



## Erasmus+ Briefing Sheet

In this briefing sheet, detail is provided on the objectives and horizontal priorities of Erasmus+, whilst also defining associated and non-associated countries, and listing the three key actions of the programme.

### Introduction

Erasmus+ is the EU programme for education, training, youth and sport. We are currently in the second generation of the programme, which covers a seven-year period (2021-2027), and which builds 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 (2024-2027). Erasmus+ programme objectives are also consistent with the actions and priorities of the Union of Skills initiative, supporting the development of basic skills, stimulating entrepreneurship and innovation, facilitating the recognition of skills and qualifications, and bridging Europe's knowledge, skills, and competences gap.

### 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.

### Horizontal Priorities

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





## 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.

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 two recently-adopted Council Recommendations on key enabling factors for successful digital education and training and improving the provision of digital skills and competences in education and training, 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 challenges and barriers that limit citizens' participation in democratic processes and contributes to increased awareness and understanding of 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. Erasmus+ 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 by encouraging projects and activities that foster the development of social and intercultural competences, critical thinking and media literacy. Priority is given to projects that offer opportunities for active participation in democratic life as well as social and civic engagement through formal or non-formal learning experiences. 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 *Youth Participation Strategy* additionally provides a common framework and supports Erasmus+ in fostering youth participation in democratic life.





Additional information on horizontal priorities can be found in the [Erasmus+ Programme Guide](#) as well as the following implementation guides developed specifically for the Erasmus+ programme:

- [Erasmus+ and ESC Inclusion and Diversity Strategy](#)
- [Erasmus+ and ESC Digital Strategy](#)
- [Erasmus+ and ESC Green Transition and Sustainable Development Strategy](#)

## Associated and Non-Associated Countries

Erasmus+ allows participation in the different funding actions from EU MEMBER STATES (27) and THIRD COUNTRIES ASSOCIATED TO THE PROGRAMME (6), each having full access to the different programme actions. Participation from THIRD COUNTRIES NOT ASSOCIATED TO THE PROGRAMME is more limited, with some actions allowing participation from one or more regions of the world, and other actions limiting participation to EU Member States and Associated Third Countries.

**ASSOCIATED 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 and regions is provided in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide, with individual action descriptions confirming eligibility (or not) for the participation of third countries not associated to the programme.

## Key Actions

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

**KEY ACTION 1 - MOBILITY OF INDIVIDUALS:** supports 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:** supports partnerships for cooperation; partnerships for excellence; partnerships for innovation; 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:** supports the European Youth Together initiative, OMC and policy experimentation, policy dialogue with stakeholders, cooperation with international organisations and the implementation of Jean Monnet actions in higher education and more widely.