieved effectively and efficiently.

Indicator 1: Percentage of impact assessments submitted by SRSS to the Regulatory Scrutiny Board (RSB) that received a favourable opinion on first submission.

Explanation: *The opinion of the RSB will take into account the better regulation practices followed for new policy initiatives. Gradual improvement in the percentage of positive opinions on first submission is an indicator of progress made by the Service in applying better regulation practices.*

Source of data: SRSS

Baseline 2015	Interim Milestone 2016	Target 2020
New Service – baseline not available	<i>Positive trend if any</i>	<i>Positive trend if any</i>

Indicator 2: Percentage of the SRSS's regulatory acquis covered by ex-post evaluations and Fitness Checks not older than five years.

Explanation: *Better Regulation principles foresee that the regulatory acquis is evaluated at regular intervals. As evaluations help to identify any burdens, implementation problems, and the extent to which objectives have been achieved, the availability of performance feedback is a prerequisite for introducing corrective measures allowing the acquis to stay fit for purpose.*

Relevance of Indicator 2: *The application of better regulation practices would progressively lead to increasing the stock of legislative acquis covered by regular evaluations.*

Source of data: SRSS

Baseline 2015	Interim Milestone 2016	Target 2020
New service	<i>na</i>	<i>76% of EU acquis covered by evaluations</i>

D. Information management aspects

The SRSS will contribute to the Commission's broader policy on data, knowledge and information management. To this end, the SRSS will promote appropriate use of ARES to ensure timely retrieval of key documents and appropriate access /sharing of information.

Objective: Information and knowledge in your DG is shared and reusable by other DGs. Important documents are registered, filed and retrievable.	
Indicator 1: Percentage of registered documents that are not filed¹² (ratio)	
Source of data: <i>Hermes-Ares-Nomcom (HAN)¹³ statistics</i>	
Baseline	Target
2015	
22.5%	<1%
Indicator 2: Number of HAN files readable/accessible by all units in the DG	
Source of data: <i>HAN statistics</i>	
Baseline	Target
>90%	> 90%
Indicator 3: Number of HAN files shared with other DGs	
Source of data: <i>HAN statistics</i>	
Baseline	Target
<1%	>20%

E. External communication activities

The SRSS external communication will focus on demonstrating how the technical support provided by the Commission contributes to the achievement of President Juncker's priority number 1, A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment, and how the Commission supports the process led by the United Nations for the reunification of Cyprus. The external communication will focus on providing evidence on the added value of the technical support provided by the Commission to the Member States to carry out structural reforms. Through the support provided to the Turkish Cypriot community under Regulation (EC) No 389/2006, the Service will contribute to the public knowledge, awareness and understanding of the European Union, its values, policies and programmes within the Turkish Cypriot community.

Objective: Citizens perceive that the EU is working to improve their lives and engage with the EU. They feel that their concerns are taken into consideration in European decision making and they know about their rights in the EU.
Indicator 1: Percentage of EU citizens having a positive image of the EU

¹² Each registered document must be filed in at least one official file of the Chef de file, as required by the e-Domec policy rules (and by ICS 11 requirements). The indicator is to be measured via reporting tools available in Ares.

¹³ Suite of tools designed to implement the e-Domec policy rules.

Definition: Eurobarometer measures the state of public opinion in the EU Member States. This global indicator is influenced by many factors, including the work of other EU institutions and national governments, as well as political and economic factors, not just the communication actions of the Commission. It is relevant as a proxy for the overall perception of the EU citizens. Positive visibility for the EU is the desirable corporate outcome of Commission communication, even if individual DGs' actions may only make a small contribution.

Source of data: Standard Eurobarometer (DG COMM budget) [*monitored by DG COMM [here](#)*].

Baseline: November 2014	Target: 2020
Total "Positive": 39% Neutral: 37 % Total "Negative": 22%	Positive image of the EU ≥ 50%