

RECOVERY FILES



A pan-European investigation into the largest EU stimulus package in history

Masterclass: researching the Recovery Files

By Hans-Martin Tillack & Lise Witteman

- 10h-12h
Explain the set up of the Recovery Fund, the work of the Recovery Files team and what we have learned so far
- 12h-15h
Hans-Tillack (Die Welt) dives deep into handling the Recovery Files foia requests
- 15.30-17h
How to find the beneficiaries of the Recovery fund and to join the Recovery Files investigation

The Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)

#nextgenerationEU

- Initiated by France/European Commission, negotiated during 2020
- Max 723.8 billion euro available (loans/grants), until 2026
- Funded by financial markets (EU loan)
- Conditional: milestones and targets, judged by the European Commission (country specific recommendations/ 37% green/ 20% digital/ do no significant harm/ 'new' projects)
- Member states will report on their achievements by April and mid-October each year
- Up to 13% can be pre-financed

Recovery Files investigation

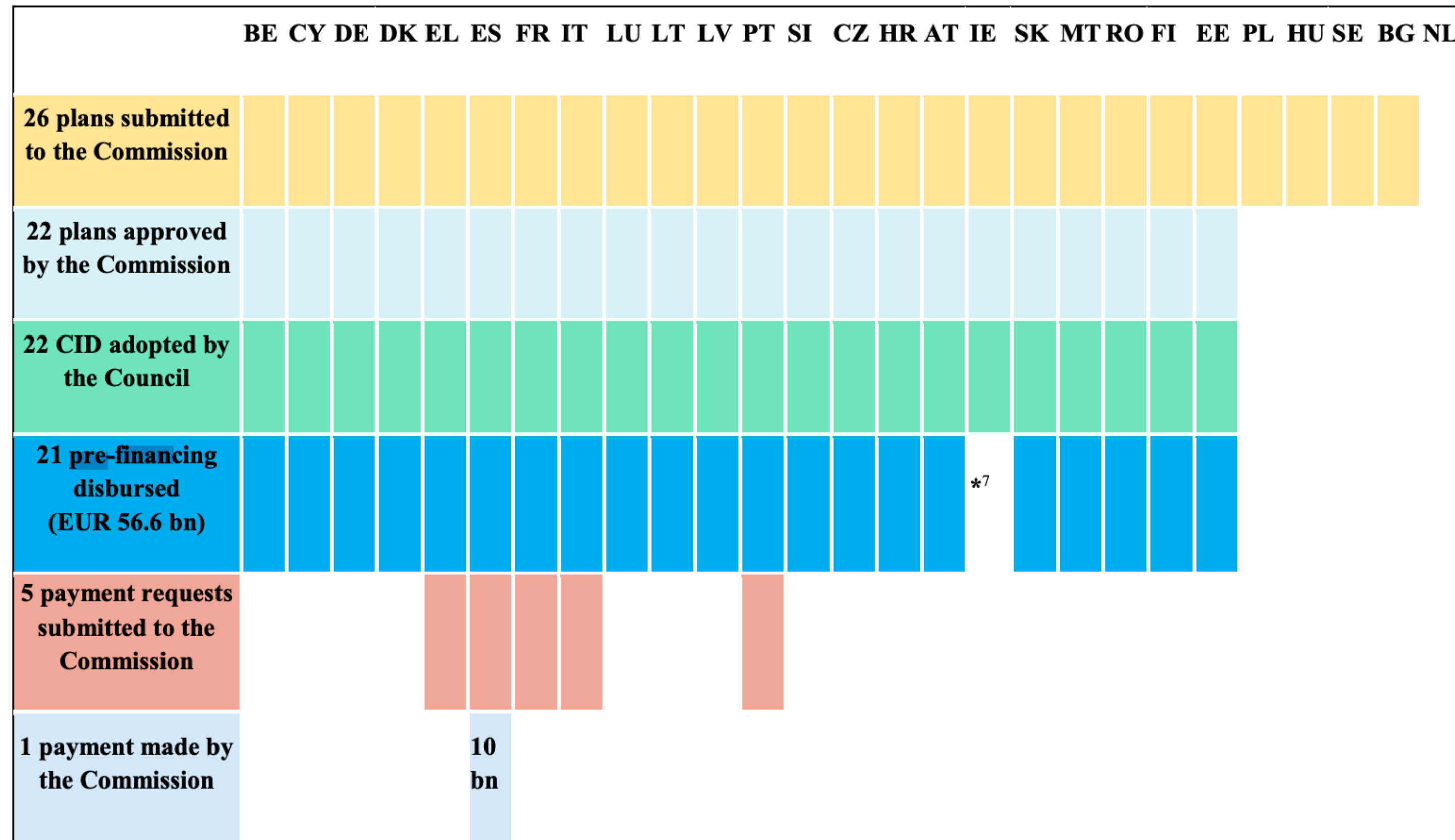
#RecoveryFiles

- Initiated and coordinated by the EU-desk of Follow the Money
- Aim: to make sure Brussels will live up to it's promise that *this time* the money will get well spend
- Main questions: Who is/has been involved? Who will get the money?
- Team >>>

- Gabi Horn, *Átlátszó* (Hungary)
- Attila Bíró, *Context Investigative Reporting Project* (Romania)
- Staffan Dahllöf, *DEO.dk* (Denmark / Sweden)
- Petr Vodsedalek, *Deník* (Czech Republic)
- Peter Teffer, Remy Koens & Ada Homolova, *Follow the Money* (The Netherlands)
- Lise Witteman, *Follow the Money* (The Netherlands / Brussels)
- Marcos García Rey, freelance (Spain)
- Jarno Liski, *Iltalehti* (Finland)
- Carlotta Indiano, *Irpimedia* (Italy)
- Giulio Rubino, *Irpimedia* (Italy)
- Marie Charrel, *Le Monde* (France)
- Adrien Sénécat, *Le Monde* (France)
- Piotr Maciej Kaczyński, *Onet.pl* (Poland)
- Ante Pavić, *Oštro* (Croatia)
- Matej Zwitter, *Oštro* (Slovenia)
- Hans-Martin Tillack, *Die Welt* (Germany)
- Ben Weiser, *ZackZack* (Austria)
- Jean Compte, *Contexte* (France)

The National plans

- [illegible]



Sources on national plans

- First annual RRF report
https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/com_2022_75_1_en.pdf
- Green(washing) analysis
<https://www.greenrecoverytracker.org/>
- Dashboards by CEPS (France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain)
<https://rrfmonitor-ceps.eu/country-analysis>
- Assessment of VOLT (Germany, Portugal, Spain, France, Austria, Italy)
https://twitter.com/d_boeselager/status/1409776882653016066?s=20
- Investments analysis by Bruegel
<https://www.bruegel.org/publications/datasets/european-union-countries-recovery-and-resilience-plans/>
- Open Procurement, on transparency
https://www.open-contracting.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/RRF_report.pdf
- Payments, NGEUTRACKER
<https://www.ngeutracker.org/>
- National/local ngo's/think tanks/(corporate) associations

Stories/findings so far

- Lack of involvement national parliaments/ngo's for national plans
<https://www.ftm.eu/articles/corona-recovery-fund-europe>
- Lack of transparency regarding negotiations between European Commission and the member states
<https://www.ftm.eu/articles/recovery-files-eu-transparency>
- Automotive industry big and controversial winner of RRF
<https://www.ftm.eu/articles/eu-recovery-files-automotive-sector>

Lunch break (until 13h)

After: deep dive into the FOIA requests with Hans-Martin Tillack

Recovery Files investigation part II

Finding the beneficiaries

- What is foreseen in the RRF-regulation
 - > Chapter IV, Art. 22 (Financial Provisions):
 - (d) for the purpose of audit and control and to provide for comparable information on the use of funds in relation to measures for the implementation of reforms and investment projects under the recovery and resilience plan, to collect and ensure access to the following standardised categories of data:
 - (i) name of the final recipient of funds;
 - (ii) name of the contractor and sub-contractor, where the final recipient of funds is a contracting authority in accordance with Union or national law on public procurement;
 - (iii) first name(s), last name(s) and date of birth of beneficial owner(s) of the recipient of funds or contractor, as defined in point 6 of Article 3 of Directive (EU) 2015/849 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽²⁶⁾;
 - (iv) a list of any measures for the implementation of reforms and investment projects under the recovery and resilience plan with the total amount of public funding of those measures and indicating the amount of funds paid under the Facility and under other Union funds;
- What is not foreseen in the RRF-regulation: publication...

Finding the beneficiaries

How to approach this matter

- Find out for which projects of the national plans the EU has already disbursed money
- Do FOIA requests (referring to Chapter IV, art. 22 of the regulation) for these specific projects, at the responsible governments
- Look for the winners of the relevant tenders
- Look for experts/sources at ngo's, (corporate) associations etc
- ANAC, Italy, building centralized database of all RRF-spending in Italy

Join the Recovery Files investigation

- We still don't have journalists in every member state to look for beneficiaries
- But also within member states: we can join forces between media
- Feel free to reach out to us if you think you can help this investigation or if you have any insights on what sources could be useful
- Next steps: diving deeper into the digital aspects of the national plans, looking into hydrogen plans, checking the positions of consultancies... etc
- By autumn: having collected as much data as possible on the beneficiaries and develop new story angles

Looking forward to working with you!

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