

In this briefing sheet, the objectives and priorities of **Erasmus+** programme are confirmed alongside the the goals and priorities of Partnerships for Cooperation, with a focus on decentralised funding actions.

Introduction

- ☞ Erasmus+ is the EU programme for education, training, youth and sport.
- ☞ Erasmus+ is now in its second programme period, covering a seven-year period (2021-2027) and building on the successes of the first Erasmus+ programme (2014-2020).
- ☞ Erasmus+ complements and supports the goals and objectives of the European Education Area, the Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027), the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2027) and the EU Workplan for Sport (2021-2024).
- ☞ Erasmus+ aims to support citizens in their personal and professional development whilst facilitating transnational and international cooperation between organisations in the fields of education, training, youth and sport, contributing to the development of more inclusive and cohesive, greener and digitally-fit societies.

Programme Objectives

- ☞ The **general objective** of Erasmus+ is “to support, through lifelong learning, the educational, professional and personal development of people in education, training, youth and sport, in Europe and beyond, thereby contributing to sustainable growth, quality jobs and social cohesion, to driving innovation, and to strengthening European identity and active citizenship”.
- ☞ The **specific objectives** of Erasmus+ are:
 - to promote learning mobility of individuals and groups, as well as cooperation, quality, inclusion and equity, excellence, creativity and innovation at the level of organisations and policies *in the field of education and training*;
 - to promote non-formal and informal learning mobility and active participation among young people, as well as cooperation, quality, inclusion, creativity and innovation at the level of organisations and policies *in the field of youth*;
 - to promote learning mobility of sport staff, as well as cooperation, quality, inclusion, creativity and innovation *at the level of sport organisations and sport policies*.

Refer also to the latest version of the Erasmus+ Programme Guide and to specific briefing sheets for Key Action 2. Sector-specific priorities are more fully detailed in the briefing sheets for *Cooperation Partnerships* and *Small-Scale Partnerships*.

In this briefing sheet, the objectives and priorities of **Erasmus+** programme are confirmed alongside the the goals and priorities of Partnerships for Cooperation, with a focus on decentralised funding actions.

Programme Priorities

☞ Erasmus+ centres on four horizontal programme priorities, namely: inclusion and diversity; digital transformation; environment and fight against climate change; and participation in democratic life, common value and civic participation.

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

Erasmus+ seeks to promote equal opportunities and access, inclusion, diversity and fairness across all its actions. Participants with fewer opportunities, and the organisations that work with them, are at the heart of these objectives and all organisations participating in the Erasmus+ programme are encouraged to adopt an inclusive approach, making their projects accessible to a diverse range of participants.

An *Inclusion and Diversity Strategy (2021)* extends to all Erasmus+ programme fields and provides a common reference point for those looking to increase accessibility and outreach to people with fewer opportunities. The strategy provides a non-exhaustive list of potential barriers that target groups might face in accessing opportunities within Europe and beyond, including: disabilities; health problems; barriers linked to education and training systems (e.g. where systems create structural limitations or do not fully consider individual needs); cultural differences; social barriers; economic barriers; barriers linked to discrimination (gender, age, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation, disability or a combination of two or more of these barriers); and geographical barriers. A complementary *Framework on Inclusion Measures for Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps (2021-2027)*, aims at to facilitating access for individuals with fewer opportunities, through ensuring that inclusion is directly considered in programme reference documents, in periodic assessment and reporting from National Agencies and in communication materials and guidelines.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Erasmus+ recognises the need to harness the potential of digital technologies for teaching and learning and to develop digital skills for all, complementing the priorities of the *Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027)*. The programme aims to engage learners, educators, youth workers, young people and organisations, recognising that digital education is an important contributor to the digital transformation of Europe.

Refer also to the latest version of the Erasmus+ Programme Guide and to specific briefing sheets for Key Action 2. Sector-specific priorities are more fully detailed in the briefing sheets for *Cooperation Partnerships* and *Small-Scale Partnerships*.

Erasmus+ Programme Briefing Sheet

The programme supports the first strategic priority of the *Digital Education Action Plan*, the development of a high-performing digital education ecosystem, by building capacity and critical understanding on how to exploit the opportunities offered by digital technologies for teaching and learning - at all levels and for all sectors - and for the development of digital transformation plans. The programme also supports the second strategic priority of the *Digital Education Action Plan*, by supporting actions aiming at enhancing digital skills and competences at all levels of society and for everyone, including young people with fewer opportunities, students, job seekers and workers. In line with the strategic priorities of the *Digital Education Action Plan*, and the two Council Recommendations adopted in 2023 centred on key enabling factors (<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15741-2023-INIT/en/pdf>) and improving the provision of digital skills (<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15740-2023-INIT/en/pdf>), the Erasmus+ programme is expected to play a key role in supporting citizens of all ages in acquiring the digital skills and competences they need to live, learn, work, exercise their rights, be informed, access online services, communicate, critically consume, create and disseminate digital education content. The programme also encourages a greater use of ICT tools as well as the combined use of physical mobility, virtual learning and virtual cooperation.

ENVIRONMENT AND FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

Environment and climate action are key priorities for the EU, both now and in the future. The *European Green Deal* communication confirms the European Commission's commitment to tackling climate and environmental-related challenges as well as the key role of schools, training institutions and universities in engaging with pupils, parents, and the wider community to highlight the changes needed for a successful transition to become climate neutral by 2050.

Erasmus+ is a key instrument for building knowledge, skills and attitudes on climate change and sustainable development both within the EU and beyond. Specifically, the programme will increase the number of mobility opportunities in green forward-looking domains, which foster the development of competences, enhance career prospects and engage participants in subject areas which are strategic for sustainable growth of the planet, with special attention to rural development (sustainable farming, natural resources, soil protection, bio-agriculture). Erasmus+, with mobility at its core, will also strive for carbon-neutrality by promoting sustainable transport modes and more responsible behaviour. Priority will also be given to projects aimed at developing competences in green sectors, including in the framework of the contribution of education and culture to sustainable development goals, developing green sectorial skills strategies and methodologies, future-oriented curricula, as well as initiatives that support the planned approaches of the participating organisations regarding environmental sustainability.

The programme supports the use of innovative practices to encourage learners, staff and youth workers to become real agents of change (e.g. saving resources, reducing energy use and waste, compensating carbon footprint emissions, opting for sustainable food and mobility choices) with priority also given to projects that - through education, training, youth and sport activities - encourage and enable behavioural changes. In all cases, participants and participating organisations should strive to incorporate green practices in all projects adopting an environmental-friendly approach when designing activities, discussing and learning about environmental issues and proposing alternative and greener ways of implementing their activities.

PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRATIC LIFE, COMMON VALUES AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Erasmus+ specifically addresses the limited participation of citizens in its democratic processes and a general lack of knowledge about the EU, prioritising active engagement and participation within local communities and in the EU's political and social landscapes and fostering a sense of belonging. The programme recognises the importance of strengthening and improving citizens' understanding of the EU as being crucial to its future.

Erasmus+ supports active citizenship and ethics in lifelong learning; it fosters the development of social and intercultural competences, critical thinking and media literacy. Priority will be given to projects that offer opportunities for active participation in democratic life and for social and civic engagement through formal or non-formal learning. A specific focus centres on raising awareness of and understanding the EU context, notably as regards common EU values, the principles of unity and diversity, and social, cultural and historical heritage.

The Erasmus+ programme, as well as the involved beneficiaries and the activities implemented by these beneficiaries, are required to observe the EU values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, in full compliance with the values and rights enshrined in the EU Treaties and in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. This is clearly embedded in the different funding actions, with applicants for funding required to explicitly confirm their understanding of and adherence to these principles.

Eligible Countries

☞ **Erasmus+** allows participation in the different funding actions from EU MEMBER STATES AND THIRD COUNTRIES ASSOCIATED TO THE PROGRAMME (full participation in all actions) as well as from THIRD COUNTRIES NOT ASSOCIATED TO THE PROGRAMME (participation in selected actions, requiring a clear and detailed justification in some cases).

- **EU COUNTRIES:** Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.
- **ASSOCIATED THIRD COUNTRIES:** Iceland, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Türkiye.
- **NON-ASSOCIATED THIRD COUNTRIES:** Countries are grouped according to the different financial instruments for EU External Action and extend to countries bordering the EU and countries further afield. A detailed breakdown of countries is provided in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide, with individual action descriptions confirming the eligibility (or not) of participation from third countries not associated to the programme. It is important to note that the *United Kingdom* is considered within the category of non-associated third countries.

Core Actions

☞ **Erasmus+** relies on three key actions to achieve its objectives:

- **KEY ACTION 1 - MOBILITY OF INDIVIDUALS:** supporting the mobility of learners and staff (educators, youth workers, sports coaches and others) as well as youth participation activities and travel experiences (DiscoverEU), language learning opportunities and virtual exchanges in the fields of higher education and youth;
- **KEY ACTION 2 - COOPERATION AMONG ORGANISATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS:** supporting partnerships for cooperation (small-scale partnerships; cooperation partnerships), partnerships for excellence (European universities; centres of vocational excellence; Erasmus+ teacher academies; Erasmus Mundus); and partnerships for innovation (alliances for innovation; forward-looking projects) as well as capacity-building projects in the fields of higher education, VET, youth and sport, and not-for-profit European sport events.
- **KEY ACTION 3 - SUPPORT TO POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION:** supporting the European Youth Together initiative, OMC and policy experimentation, and Jean Monnet Actions in higher education and more widely.