

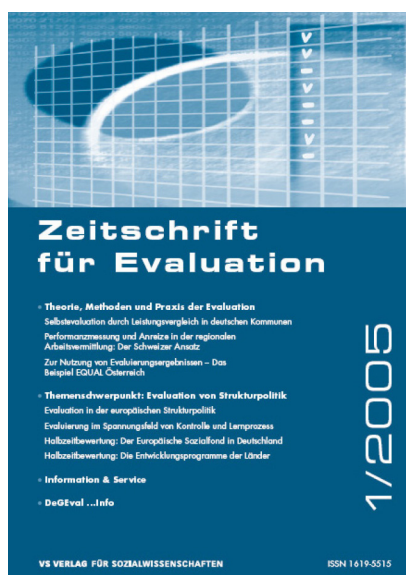
## The Mid-term Evaluation of the European Social Fund in Germany: Was the Breakthrough achieved?

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### Abstract

In the period 2000-2006 an ambitious advancement of the evaluation systems for the European Social Fund (ESF) in Germany was envisaged. The main elements of this advancement were (1) a better data base delivered by improved monitoring systems, (2) a stronger focus on in-depth analysis and assessment instead of the mere description of ESF outputs, (3) a higher degree of comparability between the different evaluation reports thus enhancing the possibilities for learning processes, (4) a greater usefulness of evaluations for actors and stakeholders. The paper analyses the real achievements that had been made in evaluating the ESF in Germany. It draws mainly upon the mid-term evaluations which were produced in 2003. The findings are mixed. On the one hand considerable progress has been made (i.e. concerning reliability of data and quality of analyses), on the other hand there are still remarkable weaknesses in evaluation systems and the usefulness of evaluation and its role in policy learning are still too small.



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