EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 15.7.2025
SWD(2025) 186 final

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

EVALUATION

Interim evaluation of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme and final evaluation of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme

Accompanying the document

Report from the European Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions

on the Interim evaluation of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme and final evaluation of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme

{COM(2025) 395 final}

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Glossary

Term or acronym	*Meaning or definition*
Accreditation	Process to ensure that the organisations wishing to receive funding under an Action of the Erasmus+ programme comply with a set of qualitative standards or pre-requisites laid down by the European Commission for that Action
Adult education	All forms of non-vocational adult education, whether of a formal, non-formal or informal nature
Adult learner	Any adult who, having completed or being no longer involved in initial education or training, returns to some forms of non-vocational continuing learning (formal, non-formal or informal). For the purpose of the Erasmus+ projects, educational staff (teachers, trainers, educators, academic and youth staff, etc.) in any of the Erasmus+ sector cannot be considered as adult learners in adult education.
Basic skills	Literacy, mathematics, science and technology; these skills are included in the key competences.
Blended mobility	Combination of physical mobility and a virtual component, facilitating collaborative online learning exchange/teamwork
ECHE (Erasmus Charter for Higher Education)	An accreditation granted by the European Commission giving the possibility to higher education institutions from EU Member States and third countries associated to the programme to be eligible to apply and participate in learning mobility and cooperation activities under Erasmus+. The Charter outlines the fundamental principles an institution should adhere to in organising and implementing high quality mobility and cooperation.
Informal learning	Learning resulting from daily activities and experiences which is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support; it may be unintentional from the learner's perspective.
International	In the context of Erasmus+, relates to any action involving at least one EU Member State or third country associated to the programme and at least one third country not associated to the programme.
Learning mobility	Moving physically to a country other than the country of residence, in order to undertake study, training or non-formal, or informal learning.
Newcomer organisation	Any participating organisation that has not previously received support in a given type of action supported by this programme or its predecessor programme either as a coordinator or a partner.
National Agency (NA)	A body in charge of managing the implementation of the programme at national level in a Member State or in a third country associated to the programme. One or more National Agencies may exist in each country.
Non-formal learning	Learning which takes place through planned learning activities where some form of learning support is present, but which is not part of the formal education and training system.
Participant with fewer opportunities	People with fewer opportunities means people who, for economic, social, cultural, geographical or health reasons, a migrant background, or for

	reasons such as disability and educational difficulties or for any other reasons, including those that can give rise to discrimination under article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental rights of the European Union, face obstacles that prevent them from having effective access to opportunities under the programme.
SALTO	Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities Resource centers aiming at improving the quality and impact of the Erasmus+ programme through providing resources, expertise and training to National Agencies in specific areas.
Staff	A person who, on either a professional or a voluntary basis, is involved in education, training or non-formal learning at all levels. Includes professors, teachers (including pre-school teachers), trainers, school leaders, youth workers, sport staff, early childhood education and care staff, non-educational staff and other practitioners involved on a regular basis in promoting learning.
TCA (Transnational Cooperation activities / Training and Cooperation Activities)	Support activities implemented by the National Agencies aiming to improve the implementation of the programme in qualitative terms and to make it more strategic by building closer links with the relevant elements of policy development. The wording 'Transnational Cooperation Activities' has changed to 'Training and Cooperation Activities' in the 2021-2027 programme
Third countries not associated to the programme	Countries which do not participate fully in the Erasmus+ programme, but which may take part (as partners or applicants) in certain Actions of the programme. The list of third countries not associated to the programme is set out in the Programme Guide
Transnational	In the context of Erasmus+, relates, unless otherwise indicated, to any activity involving at least two EU Member States and third countries associated to the programme
Transversal (soft; life) skills	Include the ability to think critically, be curious and creative, to take initiative, to solve problems and work collaboratively, to be able to communicate efficiently in a multicultural and interdisciplinary environment, to be able to adapt to context and to cope with stress and uncertainty. These skills are part of the key competences.
Vocational Education and Training (VET)	Vocational education and training is to be understood as the education and training which aims to equip young people and adults with knowledge, skills and competences required in particular occupations or more broadly on the labour market. It may be provided in formal and in non-formal settings, at all levels of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), including tertiary level, if applicable.
Vocational education and training (VET) learner	A person enrolled in an initial or continuous vocational education and training programme or a person who has recently graduated or obtained a qualification from such a programme.
Young people	In the context of the Erasmus+ programme, individuals aged between 13 and 30.
Youth worker	A professional or a volunteer involved in non-formal learning who supports young people in their personal socio-educational, and professional development.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and scope of the evaluation/fitness check

Erasmus+ is the European Union programme in the fields of education and training, youth and sport. It is one of the EU's most visible success stories. The 2021-2027 programme generation builds on the achievements of its 37 years of existence and on the success of the 2014-2020 programme, keeping substantial stability and continuity in the structure and management mode of the programme compared to the 2014-2020 programme.

This evaluation is carried out in line with Article 24(2) of Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council (hereinafter 'the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ Regulation)[1], which establishes '*once sufficient information about the implementation of the Programme is available, but no later than 31 December 2024, the Commission shall perform an interim evaluation of the Programme. That interim evaluation shall be accompanied by a final evaluation of the 2014-2020 Programme, which shall feed into the interim evaluation'.* Therefore, this evaluation report covers actions in the period 2014-2020 (final evaluation) and 2021-2023 (interim evaluation) in all Member States, third countries associated to the programme and third countries not associated to the programme [2].

The baseline for the final evaluation of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 is the mid-term evaluation performed in 2017[3], while the impact assessment for the 2021-2027 period[4] is the baseline for the interim evaluation of Erasmus+ 2021-2027. In total, the period 2014-2020 corresponds to a total budget of EUR 16.2 billion, while the period 2021-2023 to EUR 10 billion.

1.1.1 Regulatory and legislative considerations

As foreseen by Article 24(4) of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ Regulation, the Commission may on the basis of the evaluation put forward a legislative proposal to amend the Regulation. While this is not deemed necessary based on the results, it nevertheless provides an opportunity to revise budgetary allocations between actions for the final two years of the programme, taking into account priorities that were not foreseen at the time of the adoption in 2021.

1.1.2 Evaluation criteria and focus area

The evaluation assesses the performance of the programme against the five evaluation criteria established in the Better Regulation Guidelines and Toolbox. In line with the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ Regulation, the interim evaluation of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 assesses '*the overall effectiveness and performance of the Programme, including as regards new initiatives and the delivery of inclusion and simplification measures*'. The evaluation also assesses the flexibility and agility of the programme to react to unexpected contextual elements such as the COVID-19 pandemic (final and interim evaluation), the Russian invasion of Ukraine (interim evaluation), rising inflation (interim evaluation), and looks at particular areas highlighted in the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ Regulation recitals, such as the progress of institutions financed under Jean Monnet Actions towards delivering on the programme objectives (interim evaluation).

[1] Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing Erasmus+: the Union Programme for education and training, youth and sport and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 (OJ L 189, 28.5.2021, p. 1).
[2] https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-a/eligible-countries
[3] SWD(2018) 40 of 31 January 2018.
[4] SWD(2018) 277 of 30 May 2018.

Both the final and the interim evaluations assess the performance of the different (key) actions, with higher focus on the activities implemented under key action 1 (KA1, learning mobility) and key action 2 (KA2, cooperation among organisations) under indirect management (approximately 80% of the programme budget of each programming period). They also cover the extent to which findings and conclusions differ across the **programme fields** (education and training- including higher education, vocational education and training (VET), school education and adult education - youth and sport), across the different **target levels** (individual, organisational and systemic), **key actions and objectives** under each programming period.

The actions that were discontinued during the 2014-2020 programming period or in the transition to the 2021-2027 programme are only covered to determine whether their discontinuation determined any loss in terms of EU added value.

1.1.3 Methodology and data sources

This Staff Working Document (SWD) on the interim evaluation of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 and final evaluation of the predecessor programme has been carried out in line with the Call for evidence published in July 2022 [5]. It draws mainly, among other sources [6], on the **National Reports** submitted by the Member States and third countries associated to the programme on the implementation and impact of Erasmus+ in their respective territories in accordance with Article 24(3) of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ Regulation, and the **support study** conducted by **ICF S.A**, (hereinafter ICF), under contract with the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC) [7]. The final report delivered by ICF provides answers to all **evaluation questions**[8] defined in the Terms of Reference and related to the five evaluation criteria. The final report of the contractor contains also recommendations addressed to the Commission.

The support study used a broad set of data collection and analytical techniques, drawing on both primary and secondary data collection:

- Analysis of programme data, of project samples, a review of approximately 1 500 reports, scientific papers and programme documentation, and a social media analysis;
- a public consultation gathering more than 1200 responses and 64 position papers;
- targeted consultation addressing key stakeholders (more than 250 interviews; 44 case studies; surveys to implementing bodies, more than 1 800 project assessors, more than 50 000 beneficiaries and 5 000 non-beneficiaries; 5 workshops);
- three meta-analyses [9], summarizing the conclusions of scientific studies looking at individual level impacts linked to the programme's participation, around skills development, employability and values.

A counterfactual analysis was also run to assess the effects of participation across beneficiary organisations and individuals compared to non-participants (control groups), or before/after participation. Moreover, a behavioural analysis was carried out to explore why some learners

[5] https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/
[6] Annex II. Methodology and Analytical models used.
[7] See annex I Procedural information.
[8] See annex III for evaluation questions.
[9] The meta-analysis is a popular approach in research for synthesizing data across studies. It has also been used in the field of study abroad (see, for instance, Di Pietro, G. (2022) "Studying Abroad and Earnings: A Meta-Analysis", Journal of Economic Surveys, 36(4), 1096-1129).

and young people [10] participate in Erasmus+ while others do not, and to shed light on the factors that hinder participation.

1.1.4 Challenges and limitations in data analysis

Several challenges affected the scope and precision of the evaluation.

For the final evaluation of Erasmus+ 2014-2020, data were available for the majority of projects, which had already been completed. However, 8% of projects under direct management were still ongoing at the time of analysis. The overall impact of these projects could not yet be fully assessed, though the final dataset for indirect management was nearly complete.

For the interim evaluation of Erasmus+ 2021-2027, several limitations were noted, particularly regarding incomplete data for 2023. Some recently launched initiatives—such as sport mobility (first call in 2023) and the DiscoverEU inclusion action (launched in 2022)—could not yet be fully assessed. Additionally, a large proportion of ongoing projects, especially large-scale partnerships with durations of up to 48 months, remained at an early stage, limiting the ability to measure their long-term impact. As of the evaluation cut-off date, 46% of indirectly managed projects and 82% of directly managed projects initiated during 2021-2023 were still in progress. Moreover, one key challenge in the interim evaluation of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme stems from the recent adoption of its monitoring and evaluation framework. The Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/2710 [11], adopted on 13 September 2023, introduced additional indicators to improve the measurement of the programme's various dimensions. However, at the time of this evaluation, the necessary mechanisms, tools, and methodologies outlined in the accompanying SWD[12] were not yet fully operational. This limited the completeness of monitoring data, making it difficult to assess certain aspects of the programme in a systematic way.

A major limitation, affecting both the final evaluation of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 and the interim evaluation of Erasmus+ 2021-2027, relates to challenges in survey-based and counterfactual analyses. Survey respondents were recruited differently depending on their status: beneficiaries were selected from programme contact databases, while non-beneficiaries were reached through social media campaigns. This approach introduced potential comparability issues since the two groups may differ in demographics, engagement levels, or motivations for participation. Additionally, since only limited background characteristics were available in programme dashboards, it was difficult to determine to what extent the responses reflected the broader Erasmus+ participant population.

The counterfactual analysis, which aimed to compare beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, controlled for several characteristics. However, the smaller sample size of the non-beneficiary group limited its effectiveness in fully accounting for all relevant factors. Although the analysis found positive links between Erasmus+ participation and skills, employability, and behavioural changes, it could not confirm a direct cause-and-effect relationship.

Despite these challenges, survey data remains crucial for evaluating Erasmus+, given the lack of ability to track individual programme participants over time using administrative data on

[10] The experiment addressed higher education students, VET learners and young people (youth mobility).
[11] Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/2710 of 13 September 2023 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council with provisions on the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation framework for the Erasmus+ programme, OJ L 2023/2710, 5.12.2023.
[12] SWD(2023) 296 of 13 September 2023.

key post-participation outcomes, such as employment rates, wages, and career progression after learning mobility. Consequently, self-reported assessments continue to be the most widely used method to gauge the programme's impact across its various dimensions.

A possible improvement for future evaluations could be to explore, in collaboration with Member States, the feasibility of using unique identifiers for programme participants. This would allow them to be identified in administrative datasets, which could then complement survey findings and enhance reliability. Such an approach could improve the ability to track long-term outcomes, such as employment trends and career progression, beyond self-reported data.

To address outlined limitations, the evaluation integrates findings from multiple data sources and cross-references results to provide a balanced and comprehensive assessment. The final evaluation of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 has been instrumental in informing the interim evaluation of Erasmus+ 2021-2027, particularly in areas where strong continuity exists between programme generations, such as learning mobility.

This SWD provides a separate assessment for the final evaluation of the 2014-2020 programme and the interim evaluation of the 2021-2027 programme for the bulk of the evaluation questions. Given the high degree of continuity between the two programme periods, a joint analytical approach was adopted for (external) coherence, EU added value, and relevance criteria. However, also for these aspects, the report highlights key differences between the two periods and new developments. This evaluation ultimately serves as a critical tool for assessing the impact, effectiveness, and future direction of Erasmus+, ensuring that it continues to shape education, training, youth, and sport policies in Europe and beyond for the remainder of this programme period and beyond 2027.

2. WHAT WAS THE EXPECTED OUTCOME OF THE INTERVENTION?

2.1 Description of the intervention and its objectives

Erasmus+ 2014-2020

The 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme was established under Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council [13] (hereinafter 'the 20214-2020 Erasmus+ Regulation') as a result of the integration of all previously existing EU programmes implemented during the period 2007-2013 in the fields of education, training, youth and sport: Lifelong Learning[14], Youth in Action, Erasmus Mundus, Edulink, Tempus, Alfa and Preparatory Actions in Sport. Erasmus+ 2014-2020 had an overall indicative **financial envelope** of EUR 14.774 billion[15] under Heading 1 (Sustainable growth) and of EUR 1.68 billion under Heading 4 (EU as global player) of the EU budget.

- ***Challenges and needs***

Through cooperation in formal, informal and non-formal learning, the programme aimed to address the following **challenges**: economic recovery and high youth unemployment; skills' mismatches, low employability and education poverty; global competition for talents;

[13] Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing 'Erasmus+': the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport and repealing Decisions No 1719/2006/EC, No 1720/2006/EC and No 1298/2008/EC, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 50.
[14] Life-Long Learning was itself composed of 6 sub-programmes including Erasmus, Comenius, Grundtvig, Jean Monnet and Leonardo Da Vinci.
[15] Article 18(1) of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ Regulation.

Information and Communication Technology potential and digital divide; social exclusion and intolerance; lack of trust in the EU and low participation in democratic life; threats to the integrity of sport and, more generally, to common European values.

- ***Objectives***

The **general objectives** of Erasmus+ 2014-2020[16] were to contribute to the **Europe 2020** strategy for growth and jobs, including the headline education targets [17], as well as the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (**'ET 2020'**), including related benchmarks. The programme also aimed to contribute to achieving the overall objectives of the renewed framework for **European cooperation in the youth field** (2010-2018); to developing the **European dimension in sport,** in particular grassroots sport, in line with the **Union work plan for sport;** to promote the sustainable development of partner countries in the field of higher education, as well as to promoting **European values** in accordance with Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union.

The **specific objectives** [18] were structured under the headings of (1) education and training, (2) youth and (3) sport, in view of tackling:

- the improvement of the level of key competences and skills, with particular regard to their relevance for the labour market and their contribution to a cohesive society;
- the promotion of participation in democratic life in Europe and active citizenship in youth;
- the improvement of quality of youth work and enhanced cooperation in youth
- the improvement of quality, innovation, excellence (including in European studies) and internationalisation at the level of organisations and staff/practitioners in education and training fields;
- support to the modernisation of education and training systems, in particular through evidence-based policy cooperation;
- the enhancement of the European/international dimension of its sectors, including with partner countries in complementarity with the Union's external action;
- the promotion of the Union's linguistic diversity and intercultural awareness, in particular in education and training;
- cross-border threats to the integrity of sport; support to good governance in sport and dual careers of athletes; and
- the promotion of voluntary activities in sport.

- ***Programme design***

For **simplification** purposes, following the conclusions of the Impact Assessment for Erasmus+ 2014-2020 [19], the programme was based on **three cross-cutting key actions.** These key actions apply to all education and training sectors (higher education, vocational education and training (VET), school education and adult education) and to the youth field. This integrated approach does not apply to the two stand-alone strands for sport and for European integration studies ('Jean Monnet'). The 2014-2020 programme, therefore, had the following architecture:

- **Key Action 1: Learning mobility of individuals:** opportunities for students, trainees, apprentices, young people and volunteers, as well as for professors, teachers, trainers,

[16] Article 4 of Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013.
[17] In EU average: rate of early school leavers below 10%; at least 40% of people aged 30–34 having completed Higher education.
[18] Articles 5, 11 and 16 of the Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013.
[19] Erasmus+ Impact Assessment, Commission Staff Working Paper, SEC(2011) 1402 of 23.11.2011.

youth workers, staff of educational institutions and civil society organisations to undertake a learning and/or professional experience in another country.

- **Key Action 2: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices:** transnational or international projects promoting cooperation, innovation, exchange of experience and know-how between different types of organisations and institutions involved in education, training and youth or in other relevant fields.
- **Key Action 3: Support for policy reform:** actions supporting national authorities and stakeholders in defining and implementing new and better coordinated policies in the field of education, training and youth.
- **Jean Monnet activities:** actions aimed at improving the quality of teaching on European integration studies, as well as projects and operating grants aimed at promoting discussion, reflection on EU issues and enhancing knowledge about the EU and its functioning.
- **Sport:** cooperation projects, events, studies and other initiatives aimed at implementing EU strategies and priorities in the field of sport.

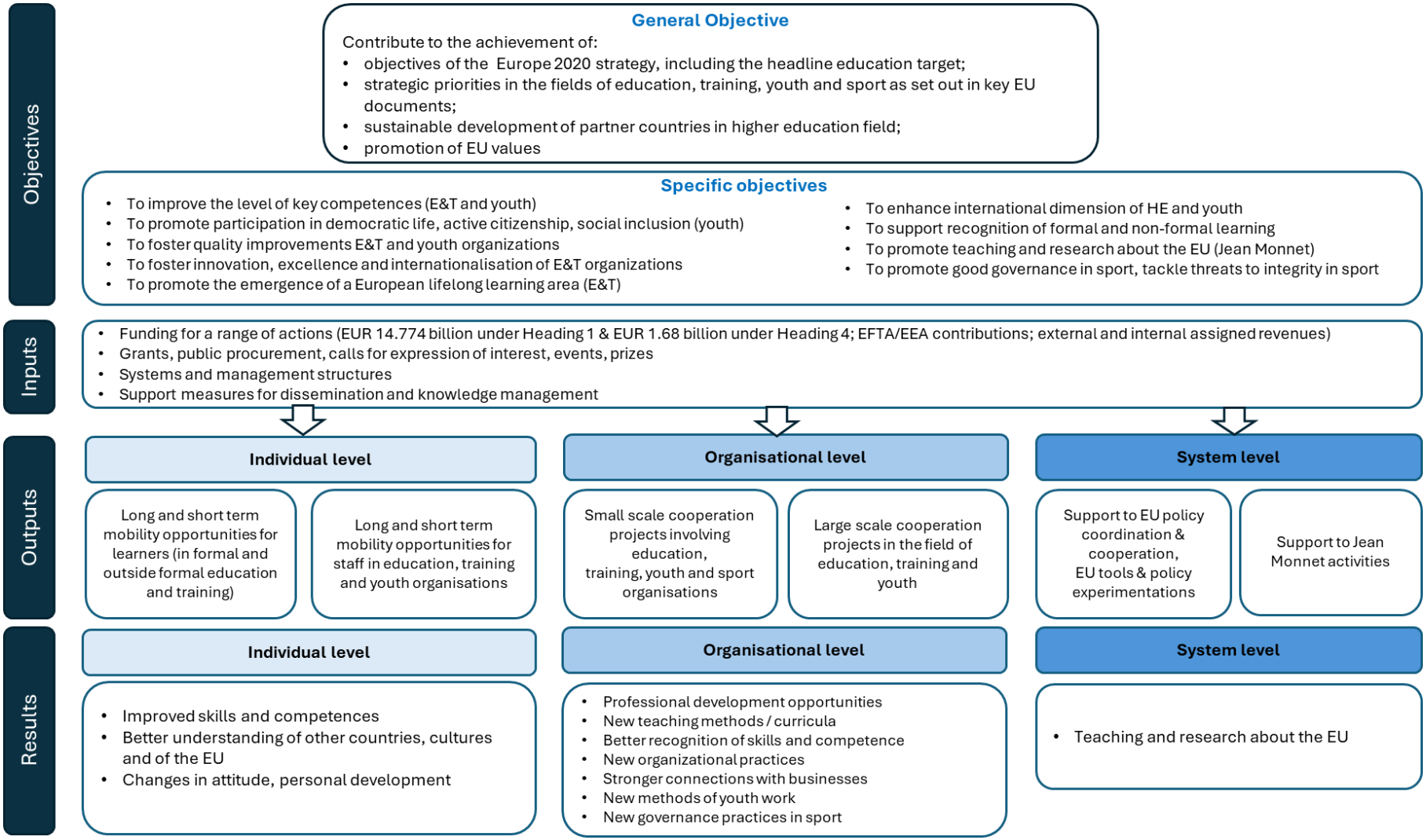
Erasmus+ 2014-2020 relied on **management modes** inherited from predecessor programmes, involving, as main implementing bodies, the European Commission, the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) and the National Agencies (implementing a large share of the budget through indirect management). No direct support is given to individual beneficiaries [20]. All support is channelled through participating organisations, which distribute it to individual learners or practitioners.

In 2019, Serbia joined Erasmus+ as a fully-fledged programme country after 2 years and a half of preparatory measures. Therefore, at the end of the programming period, Erasmus+ 2014-2020 was implemented in **34 countries**: 27 EU Member States, 3 EFTA Countries (Liechtenstein, Iceland and Norway), 3 candidate countries (North Macedonia, Türkiye and Serbia), and the United Kingdom. In accordance with the provisions of the withdrawal agreement between the EU and UK [21], Erasmus+ 2014-2020 continued being implemented in relation to the UK, or entities and persons established in the UK as if the UK remained a Member State, without disruption until the closure of the programme [22].

A graphic representation of the intervention logic of the 2014-2020 programme is summarized in the picture below, while a more detailed description of its inputs is given in Annex VI.

[20] Students, trainees, apprentices, pupils, adult learners, young people, volunteers, professors, teachers, trainers, youth workers, professionals of organisations active in the fields of education, training and youth.
[21] Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community (OJ L 29, 31.1.2020, p. 7).
[22] See also 2020 Erasmus+ Programme Guide, p. 22 (https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-09/erasmus_programme_guide_2020_v3_en.pdf).

Erasmus+ 2014-2020 - Intervention logic



Articles 165 and 166 [23] of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union define the EU mandate in the education, training, youth and sport areas, as follows: develop a European dimension in education, encourage learning mobility, stimulate cooperation between organisations, develop exchange of good practices, encourage the participation of young people in democratic life, develop a European dimension in sport, foster cooperation with third countries. This sets the scope for the **intervention logic** of the programme.

While long-term impacts were not directly measured through programme data, the Erasmus+ intervention logic foresees that the programme could contribute to various long-term outcomes in education, training, youth, and sport.

At the individual level, the programme aimed to bring positive changes at both **learners** (students, trainees, apprentices, young people) and **staff/practitioners** (teachers, trainers, youth workers). Erasmus+ could support higher education completion rates and smoother transitions to further education. Participants may have experienced better career progression, potentially benefiting from increased employability and a stronger commitment to active citizenship. The programme was also seen as having the potential to promote multilingualism and intercultural understanding, fostering skills that may have long-term benefits for mobility and international collaboration.

At the organisational level, the transnational cooperation opportunities offered by the Erasmus+ aimed at helping develop sustainable institutional partnerships, improve teaching quality, quality of youth work, and strengthen networks between educational institutions, businesses, and policy actors. Over time, these outcomes may contribute to the internationalisation of education and training and encourage the adoption of innovative teaching and learning methods.

At the system level, Erasmus+ aimed to strengthen policy coordination in education, training, youth, and sport. The programme also aimed at generating stronger awareness about key policy challenges in education and training, youth and sport; enhancing mutual learning and good practice exchanges among policy makers and key stakeholders; supporting research and training about the EU. It was also hoped that its influence could extend beyond education, contributing to broader objectives such as social inclusion, equality, and democratic participation.

Overall, Erasmus+ 2014-2020 aligned with EU strategic objectives, particularly in education, training, and youth policy, as outlined in the Europe 2020 strategy and other European priorities. By fostering mobility, cooperation, and innovation, Erasmus+ was expected to help lay the foundation for stronger education systems, a more engaged youth, and a more cohesive European society.

Spill-over between intervention levels were also expected. For instance, it was hoped that the mobility of learners and staff could – in addition to individual-level results – improve the performance of the organisations. Also, the performance of individual organisations could benefit from European cooperation in the fields of the programme, including through its modernising effects on national systems and reforms.

[23] These articles set the scope for EU intervention in Education, training, youth and sport: develop a European dimension in education, encourage learning mobility, stimulate cooperation between organisations, develop exchange of good practices, encourage the participation of young people in democratic life, develop a European dimension in sport, foster cooperation with third countries.

However, several external factors exist in the areas of the programme intervention, consisting e.g. of Member States' policy making and spending. This makes it challenging to clearly attribute and quantify the specific effects and changes the programme aimed to achieved.

Erasmus+ 2021-2027

The 2021-2027 programme is established under Regulation (EU) 2021/817. The programme has a budget of **EUR 26.526 billion** [24], complemented by about EUR 2.1 billion from EU external cooperation instruments (IPA III and NDICI-Global Europe). The programme provides learning mobility opportunities abroad for people of all ages and invests in cooperation and policy development in the fields of education and training, youth and sport.

- ***Challenges and needs***

The 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme emerged in response to Europe's evolving socio-economic landscape. That context showed the importance of investing in lifelong learning to equip **individuals with the necessary knowledge, skills and competences**, including languages, and invest in digital literacy and other forward-looking fields (e.g. climate change, clean energy, artificial intelligence, robotics, data analysis, arts/design), with the objective to foster resilience and employability, contributing to economic growth and cohesion.

The impact assessment of the Commission's proposal for Erasmus+ 2021-2027 identified the need to address the Europe-wide trends of limited **participation in democratic life** and the low levels of **knowledge** and **awareness** of **European matters** that have an impact on the lives of all European citizens. By leveraging the pivotal role of education, the programme aimed to bolster **EU values** such as freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination, fostering social cohesion.

The impact assessment also identified the need to make Erasmus+ more **inclusive**, by reaching out more and better to people of different ages and from diverse cultural, social and economic backgrounds. To close the so-called 'inclusion gap', the programme had to tackle the various categories of obstacles hindering access to its learning opportunities, simplify access to funding and broaden societal participation. The programme also needed to be **more accessible** for newcomers with little or no experience, to organisations with smaller capacity, but also for new types of organisations such as in regions, rural or deprived areas, people with disabilities and community-based grassroots organisations that work directly with disadvantaged learners of all ages.

Against a background of global challenges and climate change, the 2021-2027 programme generation seeks to make economies and lifestyles more sustainable; formal, non-formal and informal education are key to **foster environmental awareness and promote behavioural changes** towards a greener society. Additionally, high-quality **digital education**, **digital tools and platforms**, educators with **digital skills** are essential for European societies to adapt to the digital transition. The 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme endeavours to address also these needs.

The impact assessment also stressed that **international mobility and cooperation with non-associated third countries** – in particular enlargement, neighbourhood, industrialised and emerging countries - should be intensified, to better support institutions and organisations in Europe in facing the challenges of globalisation. To do so, ensuring synergies with the Union's external instruments to pursue the goals of its external actions was highlighted as key to contribute to human and institutional development in third countries, including in developing countries, and to engage with their young people, as an essential element to building more

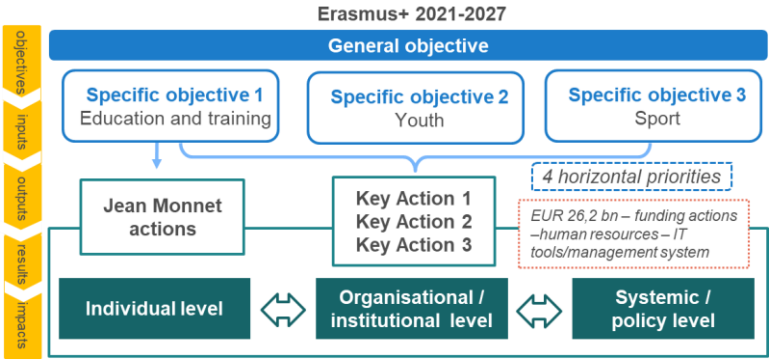
[24] As established in 2021-2027 Erasmus+ Regulation, the financial envelope for the implementation of the Programme for the period from 2021 to 2027 was set at EUR 24.574 billion (Article 17(1)), increased by an additional allocation of EUR 1.7 billion in constant 2018 prices (Article 17(2)). The latter amount is estimated at amounting to EUR 1.951 billion in current prices, for a total amount of EUR 26.526 billion.

resilient societies and enhancing trust between cultures. Keeping **stability and continuity** in the overall structure and management mode of the new programme compared to its predecessor was another recommendation.

Based on the findings of the mid-term evaluation of the 2014-2020 programme and stakeholders' consultations, a number of improvements were put forward to address the following challenges:

- Closing the knowledge, skills and competences gap;
- Making Erasmus+ more inclusive (inclusion gap);
- Limited participation in democratic life and sense of European identity;
- Limited opportunities for and access to cooperation between organisations from different countries;
- Insufficient scope and volume of international (non-EU) mobility and cooperation;
- Simplify the access to the programme and reduce burden on beneficiaries;
- Foster synergies with other funding instruments.

- ***Objectives***



The **general objective** [25] of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 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 programme also has **three specific objectives**, each addressing specific fields:

- **Specific objective 1 in the field of education and training** (including higher education, VET, school education and adult education): 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.
- **Specific objective 2 in the field of youth**: 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.
- **Specific objective 3 in the field of sport**: 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.

The delivery on the programme objectives is ensured through **four horizontal priorities** encompassing all programme actions: inclusion and diversity; environment and fight against climate change; digital transformation; and participation and civic engagement.

The 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme was designed to be a key instrument for building a **European Education Area**, supporting the implementation of the European strategic

[25] Article 3(1) of Regulation (EU) 2021/817.

cooperation in the field of education and training (ET 2030), with its underlying sectoral agendas (in higher education, VET, school education and adult education), and delivering on the **European Skills Agenda** for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience. It supports Europe's digital strategy and the **Digital Education Action Plan**, and the **European Green Deal**. In addition, the programme is a crucial contributor to advancing youth policy cooperation under the **European Union Youth Strategy** 2019-2027 and to developing the European dimension in sport in line with the **EU Work Plans for Sport**.

The 2021-2027 programme also addresses challenges identified in the findings of the mid-term evaluation of the 2014-2020 programme and in stakeholders' consultations. It helps equip Europeans with the necessary skills for an increasingly mobile, multicultural and digital society; increases the inclusivity of and the accessibility to the programme; provides more opportunities for participation in democratic life; increases the scope and volume of international (non-EU) learning mobility and cooperation; fosters synergies with other funding instruments. In line with the impact assessment of the Commission's proposal for the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme, the current programme has kept stability and continuity of the 2014-2020 programme in its overall structure with three key actions and its management mode. The current programme has also integrated sport actions in this structure.

- ***Programme design***

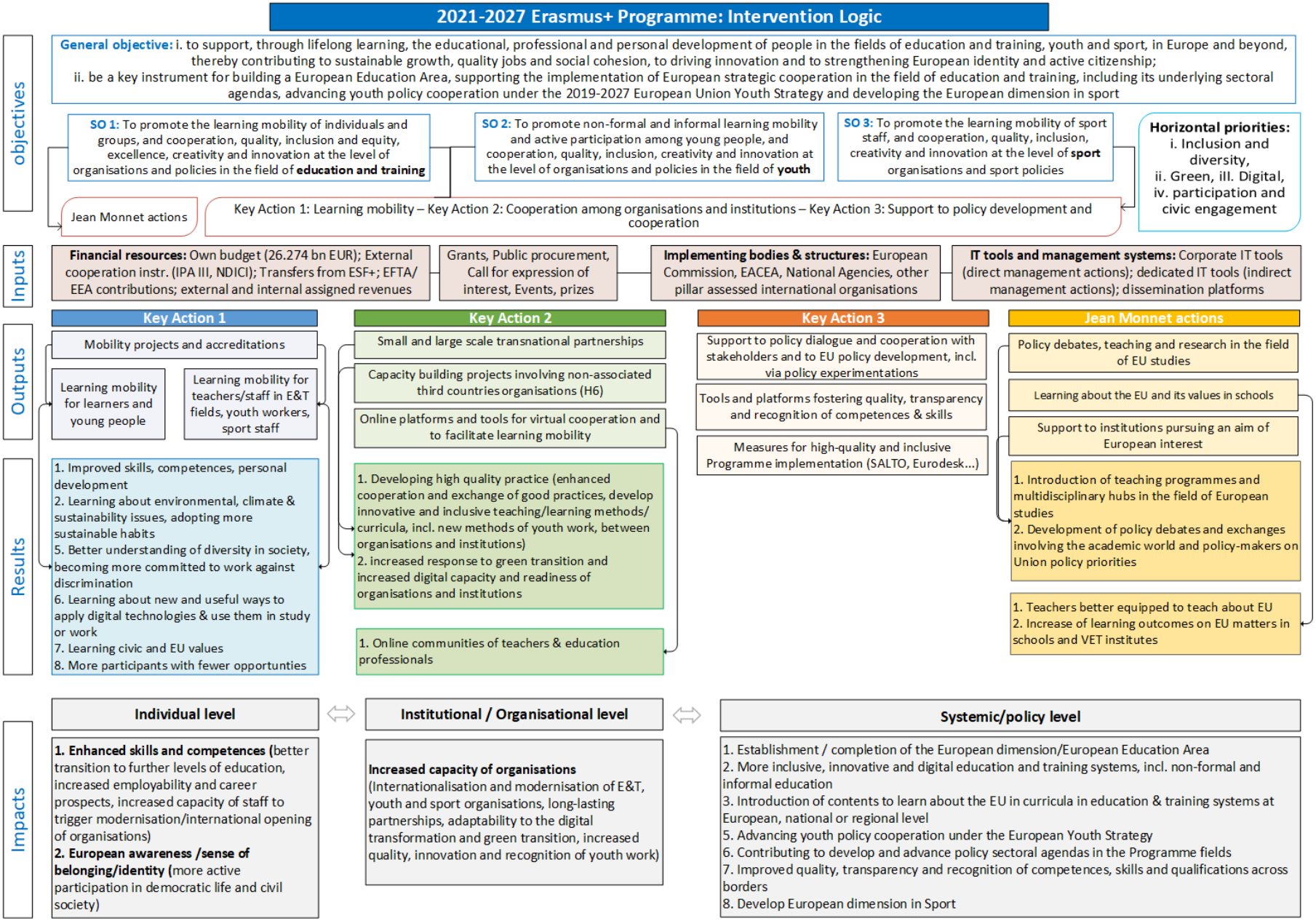
The 2021-2027 programme is implemented under both **direct and indirect management in 33 countries,** i.e. 27 EU Member States, three EEA/EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) and three candidate countries (North Macedonia, Türkiye and Serbia). The actions implemented under indirect management are largely entrusted to **National Agencies** (NAs)[26] designated by National Authorities in each Member State and third country associated to the programme, while those under direct management are implemented by the **European Education and Culture Executive Agency** (EACEA) and by the European Commission. The programme is designed as followed:

- Key action 1 (KA1) Learning mobility;
- Key action 2 (KA2) Cooperation among organisations and institutions;
- Key action 3 (KA3) Support to policy development and cooperation;
- Jean Monnet Actions: aiming to support teaching, learning, research and debates on European integration matters, including on the EU's future challenges and opportunities.

The programme is designed to address the **individual, organisational and systemic/ policy levels**, in terms of actions, final target groups and short-term results respectively through KA1, 2 and 3 as well as Jean Monnet Actions. This logic is also reflected in the **programme management and implementing modes**. The actions expected to deliver most results at individual level, such as learning mobility, and requiring closer monitoring of organisations in the national context are implemented under indirect management. Large-scale actions aiming to produce systemic and policy effects, at national and European level, are mainly implemented through direct management.

The diagram below provides a graphic representation of the intervention logic, summarizing the main inputs, outputs, results and impact as well as their relations:

[26] https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/contacts/national-agencies


2021-2027 Erasmus+ Programme: Intervention Logic
objectives
General objective: i. to support, through lifelong learning, the educational, professional and personal development of people in the fields of education and 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;
ii. be a key instrument for building a European Education Area, supporting the implementation of European strategic cooperation in the field of education and training, including its underlying sectoral agendas, advancing youth policy cooperation under the 2019-2027 European Union Youth Strategy and developing the European dimension in sport
SO 1: To promote the learning mobility of individuals and groups, and cooperation, quality, inclusion and equity, excellence, creativity and innovation at the level of organisations and policies in the field of education and training
SO 2: To promote non-formal and informal learning mobility and active participation among young people, and cooperation, quality, inclusion, creativity and innovation at the level of organisations and policies in the field of youth
SO 3: To promote the learning mobility of sport staff, and cooperation, quality, inclusion, creativity and innovation at the level of sport organisations and sport policies
Horizontal priorities: i. Inclusion and diversity, ii. Green, iII. Digital, iv. participation and civic engagement
Jean Monnet actions
Key Action 1: Learning mobility – Key Action 2: Cooperation among organisations and institutions – Key Action 3: Support to policy development and cooperation
Inputs
Financial resources: Own budget (26.274 bn EUR); External cooperation instr. (IPA III, NDICI); Transfers from ESF+; EFTA/ EEA contributions; external and internal assigned revenues
Grants, Public procurement, Call for expression of interest, Events, prizes
Implementing bodies & structures: European Commission, EACEA, National Agencies, other pillar assessed international organisations
IT tools and management systems: Corporate IT tools (direct management actions); dedicated IT tools (indirect management actions); dissemination platforms
Outputs
Key Action 1
Mobility projects and accreditations
Learning mobility for learners and young people
Learning mobility for teachers/staff in E&T fields, youth workers, sport staff
Key Action 2
Small and large scale transnational partnerships
Capacity building projects involving non-associated third countries organisations (H6)
Online platforms and tools for virtual cooperation and to facilitate learning mobility
Key Action 3
Support to policy dialogue and cooperation with stakeholders and to EU policy development, incl. via policy experimentations
Tools and platforms fostering quality, transparency and recognition of competences & skills
Measures for high-quality and inclusive Programme implementation (SALTO, Eurodesk...)
Jean Monnet actions
Policy debates, teaching and research in the field of EU studies
Learning about the EU and its values in schools
Support to institutions pursuing an aim of European interest
Results
1. Improved skills, competences, personal development
2. Learning about environmental, climate & sustainability issues, adopting more sustainable habits
5. Better understanding of diversity in society, becoming more committed to work against discrimination
6. Learning about new and useful ways to apply digital technologies & use them in study or work
7. Learning civic and EU values
8. More participants with fewer opportunties
1. Developing high quality practice (enhanced cooperation and exchange of good practices, develop innovative and inclusive teaching/learning methods/ curricula, incl. new methods of youth work, between organisations and institutions)
2. increased response to green transition and increased digital capacity and readiness of organisations and institutions
1. Online communities of teachers & education professionals
1. Introduction of teaching programmes and multidisciplinary hubs in the field of European studies
2. Development of policy debates and exchanges involving the academic world and policy-makers on Union policy priorities
1. Teachers better equipped to teach about EU
2. Increase of learning outcomes on EU matters in schools and VET institutes
Impacts
Individual level
1. Enhanced skills and competences (better transition to further levels of education, increased employability and career prospects, increased capacity of staff to trigger modernisation/international opening of organisations)
2. European awareness /sense of belonging/identity (more active participation in democratic life and civil society)
Institutional / Organisational level
Increased capacity of organisations (Internationalisation and modernisation of E&T, youth and sport organisations, long-lasting partnerships, adaptability to the digital transformation and green transition, increased quality, innovation and recognition of youth work)
Systemic/policy level
1. Establishment / completion of the European dimension/European Education Area
2. More inclusive, innovative and digital education and training systems, incl. non-formal and informal education
3. Introduction of contents to learn about the EU in curricula in education & training systems at European, national or regional level
5. Advancing youth policy cooperation under the European Youth Strategy
6. Contributing to develop and advance policy sectoral agendas in the Programme fields
7. Improved quality, transparency and recognition of competences, skills and qualifications across borders
8. Develop European dimension in Sport

A more detailed description of **inputs, outputs, results and impacts** in provided in **Annex VI.**

For this interim evaluation, the focus will be on inputs, outputs and short-term results, where data is already available at this stage of the programming period. The results of the final evaluation of 2014-2020 and the interim evaluation of 2021-2027 will inform the development of the final evaluation of 2021-2027. Further details are provided in section 5.2 'Lessons Learned'.

In continuity with the 2014-2020 programme, potential **spill-over effects** can be identified between the programme actions. For instance, learning mobility activities (KA1) of students, teachers, trainers, and other staff could, in addition to individual-level results, can lead to improvements in the performance of the institutions. This is due to the fact that mobility actions are not contracted at the individual level, but at the level of their institution.

Similarly, while the cooperation projects (KA2) are focussing on the cooperation between institutions and having effects at that level, the individuals that participate in the projects will also indirectly develop a set of skills and competences. The policy support activities and projects (KA3) can lead to concrete follow-up through pilots at the grassroots levels.

Finally, several external factors exist in the areas of the programme intervention, consisting of e.g. Member States' policy making and spending. This makes it challenging to clearly attribute and quantify the specific effects and changes it aimed to achieved.

2.2 Main changes introduced in the 2021-2027 programming period

The changes introduced in the 2021-2027 programme, most of them resulting from lessons drawn from the mid-term evaluation of Erasmus+ 2014-2020, mainly consisted in:

- Reducing the number of specific objectives from 13 to 3;
- Establishing four overarching implementation priorities across its actions and fields, to increase consistency in the delivery of programme objectives;
- Embedding all programme fields, including sport, in the three key actions, to pursue the programme objectives in a more streamlined manner;
- Rearranging the programme actions among the three key actions, linking them with more clarity to the changes that the programme aims to trigger;
- Several flagship actions were introduced (such as the European Universities initiative, and the Centres of Vocational Excellence), certain actions were renamed or moved from one key action to another, while very few actions were discontinued in the transition from the 2014-2020 programme [27]);
- Providing more flexible formats (e.g. group and blended mobility);
- Reinforcing the international dimension, extending it to a wider number of actions.

Furthermore, 'DiscoverEU' has become part of the Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027, building on the experience of the DiscoverEU initiative, launched as a preparatory action in 2018 (see Annex VIII for a more complete overview).

A number of **simplification measures** were introduced at various levels:

a) for **beneficiaries**:

[27] The European Voluntary Service was discontinued from Erasmus+ since the entry into force of the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) programme in 2018.

- introduction of the **small-scale partnership** (lower grants, flexible formats, simplified administrative requirements), an action specifically designed to increase accessibility for small and newcomer organisations;
- simplified funding rules for cooperation projects, providing organisations the possibility to apply for a single **lump sum** for implementing their projects;
- introduction of the **accreditation scheme** ('Erasmus Accreditation') for mobility projects in VET, school education, adult education, and youth [28] to simplify accessibility to funding and reduce the administrative requirements for recurrent beneficiaries;
- revamped **IT architecture**, including for the implementing bodies, with the introduction of the 'single entry point' for IT applications;

b) for **participants**:

- digitalised and simplified implementation, in particular through the **European Student Card Initiative**;

c) for **National Agencies**:

- introduction of multi-annual programming, shorter and more targeted annual reporting ('yearly reports') and more user-friendly format for feedback;
- simplified contractual requirements ('contribution agreements'), with increased flexibility for the management of the funds and a single share for transfers between actions/sectors);
- digitalisation of contractual, payment and amendment procedures, use of digital signatures;

d) for **other bodies** supporting the implementation of the programme (national VET teams, SALTO Resource Centres, Eurodesk, National Support Services for eTwinning and the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE)):

- introduction of lump sum, simplified contractual arrangements.

2.3 Point(s) of comparison

The main point of comparison for the interim evaluation is the **impact assessment carried out for Erasmus+ 2021-2027.** For the final evaluation of Erasmus+ 2014-2020, the main points of comparison are the findings of its mid-term evaluation and of the long-term impact of its seven predecessor programmes from the period 2007-2013 (ex-post evaluation) [29]. The baseline scenario for the 2021-2027 programme was to maintain the status quo of the 2014-2020 programme, which had achieved good results and was on track in achieving its performance indicators [30].

At the end of the 2014-2020 programming period more than **6 million individuals**, learners and staff, had taken part in learning mobility [31], in addition many more people benefited from cooperation projects involving almost **140 000 organisations**. Despite the good achievements, the programme was unable to meet the high demand, with only a minority of young people[32] benefitting from an Erasmus+ experience. Findings of the previous evaluation highlighted that

[28] Already existing for Higher education. In VET, during the 2014-2020 programme, organisations could apply for the 'Erasmus+ VET Mobility Charter' for simplified access to certain VET mobility actions, such as ErasmusPro. In the current programme, this Charter has been replaced by the 'Erasmus Accreditation'.

[29] https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents.evaluations_en

[30] At the time of the mid-term evaluation, in the period 2014-2016 (without taking into account fully 2016 data), the programme had already benefited over 1.4 million learners and 400 000 staff/practitioners.

[31] Mobilities counted by call year. To be noted that thousands of projects have been impacted by COVID-19 in 2020. More details in Erasmus+ Annual Report 2020, Erasmus+ annual report 2020 - Publications Office of the EU (europa.eu).

[32] 4% of young people living in Europe at the time of the impact assessment.

learning mobility activities would have benefitted from more volume and scope, in order to provide individuals with the right set of knowledge, skills and competences to support employment and foster social cohesion. To tackle such challenges, Erasmus+ 2021-2027 introduced new opportunities for school pupils, adult learners, young people and sport staff.

The mid-term evaluation of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 underlined the capacity of the programme in reaching out to **disadvantaged young people** (11.5% of the total number of participants at the moment of that evaluation [33]); however, it pointed out the need to further widen the access to the programme, reaching out to more people with fewer opportunities and facilitating the participation of smaller-sized organisation. The design of the 2021-2027 programme took these needs into account introducing measures to increase outreach and participation for individuals with fewer opportunities and of newcomer and low-resourced organisations.

The 2014-2020 programme introduced opportunities for **international mobility and cooperation**, but these were limited in scope (only available for higher education and youth) and in volume. Erasmus+ 2021-2027 has consolidated its international actions, including activities open to the rest of the world; first through reinforced higher education mobility to/from third countries non associated to Erasmus+, outgoing mobility towards third countries for VET learners and staff, and dedicated scholarships for excellent students worldwide. The capacity building actions were extended to the VET and sport fields, while continuing in the higher education and youth fields.

3. HOW HAS THE SITUATION EVOLVED OVER THE EVALUATION PERIOD?

3.1 Current state of play

This chapter describes the state of play in implementing both programme generations, explaining, both legally and on the ground, the situation of the period under evaluation.

Erasmus+ 2014-2020

Erasmus+ 2014-2020 had an overall indicative financial envelope of EUR 14.774 billion under Heading 1 (Sustainable growth) of the EU budget, complemented by EUR 1.68 billion under Heading 4 (EU as global player) and the European Development Fund (EDF), as opposed to a total budget of slightly more than a total of EUR 9 billion allocated to its predecessors over 2007-2013 (+40%). The overall indicative financial envelope was then modified to EUR 14 543 billion in current prices, following the entry into force of Regulation (EU) 2018/1475 establishing the European Solidarity Corps [34].

Budget heading	Amount (billion EUR)
MFF Heading 1 (billion EUR)	14.5
MFF Heading 4 (billion EUR)	1.7 [35]
Total (billion EUR)	**16.2**

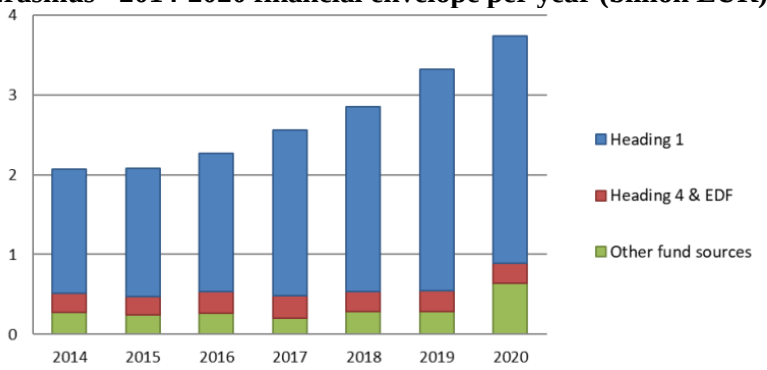
[33] With the youth actions being the most successful in this regard, reaching out to 31% of participants with fewer opportunities.

[34] Regulation (EU) 2018/1475 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 October 2018 laying down the legal framework of the European Solidarity Corps and amending Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013, Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 and Decision No 1313/2013/EU (OJ L 250, 4.10.2018, p. 1). Article 26 of this Regulation modified Article 18(1) of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ Regulation.

[35] Coming from different external cooperation instruments funding Erasmus+ 2014-2020 under Heading 4 (i.e. i) Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), ii) the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), iii) the Partnership Instrument for cooperation with third countries (PI), and iv) the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA)) as well as from the European Development Fund (EDF).

The budget profile of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme was strongly backloaded, growing at a regular, though not even, rhythm year-over-year, with a sharp increase in the last year of the programming period.

Erasmus+ 2014-2020 financial envelope per year (billion EUR)



Source: Erasmus+ annual report 2020

The **legal framework of the 2014-2020 programme** was modified in 2018 following the adoption of the European Solidarity Corps legal basis. As a result, Article 13 and Article 18, paragraphs 1, 2 and 3, of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ Regulation were amended through Article 26 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1475. This implied the following changes:

- the volunteering activities implemented through the European Voluntary Service were discontinued from Erasmus+ in view of implementation under the European Solidarity Corps,
- the overall indicative financial envelope was lowered to EUR 14.5 billion,
- the share of allocations across sectors and actions were further adjusted.

Table 2 -- Key data of Erasmus+ 2014-2020[36]

	KA1	KA2	KA3	JMA	Sport	Total
Number of contracted projects	123 519	25 313	8 828	1 909	1 366	160 935
Contracted grants (in million EUR)	11 058	5 359	494	327	274	17 512
Number of distinct organisations	95 070	56 953	9 395	993	2 831	136 155[37]
Number of participants	5 182 902	997 594	442 163	N/A	N/A	6 622 659

Erasmus+ 2014-2020 has been monitored through a set of indicators, established in Annex I of the 2014-2020 Regulation, measuring the level of achievement of the programme towards its general and specific objectives. Table A in Annex VII of this SWD shows their level of achievement at the end of the programming period, reported, in most cases, against yearly non-cumulative targets in line with the corporate guidelines for the 2014-2020 programming period (see section 4.1 for their assessment).

The overall completion rate of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 projects at the time of this evaluation is 99.4%, while the remaining projects are still in progress and due to submit their final report.

[36] Programme monitoring data, frozen on 5 January 2024 to reflect the state of play for the period under evaluation. Data are based on Call year.

[37] Number of distinct organisations across all key actions. It does not correspond to the sum of the number of distinct organisations per key action.

The cumulative implementation rates at the time of the evaluation were 100.9% for Erasmus+ 2014-2020 commitments and 97.25% for payments.

Out of the total number of 2014-2020 contracted projects, 147 594 projects (92%) were implemented under indirect management, for total grants of EUR 14 billion. 77% of the Erasmus+ funded projects have supported learning mobility under KA1[38] and 16% have supported cooperation between organisations between 2014 and 2020 under KA2[39].

Support to learning mobility is the core business of Erasmus+. In the 2014-2020 programme, the programme benefited over **6.6 million participants**, out of which more than **720 000 (around 10%) were with fewer opportunities/disadvantaged background or had special needs** across the three key actions. 80% were learners and 20% were educators and staff.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 exerted unprecedented pressure on education and training systems, impacted thousands of Erasmus+ projects and affected most mobilities funded under 2019 and 2020 calls, as well as some under 2018 call. In 2020, the impact of the pandemic on learning mobilities resulted in a 60% decrease compared with previous years (average 2016-2019). A decrease of 85% was observed also in terms of activities undertaken under KA2 in 2020, compared to the average number of activities in the period 2016-2019.

Between 2014 and 2020, **26 488 projects** were supported under **KA2**, involving more than **59 000 distinct organisations.** At the end of the programming period, the **success rate** [40] for learning mobility actions in the VET, school education, adult education and youth sectors settled in average around 47%, with youth and school education being the fields registering the lower success rates (respectively 33% and 39% in 2019 and 30% and 32% in 2020). In the VET field, 89% of learning mobility projects were funded outside the VET mobility Charter system (assimilated to the accreditation system) with a success rate of 47% in 2020. The table below provides an overview of the success rates recorded in the last two years of programme implementation for actions funded under KA2 (direct and indirect management), KA3 (indirect management), as well as for Jean Monnet and Sport activities, showing an overall oversubscription also across these actions.

[38] The figure includes Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree projects under direct management.

[39] The remaining 7% being KA3 projects and projects funded under Jean Monnet Actions.

[40] Success rate is calculated based on the number of contracted projects over the number of received project proposals. In the case of KA1 activities based on accreditation/charter system (i.e. higher education student and staff mobility (KA103) and VET learners and staff mobility with VET mobility charter (KA116)), the success rate is calculated based on the number of participants in contracted projects over participants in submitted project proposals, and not on the number of projects. Consequently, given their non-competitive character both KA103 and KA116 are excluded from success rate calculations.

Table 3 - Erasmus+ 2014-2020 Success rate [41]

Key Action	Management mode	FIELD	2019	2020
KA2	Indirect	HED	38%	34%
		VET	31%	27%
		SCH	44%	36%
		ADU	39%	30%
		YOUTH	18%	17%
	Direct	Various sectors	21%	19%
KA3	Indirect[42]	YOUTH	33%	31%
Jean Monnet activities	Direct	HED	22%	25%
Sport activities	Direct	Sport	34%	28%

Source: Erasmus+ annual reports 2014-2020 -statistical annexes.

In the period 2014-2020 [43], organisations from **third countries** - associated and not associated to the programme - participated either as coordinators or partners in 42 800 projects, with a total contracted grant amount of EUR 1.45 billion. In 2019, after two years and half of preparatory measures, Serbia joined Iceland, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia, Norway and Türkiye as fully fledged associated country. This brought the number of participating countries to 34 (including UK). By the end of the programming period, organisations from these six associated third countries participated either as coordinators or partners in 34 307 projects, with a total grant amount exceeding EUR 1.17 billion. In total, third countries (both associated and non-associated) hosted 471 106 learning mobilities funded by the 2014-2020 programme, while 734 761 participants (learners and staff) originating from these countries benefitted from an Erasmus+ mobility. Out of these numbers, the six associated third countries counted for 338 061 incoming mobilities and 501 765 outgoing learning mobilities.

Erasmus+ 2021-2027

The total financial envelope allocated to Erasmus+ in the MFF agreement for 2021-2027 is set at EUR 26.5 billion [44], with an additional indicative envelope of EUR 2.1 billion allocated from External Cooperation Instruments (IPA III and NDICI-Global Europe) via a Multiannual Indicative programme [45].

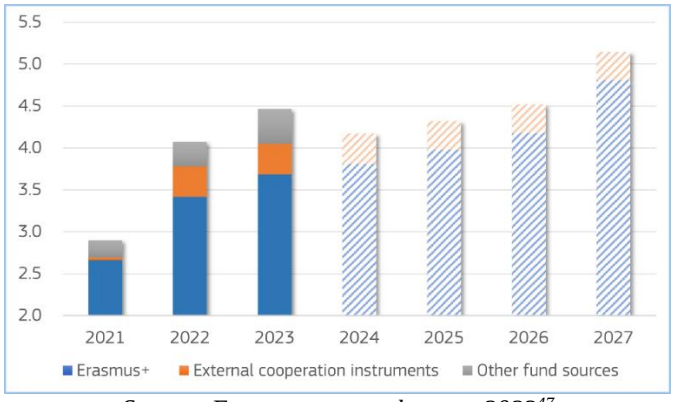
Budget Headings	2021-2027
MFF Headings 2 (billion EUR)	26.5
MFF Headings 6 (billion EUR)	2.1
Total (billion EUR)	**28.6**

As in the 2014-2020 programming period, the budget profile of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 is strongly backloaded, growing at a regular, though not even, rhythm year-over-year, with an expected sharp increase in the last year of the programming period. Considering the 2021-2027 programme's profile, the Commission proposed a frontloading of EUR 100 million from 2027 to 2023 (voted in the EU budget for 2023), to support projects facilitating the integration of

[41] The data for HE and VET do not include accredited projects funded under KA103 and KA116.
[42] Most part of the KA3 activities under direct management are not awarded through open calls for proposals, therefore success rate is not applicable.
[43] Data before 2020 includes also UK participation in the Erasmus+ programme.
[44] See footnote 24, p. 12.
[45] Based on the MFF mid-term review agreed in 2024, the indicative financial envelope allocated to Erasmus+ from the External Cooperation Instruments goes form EUR 2.2 billion to EUR 2.1 billion (https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/document/download/1d7e2bec-d688-49a1-bcfb-a67ba667514d_en?filename=ad-mip-2024-c2024-7509-erasmus-annex_en.pdf).

people fleeing the war in Ukraine into their new learning environments, as well as activities supporting organisations, learners, and staff in Ukraine [46].

Erasmus+ 2021-2027 financial programming per year (billion EUR)



Source: Erasmus+ annual report 2023[47]

The **legal framework** of the 2021-2027 programme was complemented as follows:

- Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1877 of 22 October 2021 on the **framework of inclusion measures** of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes 2021-2027 [48]. It aims to support an easier access to funding for a wider range of organisations and to better reach out to more participants with fewer opportunities. The Commission also published implementation guidelines on the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps **inclusion and diversity strategy** [49], to further support the inclusion dimension of the programme and help address the potential **barriers** hindering access to Erasmus+ opportunities, either as a stand-alone factor or in combination among them: i) disabilities, ii) health problems, iii) barriers linked to education and training systems, iv) cultural differences, v) social barriers, vi) economic barriers, vii) barriers linked to discrimination, viii) geographical barriers. The list is not exhaustive and aims to provide a reference in taking action, with a view to increasing accessibility and outreach to people with fewer opportunities.
- The Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/2710 on the **Monitoring and Evaluation Framework** of Erasmus+, adopted in September 2023. This Delegated Act supplemented the 15 indicators established in Annex II of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ Regulation with an additional set of 12 indicators to allow a more accurate measurement of the programme outputs, results and impacts (see tables B and C in Annex VII of this SWD for a complete overview and level of achievement of all programme indicators and section 4.1 for their assessment).

Table 6 - Key data 2021-2023 [50]

Erasmus+ 2021-2023	KA1	KA2	KA3	JMA	Total

[46] https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/news/reviewed-erasmus-2023-budget-brings-overall-eu443-billion-to-support-the-education-sectors-with-specific-support-for-ukrainian-learners-and-staff

[47] Solid bars represent the composition of the budget as endorsed in the relevant annual work programmes. "Other fund sources" includes top-up fines and top-ups brought by the budget authority to the annual EU budget for Erasmus+. Dashed bars represent the estimated projection of the budget for the upcoming years, in line with the programme budget profile. They only include the MFF plans.

[48] OJ L 378, 26.10.2021, p. 15.

[49] Implementation guidelines - Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy - Erasmus+ (europa.eu)

[50] Programme monitoring data, frozen on 5 January 2024 to reflect the state of play for the period under evaluation. Data are based on Call years.

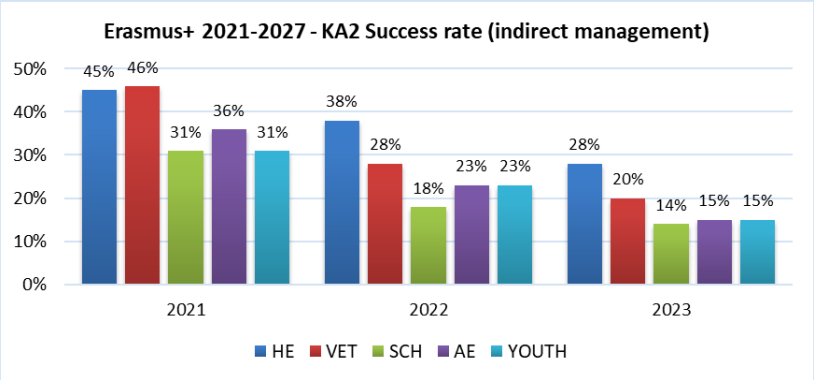
Number of contracted projects	58 240	11 812	886	1 080	72 018
Contracted grants (in million EUR)	5 876	3 559	146	175	9 757
Number of distinct organisations	56 448	26 638	826	708	77 671

Approximately **72 000 projects** have been contracted in the period 2021-2023, which represent a slight increase (5%) in yearly number compared to the 2014-2020 average[51]. Out of the total number of projects contracted in 2021-2023, 68 009 (94.4 %) were implemented under indirect management, for total grants of close to EUR 7.5 billion.

In the period 2021-2023, more than 14 000[52] organisations were awarded with the newly introduced 'Erasmus Accreditation' in the VET, school education, adult education and youth sectors [53], equal to 26.6 % of the distinct organisations participating in KA1 activities in these sectors. In total, 25 726 accredited projects have been contracted in the VET, school education, adult education and youth sectors in the period 2021-2023, against 19 033 non-accredited projects in these sectors.

Most programme actions are oversubscribed, whether in support of learning mobility opportunities or of cooperation projects. Demand for mobility in accredited projects has increased in all fields between 2021 and 2023. In particular, the demand for mobilities in accredited projects for schools has almost doubled from 2021 to 2022 (from 1 949 received projects in 2021 to 3 426 in 2022) and more than doubled from 2022 to 2023 (6 988 received projects in 2023).

The average success rate[54] of KA2 was 18%, for actions under indirect management in 2023, while for KA2 actions under direct management it was 23%.



Between 2021 and 2023, more than 81% of the Erasmus+ funded projects have supported learning mobility and 16% have supported cooperation between organisations, corresponding respectively to 60% and 36% of contracted grants [55]. In the 2021-2027 programming period, at the time of the interim evaluation (i.e. without taking into account fully

[51] http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/statistics_en

[52] The first Call of the Erasmus Accreditation (KA120 and KA150) took place in 2020 to allow organisation to be able to submit grant requests for accredited projects in 2021 Call year. In the youth sector, the Erasmus Accreditation (KA150) is not applicable for Youth participation activities (KA154).

[53] Higher education institutions applying to mobility projects need to hold an Erasmus charter for higher education (ECHE), which is the equivalent for higher education of the Erasmus Accreditation. This measure is in place since the previous programme generations.

[54] The success rate is calculated based on the number of contracted projects over the number of received project proposals.

[55] The remaining 3% (1 966 projects) being KA3 projects and projects funded under Jean Monnet Actions, corresponding in total to 3.3% of contracted grants (EUR 321 million).

2023 data – cut-off date 31 December 2023), the programme had already benefited over **1.6 million participants** [56], out of which more than **245 000 (15.2%) were with fewer opportunities**. 77% were learners and 22% were educators and staff [57].

The COVID-19 pandemic seriously impacted the first years of implementation of the 2021-2027 programme. Throughout 2021 all mobility activities continued to be affected. A number of mitigating measures addressing the restrictions of physical mobility were adopted and flexibility was applied both in the implementation and in the eligibility of costs within the applicable legal frameworks. In 2021, to compensate for the sharp decrease in mobility demand, the main programme focus shifted to cooperation partnerships. It is estimated that, in 2021, COVID-19 pandemic entailed a 36% decrease of learning mobility compared with the average over the period 2016-2019. In 2022, the programme strived for a gradual return to a regular implementation, notably in terms of learning mobilities, shifting the focus of the programme from cooperation partnerships back to the mobility projects, and a return to pre-pandemic levels with more than 1.2 million mobilities [58] across all sectors.

Between 2021 and 2023, 11 812 projects have been supported under KA2, involving more than 28 000 distinct organisations and contracting over EUR 3.5 billion. Around 20% of Erasmus+ total granted amount (approx. EUR 546 million) went to newcomer organisations, i.e. organisations that had not participated in any given Erasmus+ action in the predecessor programme.

In the period 2021-2023, organisations from third countries - associated and not associated to the programme - participated either as coordinators or partners in 12 790 projects, with a total contracted grant amount of EUR 690 million. Organisations from associated third countries participated either as coordinators or partners in 10 609 projects, with a total grant amount exceeding EUR 557 million. In total, third countries (both associated and non-associated) hosted 118 280 learning mobilities funded by the 2021-2027 programme, while 141 549 participants (learners and staff) originating from these countries benefitted from an Erasmus+ mobility during the 2021-2023 period. Out of these numbers, the six third countries associated to the programme count for 82 442 incoming mobilities and 109 861 outgoing learning mobilities.

[56] Data refer to actual participants (completed mobilities).
[57] Data at cut-off date of 31.12.2023 extracted by call year. To be noted that some categories of participants have "unassigned" label, therefore the total of learners and staff does not sum up to 100%.
[58] Learning mobilities in 2022 calendar year.

4. EVALUATION FINDINGS (ANALYTICAL PART)

This chapter presents evaluation findings for both programme generations according to five evaluation criteria – effectiveness, efficiency, coherence relevance and European added value.

4.1. To what extent was the intervention successful and why?

4.1.1 Effectiveness

The assessment of the effectiveness of Erasmus+ is overall positive for both programming periods. This assessment has looked into the extent to which:

- The programme ensured that learners and staff, including people with fewer opportunities, had access to and benefitted from its activities;
- Spill-over, sustainable or unintended effects took place;
- Results were disseminated and exploited;
- The implementation of priorities was effective;
- The response to external factors, such as COVID-19 pandemic, was effective.

An analysis of the level of achievement of outputs and results, as well as of impacts at organisational and system level, is provided separately for the 2014-2020 final and 2021-2027 interim evaluations of Erasmus+. Impacts at individual level are, however, analysed jointly, given the strong continuity of the design of most of the actions, and an important coexistence of activities, funded by the two programming periods, but running in parallel in the first years of implementation of the current programme due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Where applicable, differences are highlighted each time within the text. A distinct analysis is also provided when major changes in the programme implementation impose a clear breakdown, as it is the case e.g. of inclusion measures.

The evidence presented across the individual, organisational, and system levels suggests a generally positive direction of impact, indicating effectiveness of the interventions and activities examined. However, the findings should be interpreted with caution, as they are not conclusive due to limitations in the scope and quality of the available data.

The evaluation assesses the stronger continuity that has featured both programme generations ('*evolution not revolution*') as a strength. The overall needs, priorities and types of actions funded under Erasmus+ have not changed radically over the two programming periods. Based on the collected evidence, exposure to and participation in similar types of interventions over time is likely to achieve stronger results and impacts especially at organisational and system levels due to the build-up of experience. Although it is too early to make any assumption on the impact of the 2021-2027 programme, it can be anticipated that the impacts of the 2014-2020 programme will carry on with the current programme, likely in a more positive and sustainable manner.

Across both programme generations very **few unintended effects [59] were observed, which were predominantly positive**. These include e.g. i) the increased healthy competition among the institutions to form partnerships to participate in the programme activities and be more prominent on the international stage; ii) the attraction of more learners to those institutions that

[59] Finding based on stakeholder perception data only, such as key informant interviews and case study on Pilot PoVE Water, CIV Water (NL).

carry out programme activities, iii) the accelerated digitalisation of activities funded by the programme in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.1.1.1 Degree of achievement of intervention logic against key indicators

Erasmus+ 2014-2020

The 2014-2020 programme has been effective in achieving the expected outputs and results measured against its objectives. In line with the intervention logic, outputs can be summarised based on their level of intervention:

i) individual level,
ii) organisational level, and
iii) system level.

The table below provides a simplified overview of the degree of achievement of outputs and results from the intervention logic presented in the previous chapter, and the corresponding evidence used to assess such achievements. The green shading means that the degree of achievement is on track/attained, while yellow indicates that the achievement is somewhat lagging behind, yet not to a major extent. The overview table contains no red shading, which would have signalled significant underachievement.

Table 7 - Overview of the degree of achievement of outputs and results from the 2014-2020 intervention logic

Achievement of outputs	Evidence	IL Level	Achievement of results	Evidence
Mobilities for learners	Quantitative and qualitative	INDIVIDUAL	Improved skills, knowledge, and competences	Quantitative and qualitative
Mobilities for staff	Quantitative and qualitative		Changes in attitude, personal development, motivation	Quantitative and qualitative
Small-scale cooperation projects	Qualitative evidence	ORGANISATIONAL	Quality improvements at organisation level (new curricula, new practices, better recognition, new methods of youth work, etc.)	Quantitative and qualitative
Large scale cooperation projects	Qualitative evidence		Stronger international networks with other organisations, businesses, international, etc.	Quantitative and qualitative
Organisation participation	Quantitative evidence			
Policy outputs (support tools, experimentation activities)	Qualitative evidence	SYSTEM	*No short-term results expected in the intervention logic*	
Jean Monnet activities	Quantitative and qualitative		Research on EU studies, learning and teaching about the EU	Quantitative evidence

- ***Outputs***

Since 2014, the programme reached in total more than 6.6 million participants across its three key actions, funding more than 6.2 million learning mobilities[60]. The performance indicators established in the legal basis of the programme were reported against yearly non-cumulative targets, therefore no final (cumulative) target was established for the whole programming period.

[60] Under KA1 and KA2, the latter refers to pupils under the School exchange partnerships.

At level of outputs, performance indicators were generally on track and performing well until Call years 2019 and 2020. During 2019-2020 Call years, results were heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in particular with regards to the number of participants (see also section 4.1.1.8). As a result, quantitative indicators measuring the number of learners (pupils, students, trainees and young people) participating in the programme show 2020 achievements slightly below targets at the end of the programming period (617 000 participants, against 667 000 expected participants). In 2020, a lower number of participants was experienced in the higher education (350 000 students versus a target of 412 000), and youth sectors (117 000 young people against a target of 124 000), while the number of VET learners (150 000) was higher compared to the target (131 000).

Most of the types of actions funded in the 2014-2020 programming period continued in the 2021-2027 period. In the youth sector, the **European Voluntary Service** (EVS) supported around 54 000 volunteers until 2018 [61]. Although the Erasmus+ 2014-2020 mid-term evaluation considered the EVS effective, the action was discontinued as a 'brand' and removed from Erasmus+ in 2019, when volunteering activities started being supported under the European Solidarity Corps.

By end of the programming period, the programme reached a total of **720 000 participants with fewer opportunities, special needs or disadvantaged background** across applicable fields and actions. This number fell short of the target in 2020, with 43 000 participants against a target of 77 000, mostly due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The youth field performed particularly well and above targets all along the programme implementation, with a slight decline registered in 2019 (from 44 000 in 2018 to 39 000 participants in 2019) and underachievement in 2020 (19 000 participants against a target of 37 000). The decrease in 2019 and 2020 is mostly due to COVID-19 (mobility periods take place between one and three years after project starts), with projects end dates extended for 2019/2020 calls to allow postponed mobility periods to take place. In the case of youth, the decrease is also related to the creation of the European Solidarity Corps, and the consequent discontinuation of EVS from Erasmus+ as from Call 2019.

The **Erasmus+ Student Loan Guarantee Facility**[62] had an initial target to provide by 2020 some 200 000 students with access to EU-guaranteed loans for studying abroad. By the end of 2017, only 428 students had opted to take part in the scheme, with the majority of them coming from Spain [63]. The action proved effective in supporting the needs of disadvantaged students who were willing to go abroad for a full master's programme [64], but it never attracted enough financial intermediaries offering student loans for studying abroad nor a sufficient number of beneficiaries [65]. The Facility was discontinued in the 2021-2027 programming period as a

[61] EVS was covered under Erasmus+ 2014-2020 under KA105 (mobility projects for young people and youth workers) until 2017. In 2017, KA135 Strategic EVS was launched and in 2018, in preparation of the European Solidarity Corps, volunteering was moved from KA105 to KA125 Volunteering projects.
[62] The facility aimed at fostering higher education student degree mobility among programme countries by easing access to student loans for students enrolling in a master's programme abroad.
[63] https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/444828c6-7151-11e9-9f05-01aa75ed71a1/language-en
[64] The "social inclusion" dimension of the EU-guaranteed loans is supported by the "2018 annual report on beneficiaries of the Erasmus+ Master Loans and summary of developments 2015-2018: summary report" (which is already referred to in the 1st section on SLGF (https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/444828c6-7151-11e9-9f05-01aa75ed71a1).
[65] European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Combined evaluation of Erasmus+ and predecessor programmes – Final report – Evaluation of the student loan guarantee facility (Volume 2), Publications Office, 2017, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/2

stand-alone pilot initiative for transnational student mobility because it failed to gain significant traction with financial institutions for this purpose.

The total number of **staff involved in education and training and youth organisations participating in learning mobility was over 1 million** (against a baseline of 89 000 for all sectors). Across the different sectors, the number of staff mobility steadily increased since 2017 until 2019, and remained overall stable in 2020. Between 2017 and 2019, the highest increase was registered in the school (+69%) and the adult education sectors, which doubled the number of mobilities [66]. **At the end of the programming period, the achievement is well above the target set for 2020** (136 000), with 203 000 staff mobilities across all sectors.

Also, the 2020 targets set for the **international credit mobility in higher education** have been largely surpassed, both in terms of students receiving support to study in non-associated third country (25 000 against a target of 3 900) and of students from non-associated third countries to study in a programme country (37 000 against a target of 15 000).

The organisation participations were measured for all expected outputs, across all key actions, Jean Monnet activities and Sport, considering also the number of projects. The number of organisations' participations in 2020 was 82 000 for actions under indirect management and 3 000 for those under direct management, while the total number of organisations' participations largely exceeded 550 000 during the whole programming period [67]. In addition, specific indicators were measuring the participation of **organisations** from non-associated third countries in the higher education and youth fields with regards to the **international dimension** of the programme. These indicators slightly deviate from the expected targets. The one addressing the youth field shows a decrease in 2018, due to the discontinuation of EVS from Erasmus+ and consequent adjustment of the final target. However, as from 2019, the number of partner countries organisation participations increased, allowing to achieve and surpass the target set for 2020 (almost 7 000 youth organisations involved in international mobility and cooperation versus a 2020 target of 6 000). The indicator addressing higher education lags slightly behind (partner country Higher Education institutions involved in mobility and cooperation actions, achieving 1 235 participations against a target of 1 300), with general stability across the programming period.

System level outputs didn't have any specific indicator for their measurement. This is because most of these actions were operating grants awarded to identified beneficiaries through non-competitive procedures [68]. These outputs include for example yearly operating grants to seven institutions designated in the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ Regulation [69] pursuing an aim of European interest under Jean Monnet activities (total contracted grants: close to EUR 162 million). Other activities supporting the transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications or the EU policy agenda on education and training in the context of the Open Method of Coordination (e.g. dialogue with stakeholders, evidence-based activities) were provided through national allocations, which by end of 2020 were equal to around EUR 237

[66] Yearly progress is displayed in 2022 PPS data (ps_db2023_erasmus_h2.pdf).
[67] See footnote 48. No target was established for this indicator.
[68] Grants can be awarded to bodies considered as *de jure* monopoly on the basis of Article 198(c) of the EU Financial Regulation (FR), to bodies identified as beneficiaries in the basic act on the basis of Article 198(d) FR, or to bodies designated by national authorities on the basis of Article 198(f) FR for actions with specific characteristics that require a particular type of body on account of its technical competence, its high degree of specialisation or its administrative power.
[69] Article 10(c) of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ regulation. These institutions are: i) the European University Institute of Florence; ii) the College of Europe (Bruges and Natolin campuses); iii) the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA), Maastricht; iv) the Academy of European Law, Trier; v) the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, Odense; vi) the International Centre for European Training (CIFE), Nice.

million contracted grants. The few system level outputs based on open calls for proposals included experimentation actions aiming to fund initiatives for policy innovation (around 300 projects, involving over 2 500 organisations, for close to EUR 177 million contracted grants) and the action European Youth Together (37 projects, involving 391 organisations, for close to EUR 15 million contracted grants).

- ***Results***

The programme managed to achieve the expected results, in line with its logic of intervention. At individual level, four programme indicators (2 for education and training and 2 for youth) track quantitatively the programme performance in relation to **improved language skills and key competences,** linked respectively with specific objectives 5 and 7 of the programme [70]. Results at the end of the period are very positive, surpassing the set targets (80%) across all fields, with 96% of participants declaring having increased their key competences. Strong performance is observed also through the indicator measuring the increase in language skills across programme fields (96% achievement in higher-education and 95% in the VET field), contributing to the programme specific objective of improving teaching and learning of languages and promoting the Union's linguistic diversity.

Targets on the percentage of participants that have received certificates, diplomas or other formal recognitions in higher education, VET and youth sectors have all been achieved or significantly surpassed (100% of participants in higher education, 91% in VET and in youth), contributing to improve recognition of knowledge, skills and competences and related specific objective. In the **youth** field, in particular, data recorded along the year of programme implementation reflect the **increasing take up of Youthpass from 77% in 2014 to 91% in 2020** [71], the recognition tool for non-formal and informal learning. Youthpass was launched in 2007 under Youth in Action, one of the predecessor programmes of Erasmus+ 2014-2020, and in the course of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 issued more than 800 000 certificates [72]. Stakeholders' views also speak to the strong accomplishments of the programme on attitudes, personal development and motivation of participants, as confirmed by programme monitoring data: 95% of participants in youth actions consider having reached their expectations in terms of personal development; over 83% of programme participants consider having improved their learning competences, and 94% of staff participants in VET, school and adult education are more motivated to develop their professional skills [73].

The achievement of the expected results at organisational level [74] is confirmed by quantitative evidence [75] and corroborated by studies [76]. 82% of staff in VET, school, adult

[70] Specific Objective 1(a) on the improvement of the level of key competences and skills, Articles 5, 11 of the Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013. The data feeding both indicators were collected through surveys submitted by mobility participants at the end of the mobility period as part of the project final report.[71] Yearly progress is available in the 2022 Programme Performance Statement (ps_db2023_erasmus_h2.pdf)

[71] Yearly progress is available in the 2022 Programme Performance Statement (ps_db2023_erasmus_h2.pdf)

[72] https://www.youthpass.eu/en/about-youthpass/statistics/

[73] Data from participants reports submitted by participants in learning mobility as part of the project final reports.

[74] These include the spreading of stronger organisational networks, the development of quality youth work, and new methods of youth work, as well as in the area of new governance practices in sport.

[75] Based on the logic of the programme, the participation of E&T and youth staff in learning mobility activities is expected to provide benefit also at organisational level (see section 2.1). Participant reports (survey) are collected under the projects' final report as part of the regular monitoring of the Programme.

[76] Quantitative evidence refers to programme monitoring data (participants reports submitted by E&T and youth staff at the end of the mobility period), and to the network analysis and the socio-economic actors' survey conducted as part of the support study by the external evaluator. Among studies in the mentioned areas: RAY

education and youth declare having experienced or developed new learning/teaching techniques during their learning mobility, with youth staff reporting the highest share (89%), while 86% of staff in the same sectors have extended their professional network or built-up new contacts. Organisations' capacity grew following the participation of their staff in learning mobilities: according to respondents to the survey of socio-economic actors, the participation in the programme contributed to develop the capacity for international cooperation of their organisations and to develop new learning and teaching approaches and tools [77].

The connection with businesses also increased during the programming period. The number of strategic partnership projects involving companies or businesses has increased along the years, reaching the highest participation towards the end of the programming period, in particular in the VET field (over 2 400 businesses out of 6 700 across all sectors). The Knowledge Alliances (KA2) aimed at bringing higher education institutions and business together to collaborate on subjects of common interest. Based on the result of a recent study these activities proved effective to strengthen intersectoral cooperation [78], as they acted as first-time enablers for organisations to experience university-business cooperation, or as supporting mechanisms for organisations with prior intersectoral experience. SMEs were involved in 148 out of the 160 projects supported by the Knowledge Alliances, while NGOs/associations/social enterprises were present in 84 projects.

Under the **Sport** sector, the programme aimed to tackle cross-border threats to the integrity of sport, support good governance in sport and dual careers of athletes, and promote voluntary activities in sport. By 2020, the **programme achieved the 75% targets** to address these objectives, measured as the share of participants who used the results of cross-border projects to combat threats to sport, to improve good governance and dual careers, supporting athletes who have both their sport career and another professional or educational path at the same time. This target (75%) was also achieved for the share of participants using the results of cross-border projects to enhance social inclusion, equal opportunities and participation rates.

Evidence collected from stakeholders signal a strong performance of the programme with regard to research and teaching about the EU. These insights are further corroborated

CAP (2019). "Research project on competence development and capacity building of youth workers and youth leaders" (https://www.researchyouth.net/projects/cap/); RAY MON (2022). "Research-based Analysis on Monitoring of Erasmus+ Youth in Action – Comparative Research Report – 2014-2020: Effects and outcomes of the Erasmus+ Youth in Action Programme" (https://researchyouth.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/RAY-MON_Research-Report-20142020.pdf); "Sport diplomacy: identifying good practices" (2018) (https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/0efc09a6-025e-11e8-b8f5-01aa75ed71a1). "Study on the European sport model – A report to the European Commission" (2022) (https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/28433); Outputs produced by the Erasmus+ funded project Good Governance in Sport: https://www.eusport.org/goodgovernance/GGS_outputs). European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Kirdulytė, G., Abozeid, O., Abraham, E., Buitrago, H. et al., Assessment of the instruments, deliverables, results and impact of university business cooperation – Final report. Publications Office of the European Union, 2024 (https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/514543).

[77] Annex V of ICF support study. 79% of respondents to the survey considered that the result of development of the capacity of their organisation for international cooperation was fully met, and 16% considered it was met at some extent; while 64% considered that the result of developing new learning and teaching approaches and tools was fully met for their organisations, while 27% considered that it was met to some extent.

[78] European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Kirdulytė, G., Abozeid, O., Abraham, E., Buitrago, H. et al., Assessment of the instruments, deliverables, results and impact of university business cooperation – Final report. Publications Office of the European Union, 2024, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/514543

through reports studying the impact of Erasmus+ between 2014 and 2020 [79]. In particular, 432 000 students received training through Jean Monnet activities by 2020, surpassing the expected target (360 000), contributing to the achievement of the specific objective of promoting excellence in teaching and research activities in European integration worldwide.

- ***Impacts***

The 2014-2020 programme generation didn't include any indicator measuring the expected impacts at individual and organisational level. System level impact was measured through indicators addressing the Europe 2020 headline education target and mobility benchmarks, both discussed in section 4.1.1.4 below.

Erasmus+ 2021-2027

The programme is on track for achieving the expected outputs and results in the current programming period [80], particularly regarding the volume of mobilities (despite the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic), the improvement in participants' skills and competences, the influence of Erasmus+ on policy, and improvements in the practices of participating organisations. Due to the continued impact of the pandemic in the first years of implementation, the 2021-2027 programme had a relatively slow start, but at mid-term it is on track to meet targets and expectations (see tables B and C of Annex VII, providing the overview of the achievement level for all legal basis and delegated indicators at the end of 2023).

The **level of achievement of outputs and results has been measured through quantitative evidence**, such as programme monitoring data and programme indicators as set in Annex II of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ Regulation and in the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/2710, and **triangulated with qualitative evidence**. The table below provides a simplified overview of the degree of achievement of outputs and results from the intervention logic, and the corresponding evidence used to assess them. The green shading means that the achievement is on track/attained, while the yellow shading indicates that, at the moment of the evaluation, the achievement is somewhat lagging behind.

Table 8 - Overview of the degree of achievement of outputs and results from the 2021-2027 intervention logic

Achievement of outputs	Evidence		Achievement of results	Evidence
Mobilities for learners	Quantitative and qualitative	KA1	Improved skills, knowledge, and competences (individual level)	Quantitative and qualitative
Mobilities for staff	Quantitative and qualitative		Changes in attitude, personal development, values, motivation (individual level)	Quantitative and qualitative
Partnerships for cooperation (small scale-partnerships and cooperation partnerships)	Qualitative evidence	KA2	Quality improvements at organisation level (new curricula, new practices, capacity-building, high-quality practices, etc.)	Qualitative evidence
Organisations (participation, newcomers)	Quantitative evidence			

[79] Erasmus+ Annual Reports 2014-2020, the Combined evaluation of Erasmus+ and predecessor programmes (2018); Erasmus+ National Agency Lithuania (2019) "Longitudinal study on the impact and sustainability of the Erasmus+ Programme key action 1 mobility projects for school education staff"; European Commission (2019). "Erasmus+ higher education impact study".

[80] Key achievements and detailed progress against targets of core performance indicators are published yearly in the Programme Performance Statement: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/eu-budget/performance-and-reporting/programme-performance-statements/erasmus-performance_en

Achievement of outputs	Evidence		Achievement of results	Evidence
Capacity building projects and large-scale partnerships	Qualitative evidence		Stronger international networks with other organisations, businesses, international, etc.	Qualitative evidence
			Online platforms and tools for virtual cooperation	Quantitative evidence
Policy outputs (support tools to policy development, measures for high quality programme implementation, policy experimentations)	Qualitative evidence	KA3	*No short-term result is expected from KA3 activities, given their systemic and policy character*	
Jean Monnet Actions	Quantitative and qualitative	JMA	Research on EU studies, learning and teaching about the EU (at individual and institutional level)	Quantitative evidence

- ***Outputs***

KA1 outputs are mainly measured at level of number of mobilities of learners and staff. The reporting on programme indicators takes into account the number of contracted mobility under each Call year, standing at respectively 2 566 000 and 680 360 for learners and staff at the end of 2023, which are overall **on track with the yearly milestones**. The overall (cumulative) achievement (3 246 360) is already at 40% of the target set for the end of the programming period (8 215 900). Out of this number, by end of 2023, around 1.6 million mobilities were completed (1 271 042 learners and 369 205 staff). Only some fields fall slightly behind targets e.g. adult education learners and staff, VET learners and youth staff. The number of participants in virtual learning activities (blended mobilities) is also on track, with an 80% progress in 2023 against the final 2027 target. At level of KA1 activities, the 2023 target concerning the share of activities addressing climate objectives has been fully met for E&T, and sport and largely surpassed for youth (86% against 16% target). The share of KA1 activities addressing digital transformation was instead 14% in 2023, against a final target of 20% [81].

KA1 projects and accreditations are functional to ensure that individuals can benefit from learning mobility activities across the relevant sectors. At the cut-off date of the interim evaluation, one fourth of distinct organisations taking part in KA1 had received an Erasmus Accreditation in the relevant fields. The school education sector is the one benefitting the most from this novelty, given the increasing number of Erasmus Accreditation awarded from 2020 (2 344) to 2022 (3 113). In 2023, the number of accredited projects doubled the number of non-accredited ones (12 236 against 5 812 non-accredited ones), with 96% of accredited projects funded in the VET, school and adult education sectors [82]. The award of the Erasmus accreditation confirms that the applicant organisation has set up a plan ('Erasmus Plan') to implement high quality mobility activities as part of a wider effort to develop their organisation, consequently the scheme is also supposed to contribute to the expected impacts at the organisational level of the programme intervention logic.

Quantitative indicators tracking **KA2 outputs** concern mainly the number of organisations, including newcomer organisations, involved in projects as well as the share of projects

[81] Indicator introduced through the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/2710 on the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, for which no yearly milestones or sectoral targets are foreseen.
[82] Non final data, set at the cut-off date of the interim evaluation (end 2023).

addressing the programme horizontal priorities[83] (see also 4.1.1.6). Overall, these indicators are **performing well**, **in particular in terms of organisation participations and of number of small-scale partnerships** (5 894, with 44% progress towards the final 2027 target), an action specifically designed to increase accessibility for small and newcomer organisations. The total number of newcomer organisations in KA1 and KA2 shows positive evolutions, in particular under KA1. The number of newcomer organisations participating in KA1 both in 2022 and in 2023 is about three times (around 9 000 per year) as those participating in 2021 (around 3 000). This may be partly due to the start of new actions in 2022 (e.g. DiscoverEU inclusion action) and 2023 (Sport mobility) but also a sign of increased accessibility of the programme. For further supporting the measurement of this dimension, an indicator measuring the **number of less experienced organisations** was introduced in 2023, providing more comprehensive insights on the programme accessibility after the very first participation in a given action as well as on its capacity to accompany organisations in their growth. The achievement for 2023 (first year of measurement) is positive and encouraging; however, it is necessary to see the progress in the following years for a more comprehensive assessment.

No specific output indicator is linked to **Capacity building projects** (funded under Heading 6 of the budget), beyond those already mentioned with regards to KA2 organisations and horizontal priorities. Under Call years 2021-2023, 560 projects have been contracted, involving 2 889 distinct organisations, out of which 78% were from not-associated third countries[84]. In total, 26% of contracted projects were coordinated by organisations from third countries not associated to the programme.

N**o specific indicators are set for KA3 outputs, other than the number of organisations involved** (on track with 47% progress against the 2027 target). This is because most of these activities are based on grant allocations awarded to identified beneficiaries through non-competitive procedures. programme data analysis shows a sufficiently satisfying uptake of Training and Cooperation Activities (TCA) in the youth field (more than 1 000 activities planned between 2021 and 2022 [85]), despite the challenges in the first years of the programme implementation due to COVID-19 [86]. Networks, such as the SALTOs, register a strong appreciation well-evidenced through consultations activities.

Lastly, **Jean Monnet Actions do not have quantitative output targets associated with them through programme indicators**. However, qualitative evidence collected through consultation activities indicate that the activities are generally on track. The newly launched actions in the school and VET fields encountered some initial difficulties in the number and quality of proposals in the first years of the on-going programme. This was due to the combined effect of COVID-19 pandemic as well as to issues linked to a lack of capacity and capability in preparing applications within schools, and to legal issues limiting the capacity for public schools to sign grant agreements. Despite these challenges, the Teacher Training activities and Schools Networks received sufficient applications to fully utilise the available budgets, while

[83] One legal basis indicator addressing climate objectives, complemented by three delegated act indicators addressing the inclusion, digital and participation priorities. All four indicators are tracked in same way through data in KA2 application forms.

[84] Depending on the sectors and the call, these organisations come from Western Balkans, East neighbourhood, South Mediterranean, Asia, Central Asia, Middle East, Pacific, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

[85] Source: Erasmus+ Annual Reports 2021-2022.

[86] Response to COVID-19 pandemic required the extension of the eligibility period of TCAs funds (from 18 to 24 months) made available under 2020 and 2021 Call years. This implied the postponement of many activities and difficulties for National Agencies to plan new activities with the funds made available under KA3 in the first years of the programme implementation (see also section 4.1.2.2).

Learning EU Initiative has seen a significant increase in applications in 2024, leading to the full utilisation of the total budget available, supporting 94 projects.

Under Jean Monnet Actions, Erasmus+ provides operating grants to seven institutions designated in the Regulation and pursuing an aim of European interest[87]. Under the 2023 Erasmus+ Annual Work Programme the total allocation was around EUR 41 million. These operating grants make it possible for them to deliver their teaching, training, research and dissemination activities focused on the EU.

- ***Results***

The achievement of the expected results is, at mid-term, generally on track. At individual level, short-term results are tracked through surveys (participant reports) submitted by mobility participants at the end of their mobility period. A range of quantitative indicators signal the good performance of the programme regarding **improved skills, knowledge, and competences**. Based on programme monitoring data, 77.2% of participants in learning mobility have declared having improved their foreign language competences, 73.5% have increased cultural awareness and expression, while 79.4% have improved their personal and social skills (organisational skills, capacity to reach decision, learning to learn…) and 64.3% their entrepreneurship capacity.

Four result indicators were introduced in September 2023 through Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/2710 to track **participants' behavioural change and learning outcomes linked to the four horizontal priorities** of the programme. Therefore, their tracking and reporting started only recently. Such indicators do not have yearly milestones; however, they seem in most cases to progress well towards the target set at the end of the programming period. Following this interim evaluation, targets can be revised and yearly milestones for the second part of the programming period can be set up for a more accurate follow-up of progress.

In the 2021-2027 programme, the number of **KA1 participants with fewer opportunities** is measured at level of results, as an outcome following the implementation of strategies and measures to enhance the inclusivity of the programme. In 2023, the relevant legal basis indicator signals a 48% progress against the cumulative target set for 2027, with 445 635 participants with fewer opportunities across all fields (see also 4.1.1.5 regarding the effectiveness of inclusion measures).

Regarding **KA2**, key results across all small- and large-scale partnerships actions are tracked as **share of organisations and institutions that consider they have developed high-quality practices** following their participation in KA2 activities. Preliminary data seem to point out to a positive performance with a 96% [88] achievement in 2022, *versus* a 65% yearly target. Data on this indicator are collected through final reports, therefore there is no sufficient critical mass yet to draw firm conclusions on the performance of this indicator against the final target. Additional feedback is provided through case studies, showing that **through participation in KA2, teachers benefit from observing and learning from other school practices,** while among learners there were improvements in participation and motivation, and both learned

[87] In accordance with Article 8(c) of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ Regulation, the programme provides support to the following institutions pursuing an aim of European interest: the European University Institute, Florence, including its School of Transnational Governance; the College of Europe (Bruges and Natolin campuses); the European Institute of Public Administration, Maastricht; the Academy of European Law, Trier; the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Odense; and the International Centre for European Training, Nice.

[88] 96% for Education and Training fields and 97% in the Youth field in 2022. 2023 data not available at the moment of the evaluation, since they are collected at final report stage. Source: Programme Performance Statement.

from knowledge sharing [89]. In the **adult education** field, the main effects from KA2 participation include **improved networking opportunities and new approaches to training** [90]. In the **youth** sector, the case studies also highlight positive effects of Capacity building projects, for both staff and young people, such as **improved self-confidence and social skills and enhanced cultural awareness** [91].

The expected result in terms of **increased response to green transition, increased digital capacity and the readiness of organisations and institutions** is not tracked by specific indicators. However, programme data show that 260 KA2 projects, for total contracted grants of over EUR 79 million, focused on the sectoral priority 'supporting digital and green capabilities of organisation/institutions', in particular in the higher education field. Positive qualitative feedback was also collected through case studies [92]: interviewed organisations reported how new methods of approaching digital transformation and green transition have been embedded in their organisational policies and practices, increasing capabilities and readiness of the organisations. Participation in Erasmus+ has facilitated the embedding of digital transformation and green transition in higher education institutions' activities, programmes and policies; improvements in digital capacity and readiness have also been observed, contributing to the resilience of organisations to future challenges.

The results achieved by **virtual cooperation platforms** implemented under KA2 are measured in relation to the number of users benefitting from these online communities, which is on track for the European School Education Platform (ESEP) (previously the School Education Gateway) but, mid-term, have fallen slightly short for EPALE. The funding of online platforms appears effective in the establishment and support of extended communities of practitioners, and crucial in building strong networks, including as an entry door to the programme to build initial international cooperation [93].

No short-term results are expected from KA3 activities, given their systemic and policy character. Therefore, no result indicator is set for these activities.

Regarding **Jean Monnet Actions**, data on results are mainly collected through final reports[94]. However, given the long duration of these projects (36 months) very few data are available at the moment. Other applicable indicators concern the introduction of teaching programmes: 828 modules and chairs and 101 Centre of Excellence (multi-disciplinary hubs) were awarded in the field of EU studies worldwide under the 2021-2023 Calls. However, since none of these indicators are established in the legal basis, no associated target exists.

The **JMA higher education strand is widely viewed by consulted stakeholders as a well-established initiative** with recognition in academic circles. In particular, their role in improving cross-sectoral cooperation, fostering dialogue between academia and policy-makers, promoting civic participation and citizenship education, creating international networks, and

[89] Case studies Istituto comprensivo Manzoni-Radice (SCH, IT), I Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. Henryka Sienkiewicza w Kędzierzynie-Koźlu (SCH, PL), Pädagogische Hochschule Freiburg (SCH, DE), Primary school Anton Skala (SCH, RS).
[90] Case studies Afeji Hauts-de-France (ADU, FR), Społeczny Instytut Ekologiczny (ADU, PL), Asociația Sprijin+ (ADU, RO).
[91] Case studies Društvo ustvarjalcev Taka Tuka (YOU, SI), E29 (formely, Ifjúsági Nomád Klub) (YOU, HU).
[92] Asociatia Sprijin+" (ADU, RO); Universidad de Sevilla (HED, ES); Univerza v Mariboru (HED, SI).
[93] Case study I Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. Henryka Sienkiewicza w Kędzierzynie-Koźlu (SCH, PL).
[94] For all JMA: i) number of teaching hours, ii) number of students involved in the action; only for Learning EU and Teacher training actions in the school and VET fields: i) number of teachers involved in the action, and ii) success rate in learning test/assessment about the EU (%).

promoting teaching and learning about the EU [95] is appreciated. Given the early stage of the JMA in the school and VET sectors, it is not possible to draw firm conclusions on their effectiveness, although the beneficiaries consulted for the case studies [96] reported some early success and good prospects for the future, such as:

- Some effective results at the learner, professional and organisational levels;
- Project outputs were considered superior (in terms of depth and scope) compared to conventional approaches available within their country (e.g. through civic education, history classes);
- Suggestions that it would not have been possible to carry out the same activities and outputs without the JMAs in schools.

In general, looking at qualitative and opinion-based findings, results regarding international networks and improvements in organisational practices, teaching and research on EU-related studies and teaching and learning about the EU are deemed strong by stakeholders, and evidence from the literature review supports such views [97].

- ***Impacts***

At level of **impacts**, **the intervention logic of the 2021-2027 programme is operationalised through 4 impact indicators**, addressing the three levels of intervention of the programme. At individual level, benefit for participants is measured by two impact indicators concerning i) the share of participants that consider they have benefited from their participation in learning mobility activities, and ii) those who have increased their European sense of belonging after participation in KA1 activities (both applicable in the same way across all sectors). Both indicators refer directly to the general objective of the 2021-2027 programme, with respect to addressing educational, professional and personal development of people in education, training, youth and sport and to strengthening European identity. **For both indicators, the level of achievement at the cut-off date of the evaluation is surpassing the milestones set for 2023 in all fields**, being promising in view of meeting the final target. In particular, the results for the sport mobility emerge very positively at the very first measurement of this new action, respectively **99% of participants have benefitted from their mobility and 95% consider they have increased their sense of belonging**.

The indicators measuring the programme impact at organisational and system/policy level were introduced through the delegated act on the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework in 2023: i) increased capacity of organisations; ii) contribution to policy development, strategies and cooperation in education and training, youth and sport. Both address the three specific objectives of the programme with regards to the promotion of i.a. cooperation, quality,

[95] These included interviews at EU (Commission services, EU delegations) and national level; Case studies with Scuola superiore di studi universitari e di perfezionamento Sant'Anna (JMA, IT), Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna (JMA, IT), College of Europe (JMA, BE and PL), European University Institute (JMA, IT), European Institute of Public Administration (JMA, NL).

[96] Relevant case studies and their action types are Casa do Professor (JMA, PT) - Teacher Training Action, Profilirana Prirodo-Matematicheska Gimnazia Akademik Ivan Tsenov (JMA, BG) - Learning EU Initiatives, and Istituto Statale d'Arte - Liceo artistico "Edgardo Mannucci" (JMA, IT) - Network for Schools.

[97] See, for example, Erasmus+ Annual Reports 2021-2023, and the European Parliament report on the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027 (2023); European Commission (2023). "Study on Learning Mobility"; DAAD (2022) "Erasmus+ Cooperation Projects - Elements of Successful Internationalisation"; Epos (2022) "Impact van Erasmus+ en eTwinning op scholen".

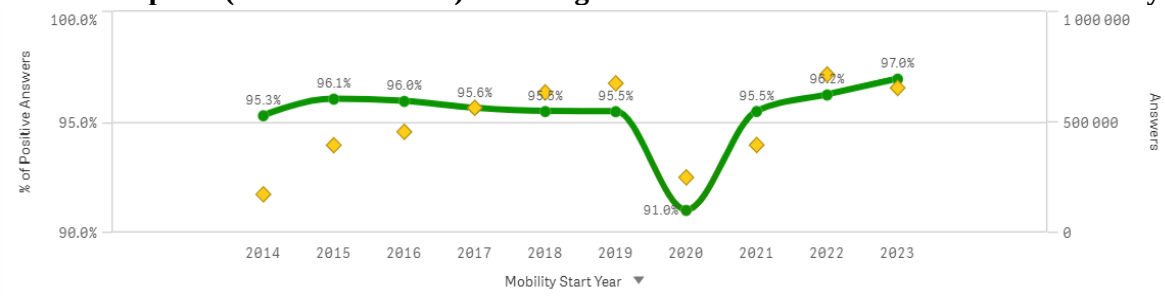
inclusion at level of organisations and policy, and are measured through a qualitative analysis respectively in sections 4.1.1.3 and 4.1.1.4 [98].

4.1.1.2 Impact at individual level

KA1 activities are generally reported positively for both learner and staff mobilities in both programming periods [99] and identified as affective across the different sectors[100].

Programme monitoring data, collected from participants' reports at the end of the mobility period, show a positive constant trend across both programme generations in terms of satisfaction of the participants (both learners and staff) with their mobility experience, as displayed in the chart below. The satisfaction level only dropped slightly in 2020, affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participants (learners and staff) declaring their satisfaction with the Erasmus+ mobility



Source: Participants' surveys Indicator dashboard. The data is displayed per mobility start year. The yellow dots illustrate the number of replies (participants' reports) submitted at the end of the mobility at project final report stage (in total: 3.9 million responses for participants from Call years 2014-2020 and 611 874 from Calls 2021-2023). Submission of participants' reports is not compulsory for all actions, consequently the number of responses for the 2014-2020 programme is lower than the number of participants.

- ***Learners***

Across both programming periods, participation in Erasmus+ is associated with several types of outcomes: problem-solving skills; sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; sense of European identity; positive feelings towards the EU; digital competence; confidence in their efforts in education, training or work; perception that employers value transnational educational and mobility experiences; completion of studies/other activity[101].

As stated in section 1.1.4, some limitations were experienced in the data analysis, affecting the establishment of direct cause-and-effect relationship. Despite these methodological challenges, a review of these outcomes across both programming periods was carried out through multiple data sources: programme monitoring data, surveys, case studies, research papers, meta-analyses, national reports.

- **European values**

Just over two thirds of respondents to the Eurobarometer carried out in 2017 agree that **European programmes and initiatives such as Erasmus+** and the European Solidarity Corps

[98] As required by the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of the 2021-2027 programme, an assessment on both indicators is provided in 'narrative' only.
[99] The main focus of this analysis is on 2014-2020 programme. A minority of the data collected in the period 2021-2023 may pertain to the 2021-2027 activities, however this is not considered an issue as most of the actions under assessment continued across the two programming periods. Because of this, a split would not be feasible.
[100] Based on Stakeholders' perceptions and NA/EACEA survey.
[101] Findings based on stakeholder perception data and supported by surveys with limited contrafactual analysis.

make them feel more European (67%). For young people participating in Erasmus+ 2014-2020, youth projects functioned as 'eye-openers', deepened existing knowledge on **participation and citizenship**, and encouraged to follow up on social or political topics, contributing to the development of skills important for participation and active citizenship [102]. In particular, the participation in the Youth dialogue [103] is noted for its effects on participants in terms of active citizenship, participation in civil society and democratic life, ranking the highest in the survey run by the RAY research network (53% of response, compared to the average of 33% for other youth actions) [104], results confirmed in the beneficiary survey run by ICF[105]. Furthermore, based on a survey carried by DAAD in 2023 on over 19 000 alumni from the period 2014-2019, the intention of former mobility participants to take part in 2024 European election is quite high, with 85 % of respondents confirming their intention to vote [106].

Box 1 – Example from National reports

Spain: The data suggest that the [2014-2020] Erasmus+ programme has had a considerable impact on the formation of a stronger European identity and the promotion of multiculturalism, especially in the youth field, where the figures are particularly striking, reaching up to 80%, which reinforces the findings from the RAY research network surveys, highlighting the importance of non-formal education in strengthening these aspects. Participants not only acquire academic and professional skills, but also develop a **greater awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity and European common values**. The positive trend in all categories can be attributed to the structure of the Erasmus+ programme, which encourages **mobility, cultural exchange, and international cooperation**. These elements are essential for building a more united and supportive Europe.

- **Skills and competences**

Learners participating in the programme since 2014 and surveyed by the external evaluator reported that their mobility experience helped them acquire or improve professional skills in teamwork, sector or field specific skills, planning and organisational skills, analytical and problem-solving skills, innovative and entrepreneurial skills, with shares generally above 70% across target groups [107]. On average, 80% of respondents across higher education students, VET learners, adult learners and young people reported positive results regarding the acquisition of 'planning and organisational skills'. The teamwork skills received the highest level of appreciation from young people participating in youth activities (93%) and positive feedback from at least 80% of other target groups. The acquisition of innovative and entrepreneurial skills had the most diversified feedback, from 59% of HE students reporting positive outcomes (the only result below 70%) to 74% of young people with the highest share.

Survey results for learners identifying themselves as having **fewer opportunities** are overall very similar, with some perceived differences within the different target groups. VET learners

[102] RAY research study on long-term effects of Erasmus+ Youth in Actions on participation and citizenship (RAY LTE): https://www.researchyouth.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/RAY-LTE-FTA_20210324-research-report-clean.pdf

[103] KA3, 'Dialogue between young people and policy makers' also called 'Structured dialogue' before 2018.

[104] RAY-MON, Comparative research report. Effects and outcomes of the Erasmus+ Youth in action programme (https://researchyouth.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/RAY-MON_Research-Report-20142020.pdf).

[105] Finding to be read in the light of the limitations indicated in section 1.1.4.

[106] DAAD (2024), Erasmus+: Wirkung der Studierendenmobilität (https://eu.daad.de/news/de/86030-erasmus-wirkung-der-studierendenmobilitaet/).

[107] Beneficiary survey for learners run by ICF (findings to be read in the light of the caveats indicated in section 1.1.4). Results are based on a total of responses "strongly agreeing" or "rather agreeing" to these statements from a total of 16 740 participants in higher education, 5 255 in VET, 2 479 in youth, and 90 in adult education, out of which the following declared themselves as having fewer opportunities: 48,7% in higher education, 59,9% in VET, 69,3% in youth, and 61,1% in adult education. Survey run on programme participants with mobility start years between 2014 and 2023 (inclusive). The feedback reported in this section is only based on programme participants (no comparison is done with non-participants). The question was not asked to school pupils.

are on average slightly more positive compared to their peers with fewer opportunities. On average, both young people and students with fewer opportunities perceive more benefits compared to their peers, in particular regarding analytical and problem-solving skills, followed by sector- or field specific skills.

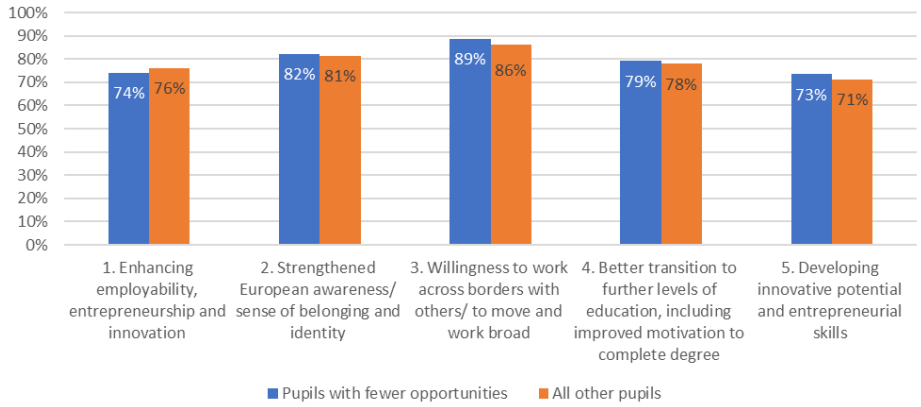
When breaking down this survey results by perceived barriers, learners declaring to face cultural or economic barriers, and to a certain extent those facing geographic barriers, perceive a higher benefit from the participation in the programme, in terms of acquisition of skills, compared to those facing other types of barriers, in particular health problems. However, as stated in section 1.1.4, given the differences in sample size of the different target groups, it is not possible to generalise these results to the entire programme for either programming period. Furthermore, the high share of respondents identifying themselves as having fewer opportunities (around 50% of the sample) limits their representativeness compared to the programme population over both programming periods (around 10% in 2014-2020, and 15% by end 2023) [108]. Therefore, these results can only be indicative of achieved outcomes, not allowing to claim causal links or to draw firm conclusions.

Examples of the range and types of effects of programme participation on people with fewer opportunities[109] include, for example, becoming more proactive and engaged as a result of project activities, acquiring new competences and skills, and progressing further in their education and career paths. Similarly, several countries report positive effects in terms of personal development [110], skills enhancement [111] and career prospect [112] for disadvantages participants, although comprehensive data on the specific impact of Erasmus+ on participants with fewer opportunities is limited in most cases.

The beneficiary survey for learners shows positive results also for **school pupils**, with 70% or more indicating an improved the range of competences (see chart below) following a mobility experience, with similar shares both for pupils with fewer opportunities and for all other pupils [113]. A recent study in the school sector in Germany shows that participation in Erasmus+ seems to benefit those who have less favourable learning profiles and less opportunities for e.g. extracurricular school settings or to participate in 'classic' privately organised international mobility abroad. In particular, the study highlights that participation in Erasmus+ benefits pupils from non-academic track school types, as well as those who receive less support from their parents on school matters, giving them the opportunity to be involved in outbound learning mobility [114].

[108] This can be explained by the different way of collecting data on participants with fewer opportunities in the survey (self-reported data from each respondent), compared to the programme (data entered by the beneficiary organisations at mobility level).
[109] Case studies: Pädagogische Hochschule Freiburg (SCH, DE), Oktatási és Szakértő Bt. Hungary. E29 (YOU, HU), Youth wiki (Youth, CY, FR, MT). Findings based on stakeholders' perceptions.
[110] 10 national reports mention increased self-confidence, autonomy and motivation as frequently cited benefits for disadvantaged participants (AT, BG, DE, EL, ES, FI, IE, LV, MT, RO).
[111] 19 national reports mention improvements in language skills, intercultural competence and digital literacy as commonly reported benefits for people with fewer opportunities (AT, BEnl, BG, CZ, CY, DE, ES, FR, HR, IT, LI, LV, LT, LU, NO, PL, PT, RO, SK).
[112] 21 national reports indicate enhanced employability and clearer career aspirations as benefits, particularly in the VET sector for disadvantaged participants (AT, BEnl, CZ, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, HR, LI, LT, LU, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, TR).
[113] Also for this target group, the results from this survey have to be read taking into account the caveats indicated above and in section 1.1.4.
[114] S. Hornberg, M. Becker, N. Sonnenburg, M. Peitz, C. Schreiber (2025). Lernmobilität in Europa (https://erasmusplus.schule/fileadmin/Dateien/Bilder/Dossiers/Politische_Papiere/2025_Hornberg_et_al_Zusammenfassung_Studie_Lernmobilitaeten_Europa.pdf).

Share of pupils participating in the programme who agreed that their stay abroad helped them in:



Source: Beneficiary survey for learners (school pupils) run by ICF. Results are based on responses from 560 programme participants (pupils), out of which 46.30% (=259) declaring themselves as having fewer opportunities

The collected evidence demonstrates a number of sustained effects from participation in learning mobility. The counterfactual analysis comparing participants over both programme generations and non-participants [115] highlighted the following correlations between participation in learning mobility and a series of outcomes:

- For **higher education students**, participation in learning mobility across both programme generations is associated with the increased likelihood of having a sense of EU identity and believing that employers in their sector value the mobility experience.
- For **VET learners**, positive association is found with the increased likelihoods of moving to another EU country permanently to study/work, finding a job within 3 months and completing studies/other activity. A positive association was also observed regarding digital competences but only for learners taking part in physical (not blended) mobility.
- For **school pupils**, a positive association was found with individual's problem-solving and autonomy skills, and civic competences. A correlation was found between an increase of individual's likelihoods of future involvement in civic/volunteering activities, and the reduced likelihood of believing that they will achieve poor performance in education/training regardless of the efforts they put in (reduced pessimism).
- For **adult learners**, participation in Erasmus+ 2021-2027[116] is correlated with the increased likelihood of reporting that the learning organisation facilitates social contacts and believing that employers in their sector value the mobility experience.
- For **young people**, participation in the programme is found to have increased the individual's social and civic competences. Participation in DiscoverEU (2021-2027) is associated with an increased sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; similarly, participation in the Youth Dialogue (2014-2020) is positively associated with increased problem solving and autonomy of participants, as well as with active citizenship and involvement in democratic life, in line with the objectives of the action. Participation in the European Voluntary Service (2014-2020) was found to be associated with an increased sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, positive feeling

[115] Analysis based on the beneficiary survey for learners carried out by ICF (see 1.1.4 for related caveats)
[116] Mobility of adult learners was only implemented in the 2021-2027 Programme.

towards the EU and a positive association with increased cultural awareness and expression.

At level of mobility entailing cooperation with non-associated third countries, participants in **Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees** benefitted from high-quality education and international exposure, which enriched their educational and professional experiences; students gained valuable skills in their respective fields, becoming more open-minded and independent. According to a recent Erasmus Mundus Graduate Impact Study 90% of surveyed alumni stated high satisfaction [117], consistently reporting individual impact in five key areas, such intercultural competencies, improved career prospects, personal growth, more positive attitudes towards Europe and the EU, and deeper subject matter expertise.

- **Academic performance**

Participation in 2014-2020 Erasmus+ student mobility is reported as enriching academically, socially, personally, and in terms of the employability development [118]. The periods spent abroad have a positive impact on openness to the world and on social cohesion, with more students who identify themselves as global citizens, Europeans and EU citizens after their stays abroad [119]. The meta-analysis carried out by the external evaluator on the topic 'skills development' took into account 19 research papers looking at sample populations that participated in study abroad anywhere from 2007 up to and including 2020. The analysis measured three outcome type covered in all the 19 studies: i) academic achievement, ii) language skills, and iii) intercultural cognitive competence. 46% of the outcomes reported in the studies included in this meta-analysis suggest a positive and statistically significant relationship between participating in international student mobility and educational attainment or skills formation [120], providing reasonable evidence that participating in Erasmus+ improves language skills and possibly also cultural intelligence [121]. Out of the 19 studies included in the meta-analysis, five [122] use sample populations directly referred to the 2014-2020 programme.

[117] The study analysed the experience of 3 different cohorts of EMJMD graduates. In the GIS 2022/23, graduates from cohorts 2012/13, 2017/18 and 2021/22 were invited to participate by e-mail and 3.396 of them completed the survey. To enhance representativity, the data were weighted to reflect the overall distribution of gender, region, field of study, and cohort. This edition of the survey included relevant topics, such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on studies and entry into the labour market. 90% of respondents reported high levels of satisfaction.
[118] European Commission (2019). "Erasmus+ higher education impact study"
[119] ESN, 2022, ESNsurvey. Understanding the Experience & Needs of Exchange Students in Challenging Times, Bruxelles.
[120] The meta-analysis carried out on the topic 'skills development' pooled independent variables (i.e. output types used in the analysis) from the 19 eligible studies (for 80 coefficients in total). These coefficients were analysed to determine whether they were statistically significant, and if so, whether they had a positive or negative effect. A result was considered to be statistically significant if it met the criteria of $p<=0.05$. 43 out of the 80 estimates suggest a positive and significant association, 33 are not statistically significant, and 4 are negative.
[121] Within the considered outcomes, 51 out of 80 coefficients were specific to language skills (60% of which are statistically significant and positive), 13 to cultural intelligence (92% of which are positive and statistically significant), and 16 on academic achievement (which are largely not statistically significant, and those that are significant are mixed between positive and negative results, with 3-3 cases each). The low number of coefficients reported for academic achievement supports the documented challenges for researchers in the availability of data that can be used to evaluate the impact of Erasmus+ and study abroad on academic achievement.
[122] Among these, two studies report a positive correlation between Erasmus+ participation and improvement of second-language proficiency (Kaya, F. 2021) and cultural cognitive competence (Mckay et al. 2022). However, they both rely on non-contrafactual methodology, thus not allowing to claim causal-impact.
Kaya, F. (2021). Language Proficiency Development and Study Abroad Experience: A Study on EFL Learners. GIST Education and Learning Research Journal, 23, 33 58.
Mckay, S., Lannegrand, L., Skues, J., Wise, L. (2022). International experience and cultural intelligence development: A longitudinal assessment of Australian and French exchange students. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 91, 56-69.

Among these, a recent paper [123] explores academic performance, showing that participation in Erasmus+ learning mobility does not delay graduation at the home university and, in addition, it has a **positive and significant impact on undergraduates' final degree mark**. In particular, participation in Erasmus+ learning mobility **improves graduation results for undergraduate students in scientific and technical fields (STEM) and for those who apply for the Erasmus+ grant in the first year of their studies, for whom it was also observed a reduction in time to graduation**. The paper makes use of administrative records from the University of Bologna, the second-largest public university in Italy, through a counterfactual methodology, allowing to claim causal-link [124].

- **Employability and career prospects**

National reports indicate **positive and lasting effects of Erasmus+ participation at the individual level**, without making major distinctions between programme generations. **Enhanced employability [125] and career prospects** were highlighted in 25 reports [126]. Improved soft skills, such as intercultural competence, language proficiency and adaptability, were indicated in all reports. Increased European identity and active citizenship were mentioned in 21 reports [127]. Regarding aspects of future career prospects, 88% of learners surveyed by the external evaluator believe that employers valued the personal skills gained through the mobility experience [128]. More than 70% of learners who participated in mobility activities in different programme fields since 2014 agreed that their stay abroad had improved their opportunities for future employment (both for those survey respondents who identified themselves as participants with fewer opportunities[129] and for all other learners).

[123] Granato, S., Mazzarella, G., Schnepf, S. V., and Havari, E. (2021). Study Abroad Programmes and Students' Academic Performance: Evidence from Erasmus Applications, IZA Discussion Papers, No. 14651, Institute of Labor Economics (IZA), Bonn.

[124] The paper exploits the allocation mechanism used by the university to select participants in Student mobility in a fuzzy regression discontinuity design, which allowed to tackle the bias deriving from selection into the Erasmus+ programme and to estimate its causal impact on short-term outcomes. It uses rich administrative data on students' applications to the Erasmus+ programme matched with administrative records on their performance at university (information on time to degree completion and final graduation mark), becoming the first study that uses administrative data on Erasmus+ applications and students' outcomes at graduation.

[125] See European Experts network on Economics of Education, https://eenee.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/EENEE_AR36.pdf

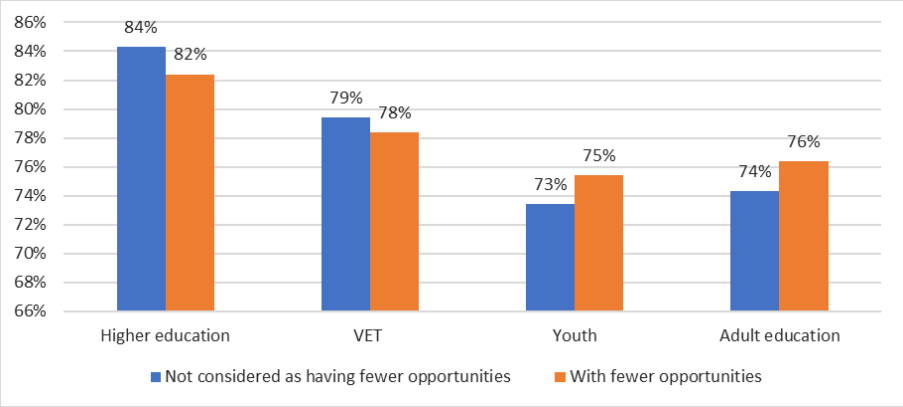
[126] AT, BEnl, BG, CZ, CY, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, HR, IE, IT, LI, LT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PT, RO, RS, SE, TR.

[127] AT, BEde, BEnl, CZ, CY, DE, EE, ES, FI, FR, HR, IT, LI, LT, LU, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, TR.

[128] Beneficiary survey for learners run by ICF (see section 1.1.4 for related caveats).. Results are based on a total of 16 740 respondents in higher education, 5 255 in VET, 2 479 in youth, and 90 in adult education. The question was not asked to school pupils.

[129] The respondents to this survey self-declared themselves as facing physical, economic, social, cultural or geographical barriers and therefore were considered as participants with fewer opportunities in the analysis. However, as previously explained, the data do not correspond to the monitoring data which are collected at programme level on participants with fewer opportunities.

Share of participants by field who agreed that their stay abroad helped them improve opportunities for future employment



Source: Beneficiary survey for learners run by ICF. Results based on a total of responses "strongly agreeing" or "rather agreeing" to these statements from 16 740 respondents in higher education, 5 255 in VET, 2 479 in youth, and 90 in adult education, out of which the following declared themselves as having fewer opportunities: 48,7% in higher education, 59,9% in VET, 69,3% in youth, and 61,1% in adult education. The question was not asked to school pupils.

Studies looking at the effects of **Erasmus+ on labour market outcomes** struggle to find definitive answers to this question. The meta-analysis carried out by the external evaluator on the topic 'employability' aimed to measure the outcomes 'employment success' and 'employment quality'. However, out of the 11 research papers filling in the criteria for inclusion in the analysis, only five included samples participating in student mobility in the first years of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 [130] Around a quarter of outcomes contained in the 11 primary studies included in this meta-analysis are positive and significant (i.e. have a positive statistically significant effect), but methodologies and research design are heterogeneous and cannot firmly identify impacts [131], the extensiveness of the mobility period addressed in the papers doesn't allow a clear link with the intervention. The few research papers referring directly to the period 2014-2020 note that the participation in the programme improves employment prospects at

[130] Crăciun D., Orosz K., Proteasa, V. (2020) Does Erasmus Mobility Increase Employability? Using Register Data to Investigate the Labour Market Outcomes of University Graduates in European Higher Education Area. Challenges for a New Decade.
Croce, G., Ghignoni, E. (2024). The Multifaceted Impact of Erasmus Programme on the School-to-Work Transition: A Matching Sensitivity Analysis. *Research in Higher Education*; https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-024-09774-x
Iriondo, I. (2020). Evaluation of the impact of Erasmus study mobility on salaries and employment of recent graduates in Spain. Studies in higher education, DOI: 10.1080/03075079.2019.1582011
Van Mol C., Caarls K., Souto Otero M (2021). International student mobility and labour market outcomes: an investigation of the role of level of study, type of mobility, and international prestige hierarchies. Higher Education, 82, 1145–1171. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734 020 00532 3
Wiers Jenssen J., Støren L.A. (2020). International student mobility and the transition from higher education to work in Norway. Higher Education, 82, 1119–1143. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734 020 00564 9
[131] Annex VI of ICF study. Estimates are considered to be statically significant if p<=0.05. Out of the 48 estimates considered in this analysis, a positive significant effect was identified in only 10 cases, representing 21% of the estimates. Heterogeneity in the results was noted when breaking down the findings by geographical scope – namely, the relevant sending country. The highest number of estimates is found in studies that analysed southern European countries, with Italy resulting in 21 estimates out of 48. This can be due by the fact that the Italian National Institute of Statistics runs a survey on recent graduates, which includes their professional path and whether they participate in mobility schemes. D'Hombres (2020) argues that the employability outcomes of mobile students across the EU can be influenced by labour market conditions in their home countries, where differences in education systems and labour market demands contribute to this variation. For example, in highly saturated job markets with high youth unemployment rates, and/or a high number of graduates, the signalling effect of ISM can be comparatively more important.

least in the short term, as well as the quality of job, and has a positive long-term effect on the participants' ability to find a job abroad. The wages of participants are persistently higher than those of non-participants, while graduates coming from less educated families, lower social classes, and regions with high youth unemployment rate also benefit from the Erasmus+ experience (Croce, G., Ghignoni, E. (2024)). Positive impact on the prospects of recent graduates who undertook a learning mobility was found in the medium term in Spain, noting salaries that were 10-12% higher than those who had not participated in the programme (Iriondo, I. (2020)).

- ***Staff***

The evidence collected through the beneficiary survey for staff carried out by the external evaluator[132] suggests that participation in the Erasmus+ programme over **both programme generations** is associated with an increase in the following outcomes for staff members of beneficiary organisations:

- **continued exchange with international networks** (development of other projects, exchange of information related to their profession, keeping abreast of developments in the professional community);
- **transnational partnerships** (having a clear strategy for the development of an international network or international activities, cooperation and network size);
- **quality of work**;
- **removing barriers** to (participation in) teacher/staff mobility and international cooperation.

In particular:

- For **higher education staff**, significant correlations with Erasmus+ participation is noted in several areas, particularly in continued exchange with international networks (e.g. social media, professional information) and in relation to transnational partnerships.
- For **VET staff**, positive correlation is noted in the continued exchange with international networks, including social media and project development, with multiple outcomes achieving statistical significance as well as in areas related to transnational partnerships and the removal of perceived barriers to international cooperation.
- For **school education staff** positive association is noted between Erasmus+ participation and various forms of continued exchange, incl. keeping abreast of professional developments.
- For **adult education staff and sport staff** [133], fewer significant correlation overall is noted, though for sport staff some positive effects are reported in continued exchange with international networks.
- For **youth workers**, improvements are reported in the quality of youth work, while also benefiting from significant advancements in continued exchange with international networks, particularly regarding the development of projects.

Sustained effects for staff from participation in the programme are also noted. 78% of school education staff surveyed in the beneficiary survey maintains contact with individuals they had

[132] Findings to be read in the light of the caveats indicated in section 1.1.4.

[133] The sample used for the survey addressing sport staff is largely based on participants in the 2014-2020 programme (at level of KA2 collaborative partnerships), therefore these outcomes are more likely to be attributed to the 2014-2020 programme.

met abroad[134]. The international experience often contributes to career advancements: 35% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that their international experience helped them achieve a new function or level of seniority (reported by 60% of staff in the sport sector, 35% in higher education, 34% in adult education, 28% in VET and 25% in school education).

Box 2 - Sustained effects on staff from case studies

The primary school 'Anton Skala' (Serbia) was the first Balkan school to open a department for the upbringing and education of children with mild, moderate mental retardation and autism**.** Its staff has extensive experience in teaching, understanding and knowledge of sensory and cognitive specifics of children with intellectual disabilities and autism. According to the school, further participation in Erasmus+ since 2019, the work of teachers had improved by applying various digital applications aimed at the development of cognitive, emotional, social, and motor skills in students. These were adapted and further developed following the example of the institutions they visited during the programme activities.

TAKA TUKA EV is a Slovenian NGO, established in 2002, specialized in working with hearing impaired children and youth in the field of theatre. Practitioners, including highly experienced teachers and specialists in special pedagogy, highlighted how the programme has allowed them to gain knowledge and new perspectives in youth development and to promote new teaching methods in hearing impaired children education within their teaching activity. Additionally, they emphasised the value of international experience and network opportunities in their personal and professional growth. The organisation has coordinated five Capacity building projects in the field of youth (respectively 3 and 2 in the 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 periods).

Based on programme monitoring data of the **period 2014-2020**, on average 84% of staff participating in learning mobility indicated they had improved skills needed for their current jobs, with the highest share among school staff (86%). Improvement of career opportunities are reported by 60% of staff with no major differences across sectors.

4.1.1.3 Impact at level of organisations

Over both programme generations organisational benefits as contribution to increased cooperation, internationalisation, improved practices of beneficiary organisations. The continuity of the intervention, and the repeated participation of organisations over both programme generations, makes it challenging to clearly attribute effects to one or the other programme cycle. For this reason, in some cases, only differences and trends can be identified. However, as impactful effects are rather generated following a prolongated action made of several components, it is more likely that long-term effects are rather to be attributed to the 2014-2020 programme.

Progress at organisational level is positive across both programme generations, as measured both quantitatively (where possible) and qualitatively. A large majority of beneficiary organisations (81%) responding to the survey targeting socio-economic actors [135] stated that their objectives were fully met, with an additional 17% stating that they were met to some extent. None of the respondent organisations reported that their objectives were not met at all.

[134] This question was only asked in the survey for School education staff. Question: 'do you keep in touch with the people you met during your stay abroad, and if so, how often do you keep in touch? The share is based on 3 158 respondents (Erasmus+ participants) in school education.
[135] Annex V of ICF study. Non-contrafactual survey, registering a total of 1 550 valid responses.

A common feature at the basis of the intervention logic of both programme generations is the expected spill-over effects[136] at the different levels of programme intervention. Several can be identified at organisational level. It is observed that **repeated participation by organisations in Erasmus+ can facilitate organisational learning**, by which organisations increase their capacity and make it easier to absorb positive effects of participation, especially if partner organisations also remain the same. Data on repeated organisation pairs [137] signals that from 2021 to 2022, 24% of organisations sent mobilities to each other more than once, and that 5% of organisation pairs continued collaboration from the 2014-2020 programme throughout the 2021-2023 period. Stakeholders' consultations highlight that participation in Erasmus+ actions, including the interaction with peers or staff in other organisations, affects the teaching or learning methods, resulting in spillovers effects both on the organisation they are active in and on the learning of those in their classroom. This is in line with the results of the survey of socio-economic actors, where 64% of beneficiary organisations responding to the survey stated that the activities in which they participated contributed to achieving new learning and teaching approaches.

At the organisational level, the **programme's effects across both programming periods are considered sustained**. 54% of staff surveyed in the beneficiary survey run by the external evaluator indicated that the benefits of their international experiences in their organisations are still in place, with only 15% indicating that these benefits were no longer in place[138]. Almost 80% of the beneficiary organisations responding to the survey of socio-economic actors consider that participation in the programme fully facilitated the creation of new partnerships and the development of capacity for transnational cooperation [139].

National reports also highlight that common benefits for organisations include **enhanced internationalisation, improved teaching practices and expanded networks** in all countries. Organisational impacts like internationalisation strategies and improved teaching practices show potential for sustainability, but require ongoing commitment, as reported in 16 countries [140].

Erasmus+ 2014-2020

As defined in the 2014-2020 intervention logic, the opportunities offered by the programme could help develop long-lasting partnerships and better quality of teaching/learning methods and youth work, and strengthen networks and cooperation with businesses/policy actors and contribute to the internationalisation of organisations. The 2014-2020 programme did not include any impact indicator at level of organisations, so no targets are established.

Stakeholder insights and evidence from the literature speak to the strong accomplishments of **quality improvements in the organisations participating in the programme reporting the establishment of organisational networks** [141]. In higher education, **KA2 strategic**

[136] Under Erasmus+ specific objectives are expected to deliver results at more than one level of intervention and across more than one key action. As a result of these 'spill-over effects' mobility of staff (individual level) can e.g. support the development of better organisational practices, thus influencing the organisational level (see section 2.1 for both programming periods).
[137] Network Analysis carried out as part of ICF study.
[138] Beneficiary survey for learners run by ICF (see section 1.1.4 for related caveats). Question: Are the immediate benefits of participating in the mobility activity still in place? Replies based on a total of 26 332 Erasmus+ participants across all target groups.
[139] Survey of socio-economic actors, annex V of ICF study report.
[140] AT, BEnl, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, IE, IT, LT, MT, NL, NO, PT, SE, SK.
[141] European Commission (2019). "Erasmus+ higher education impact study"; DAAD (2022) "Erasmus+ Cooperation Projects—Elements of Successful Internationalisation"; Epos (2022) "Impact van Erasmus+ en

partnerships have helped institutions increase their cooperation with actors outside of higher education and establish new cooperations [142]. This is considered key for the initiation and expansion of robust, topic-related international networks, which is instrumental to broad internationalisation of higher education institutions [143]. Strategic partnerships have also enabled higher education institutions to develop innovative teaching and curricula, to be more interdisciplinary, more accessible and digital and to better deliver on labour market needs. **Knowledge Alliances** are found successful in their aim of building innovation capacities in HEIs and businesses, through cooperation and knowledge flow [144] and to support the development and implementation of innovative learning and teaching methods as well as the incorporation of inter-disciplinary approaches [145]. The strategic partnerships have proved at all educational levels to be a very important flywheel to introduce or consolidate methodologies and practices which characterize the scope of the coordinating institute's educational offering. For coordinating institutions, KA2 projects often provided the trigger for new projects, encouraging the involvement of a large number of different subjects, giving the opportunity to create lasting synergetic networks [146]. **Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters Degree significantly enhanced international cooperation among higher education institutions worldwide**, leading to new partnerships and strengthening existing ones, facilitating joint research projects. Positive changes are observed also in learning and teaching methods.

Case studies also show that increased internationalisation and more opportunities for research collaboration are among the main benefits of participation in KA2 for higher education institutions, while for staff they include improvements in learning and knowledge sharing [147]. In the VET field, KA2 activities are seen as essential to build the international profile of organisations, and that they facilitate improvements in methodologies and practices of staff and practitioners [148]. In the youth field, participation in Erasmus+ tends to increase practices of youth organisations in the provision of non-formal education, improve their processes of recognition and validation of competences of young people, foster knowledge transfer and implementation of good practices within the organisation [149]. In the sport sector, key effects identified in case studies include the professionalisation of organisations, improvement in technical skills and knowledge sharing [150].

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eTwinning op scholen"; European Commission (2018). Study on the impact of Erasmus+ higher education partnerships and knowledge alliances at local, national and European levels on key higher education policy priorities – Final report (https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/87791).

[142] European Commission (2019). "Erasmus+ higher education impact study".

[143] DAAD (2022) "Erasmus+ Cooperation Projects — Elements of Successful Internationalisation".

[144] For HEIs this took form of thorough knowledge innovation (i.e., by developing, deepening, or expanding expertise and research) and experience with innovative teaching; for business this was achieved by stimulating a better understanding of the functioning of HEIs and through a greater accessibility to knowledge. European Commission (2024), Assessment of the instruments, deliverables, results and impact of university business cooperation – Final report (https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/514543).

[145] European Commission: Joint Research Centre, Esparza Masana, R. and Woolford, J., European universities and knowledge alliances within their territorial innovation ecosystems, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/429140

[146] INDIRE (2020), Innovation in Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships - A second study on the impact (https://2014-2020.erasmusplus.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/erasmus_summary_q3_WEB.pdf)

[147] Case studies Univerza v Mariboru (HED, SI), TU Berlin - ENHANCE Alliance (HED, DE), Universidad de Sevilla (HED, ES), CHARM-EU, University of Barcelona (HED).

[148] Case studies FH Joanneum (VET, AT), Chambre de Métiers et de l'Artisanat Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (VET, FR), Kauno technologijų mokymo centras (VET, LT), Pilot PoVE Water, CIV Water (VET, NL).

[149] RAY MON Research report, 2021 (based on data collected in 2019 and 2020), https://researchyouth.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/RAY-MON_Research-Report-20192020.pdf

[150] Case studies European Hockey Federation (SPO, BE), EuropeActive (SPO, BE), European Young Women Programme, FIA (SPO, FR).

Monitoring data from 2014-2020 participants' reports show the contribution of KA1 staff mobility to reinforced transnational cooperation. 83% of participants in staff mobility reported reinforced cooperation with the partner organisation as a result of the mobility, with higher education staff reporting the highest share (88%), followed by VET staff (84%). In the VET sector, staff mobility contributed to strengthen cooperation of the sending institution with players in the labour market, as reported by 67% of VET staff. Similar results are noted at level of stakeholders in civil society, where reinforced cooperation was stated respectively by 66% and 62% of youth and adult education staff.

While there is evidence that the cooperation opportunities fostered by the programme supported effectively the creation of new partnerships, contributed to reinforce them and to bring forward internationalisation strategies, based on the collected evidence it is not possible to quantify the extent to which these partnerships lasted over time. Although only 5% of organisation pairs participating in the 2014-2020 programme continued collaboration in the same format in the 2021-2023 period, this share cannot give a precise measure of the duration and sustainability of partnerships, as these may continue or evolve beyond programme participation.

Erasmus+ 2021-2027

Expected organisational level impacts of the 2021-2027 programme concern increased capacity of educational institutions by fostering internationalisation, long-lasting partnerships, the progressive adoption of innovative teaching and learning methods and tools, adaptability of twin transition.

The development of organisational networks and increased internationalisation are deemed strong by stakeholders, and evidence from the literature review supports such views [151]. KA2 Cooperation partnerships were ranked by NAs/EACEA survey respondents among the top three most effective actions for organisations and staff. The Small-scale partnerships are viewed as very effective in the school and adult education fields, particularly for organisations and learners. In the school sector, participation in Small-scale partnerships is reported to enhance motivation for professional skill development, enrich professional and cultural awareness, and strengthening the sense of belonging to the educational community [152]

In continuity with the previous programme, and as likely results of participating in the same type of action under both programme generations, consulted HEIs report **increased internationalisation and visibility and research collaboration opportunities** as the main organisational benefits of KA2 participation [153]. In the higher education field, European Universities alliances are ranked as the most effective action for organisations and systems across all of Erasmus+ activities in the NAs/EACEA survey. Similar views were expressed in the public consultation with 76% of respondents representing the higher education sector agreeing that European Universities alliances highly contribute to support excellence, creativity, and innovation at the level of organisations and policies. In the VET field, 61% of VET respondents of the public consultation agreed that Centres of Vocational Excellence highly contribute to **support excellence, creativity, and innovation at the level of organisations and policies**. Respondents to the NAs/EACEA survey ranked it as the most effective VET action. Also in the case of VET institutions, organisations participating in KA2

[151] See Erasmus+ annual reports 2021-2023, the European Parliament report on the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027 (2023); European Commission (2023) "Study on Learning Mobility"; RIA-AE (2024), Transnational analysis of the impact of Erasmus+ on the Adult Education Sector.
[152] Istituto Comprensivo Manzoni-Radice (SCH, IT).
[153] Case studies Univerza v Mariboru (HED, SI), TU Berlin - ENHANCE Alliance (HED, DE), Universidad de Sevilla (HED, ES), CHARM-EU, University of Barcelona (HED, ES). These organisations have taken part in KA2 projects in both programming period highlighting the same type of feedback on the effectiveness of KA2 activities.

report similar feedback, highlighting the importance of KA2 activities to build their international profile, and facilitate improvements in methodologies and practices adopted by their staff [154]. The Erasmus Accreditation is reported to have positive effects at organisational level as it provides institutions with a structured framework for continuous improvement, facilitating long-term planning, ensuring sustained educational excellence and international collaboration [155].

The Commission's Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/2710 introduced a **new impact indicator** for the 2021-2027 programme to assess, from a qualitative point of view, the increased capacity of organisations. This indicator links to the **three specific objectives of the 2021-2027 programme**, addressing the promotion of cooperation, quality, inclusion and innovation at level of organisations. Consulted stakeholders indicate overall positive effects on organisation capacity linked to participation in the programme, with qualitative findings summarized in the box below[156]. Although at this stage no quantification can be done, progress is noted in the improvements of practices and cooperation as **direct and indirect consequence of participation in projects**, especially when participation in the programme was repeated over time and continued over both programmes. This makes it very challenging to clearly attribute effects to either the previous or the on-going programme.

Box 3 - Findings on the increased capacity of organisations

The programme increased the capacity of organisations through access to and application of innovative teaching methods and technologies, development of technological infrastructure, a strengthened capacity for staff to participate in new projects and cooperate with other organisations, improved staff expertise and skills, development of new tools, increased leadership skills and strategic planning[157].

Factors contributing to improved capacity-building through project activities[158] are collaborative workshops, resource support, broadening of networks, fostering collaboration, a culture of continuous learning and knowledge sharing. For example, under the European Universities alliance ENHANCE, partner higher education institutions enhanced their capacity and capabilities and raised excellence and innovation levels by pooling expertise, knowledge, and resources, including equipment and joint support services, combining complementary strengths not available at any single institution, to the benefit of their students, staff and communities. The University of Sevilla reports a similar experience, highlighting that the strong transnational alliances established following the participation in Erasmus+, facilitated the exchange of knowledge, resources, and best practices among universities across Europe. This also resulted in enhancing the quality and scope of the research projects that the university has secured under Horizon Europe.[159]

[154] Case studies FH Joanneum (VET, AT), Chambre de Métiers et de l'Artisanat Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (VET, FR), Vegova Ljubljana (VET, SI), Pilot PoVE Water, CIV Water (VET, NL). With exception of Vegova Ljubljana, all these organisations have participated in KA2 activities in both programme generations. Their feedback did not highlight any major difference in the experienced effects.

[155] Case study BHAK/BHAS Oberpullendorf (SCH, AT), Primary school Anton Skala (SCH, RS), Chambre de Métiers et de l'Artisanat Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (VET, FR), Bildungsdirektion Steiermark, Board of Education of Styria (AT).

[156] Findings largely based on stakeholders' perception data.

[157] Case studies: Istituto Comprensivo Manzoni-Radice (SCH, IT); Primary school Anton Skala (SCH, RS); Pädagogische Hochschule Freiburg (SCH, DE); I Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. Henryka Sienkiewicza w Kędzierzynie-Koźlu (SCH, PL); European Hockey Federation (SPO, BE); EuropeActive (SPO, BE); FH Joanneum (VET, AT); Chambre de Métiers et de l'Artisanat Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (VET, FR); E29 (formerly, Ifjúsági Nomád Klub) (YOU, HU); Agenzija Zghazagh (YOU, MT); Profilirana Prirodo-Matematicheska Gimnazia Akademik Ivan Tsenov (JMA, BG); College of Europe (JMA, BE and PL); CHARM-EU, University of Barcelona (HED, ES); key informant interviews with NEOs, SALTOs, and EU Delegations, third country organisations.

[158] Case studies: TU Berlin - ENHANCE Alliance (HED, DE); European Hockey Federation (SPO, BE); EuropeActive (SPO, BE); Chambre de Métiers et de l'Artisanat Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (VET, FR); Agenzija Zghazagh (YOU, MT); Profilirana Prirodo-Matematicheska Gimnazia Akademik Ivan Tsenov (JMA, BG); Key informant interviews with NEOs, SALTOs, and EU Delegations; Commission services/Agencies, six stakeholder organisations.

[159] See Case studies on TU Berlin – ENHANCE alliance (HED, DE) and University of Sevilla (HED, ES).

In the school education field, the 'Good Practice' label awarded at stage of final report assessment is highlighted as an example of the programme boosting motivation to further boost capacity, experience and confidence[160]. Moreover, interviewed EU Delegations highlighted significant institutional impacts in Latin America, contributing to academic diplomacy and regional integration in higher education. Latin American universities are forming consortia, which build trust and foster collaboration.

The organisations participating in the programme also raised capacity of other organisations, including through network-building, knowledge-exchange, training, and curriculum development [161]. In the school education field, for example, the ICSE academy, funded in 2021 under the Erasmus+ Teacher Academies and bringing together 13 higher education institutions, 13 policymaking organisations and 65 schools, offers job shadowing summer schools and a workshop series, which contribute to capacity building of the educational work force. Through this work, the academy has disseminated innovative teacher approaches in STEM education and built capacity within the organisation hosting the ICSE Academy itself.

Points of improvement were mentioned by a few stakeholders, which mainly noted the limited capacity for many organisations to engage with the process of applying for and running projects, and suggested grants to invest in support for organisational operations (operating grants) to improve project applications, utilisation of EU funding, and the sustainability of project results [162].

4.1.1.4 System and policy impact

Over both programme generations, system and policy level impact is defined as a contribution to support policy cooperation in programme fields to influence improvements of national education, training, youth and sport systems. The findings analysed under this chapter are in large part based on programme monitoring data, consultation activities and literature review.

Erasmus+ 2014-2020

Erasmus+ 2014-2020 aimed to contribute to the **Europe 2020 headline target in education** [163], namely (a) higher education attainment and (b) tackling early school leaving. As also observed in the mid-term evaluation, the contribution of the programme to their evolution is **indirect,** putting in question the testability and plausibility of these indicators with regards to the programme intervention (see also section 4.1.2.5). Nevertheless, the programme contributes to the achievement of both targets, reaching a high number of learners via KA1 and KA2 [164], increasing their **attitude towards education/training**[165]. Such a positive attitude can be analysed as a precursor of education retention and as reducing the risk of dropouts.

Early school leavers or people not attracted by higher education are more likely to be found among disadvantaged people. At this level, the programme has performed well in non-formal and informal learning, putting inclusion at the heart of youth activities. In addition, the identification of the KA2 priorities particularly relevant in the national context by National

[160] Case study: I Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. Henryka Sienkiewicza w Kędzierzynie-Koźlu (SCH, PL).
[161] Case studies: College of Europe (JMA, BE and PL), Pädagogische Hochschule Freiburg (SCH, DE); European University Institute (JMA, IT); Regional Capacity for Adult Learning and Education, EAEA (ADU, BE).
[162] Case studies: Agenzija Zghazagh (YOU, MT); Afeji Hauts-de-France (ADU, FR); Youth for exchange and understanding international (YOU, BE); Casa do Professor (JMA, PT); CHARM-EU, University of Barcelona (HED, ES); Bildungsdirektion Steiermark, Board of Education of Styria (SCH, AT); Pilot PoVE Water, CIV Water (VET, NL).
[163] The Europe 2020 strategy aimed to reduce early school-leaving rates to a level below 10% (9.9% in 2020) and to enable at least 40% of 30-34 years-old to have completed tertiary or equivalent education by 2020 (40.3% in 2019). (see: 04c88d0b-17af-cf7e-7e78-331a67f3fcd5).
[164] Mobility of pupils was implemented under KA2 in the 2014-2020 programme.
[165] Based on the Erasmus+ higher education impact study (2019: https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/162060), around 80% of participants in their first cycle reported that they plan to continue their studies to the next level – in particular those students who experienced greater impact of mobility on their studies (acquisition of competences relevant to study, experience of new teaching methods, etc.) were more likely to want to continue to a higher educational level.

Agencies helped raise the attention of potential applicants on areas with higher needs. As a result, in the 2014-2020 period, approximately EUR 672 million were contracted to support close to 9 000 projects addressing the topic of early school leaving.

Erasmus+ 2014-2020 improved attractiveness of participating higher education institutions, by adding value to their academic offer and the exposure to innovative learning/teaching methods[166]. According to consulted stakeholders, the association with a prestigious brand like 'Jean Monnet' increased the prestige of beneficiary universities, while engaging in Jean Monnet projects enhanced the depth and quality of studies, improving academic outcomes and practical skills development [167]. This effect continues over time, as a result of the continuation of the action in the 2021-2027 period.

The programme has strived to support initiatives with high transformational impact for education and training systems to further increase attractiveness of higher education institutions and the quality of the educational offer, including for a more systemic approach to learning mobility. **In 2019 and 2020, Erasmus+ tested the European Universities Initiative**[168] through two calls for proposals, paving the way for its full rollout under Erasmus+ 2021-2027. The initiative aims to boost the transformation of European higher education to enhance its quality, inclusion, digitalisation and attractiveness through deeper cooperation between institutions, their students and staff. The key achievements of the European Universities alliances selected under the pilot calls include the involvement of a diverse spectrum of HEIs, the presentation of common long-term strategies on education, with links to research and innovation, the offer of student-centred and flexible curricula, which marked their aspiration for a systemic, structural and sustainable impact [169].

Indirect influence can be attributed also to the achievement of **other ET2020 European benchmarks**[170] mentioned in the general objectives of the programme, with no possibility to establish a causal link on the basis of available evidence. Based on the Education and Training Monitor 2019, employment rate of recent graduates was at 81,6% against a target of 82%, with improvements compared to the state of play of the mid-term evaluation (77%). In contrast, the progress towards the EU target on underachievement in basic skills was at 20% against an EU target of 15% [171]. Both topics were addressed by the programme with over 10 000 projects addressing labour market issues and youth unemployment and more than 6 000 tackled the overcoming skills mismatching and basic skills.

Furthermore, by 2020, around 8 300 projects tackled specifically improving quality and efficiency of education and training systems, including the quality of youth work, sometimes influencing policy changes with the integration of innovative educational practices into national systems. In Slovenia, Erasmus+ 2014-2020 has influenced the understanding of youth policy by solidifying a horizontal youth policy approach and becoming an important driver for policy

[166] European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, *Erasmus+ higher education impact study – Final report*, Publications Office, 2018 (https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/162060).
[167] Case study on Scuola superiore di studi universitari e di perfezionamento Sant'Anna (JMA, IT).
[168] The initiative was announced in the European Council conclusions of 14 December 2017.
[169] SWD accompanying the Communication on achieving the European Education Area by 2025 (SWD(2020) 212 final).
[170] Council conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ("ET 2020") of 12 May 2009. The strategy had the four strategic objectives: 1. Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality; 2. Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training; 3. Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship; 4. Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training (https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/107622.pdf).
[171] https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document-library-docs/volume-1-2019-education-and-training-monitor.pdf

making [172]. It triggered initiatives pursuing professionalisation and recognition of youth work as an occupational qualification, promotion and comprehension of learning mobility, becoming the tool for renewing policy mechanisms, testing new ideas and innovative approaches.

Box 4 - Influence of regional and national policies through policy experimentations

The policy experimentation '**Novice Educator Support and Training**' (NEST), funded under KA3 2020 Call, was implemented by a transnational consortium of 15 partner organisations. The project aimed to design, implement, evaluate and propose a **system of new adaptive mentoring for novice teachers in disadvantaged schools**. Informed by the NEST project, the government of **Catalonia** tapped into ESF+ funding to up-scale an induction program for novice teachers in the region. This innovative programme called "Sensei" was designed to provide high-quality support to novice teachers during their first year in the profession, leveraging on the results of NEST's implementation across regions. The findings from the NEST evaluation informed the development and content of the Sensei program's mentor training. In **Romania**, the NEST results were used to feed in the Law of Education that was enacted in September 2023, which ensures mentoring is at the core of the teaching career. Local authorities in **Bulgaria** are currently exploring the possibility of up-taking components of the NEST mentoring approach.

Spill-over effects can be observed **at the system-level**, or through cross-action and cross-sectoral lens. These spillover effects are only identified through qualitative sources, such as key informant interviews and case studies, and hence rather constitute 'perceptions' of spillovers by a range of stakeholders. In some cases, their effects last over time influencing future projects under the successor programme of Erasmus+ 2014-2020, showing the added value of a continued intervention across programming period to generate stronger effects. For example, the European Universities initiative, piloted under the 2014-2020 programme and fully rolled out in the 2021-2027 programme, influences national policy and legislation with benefits for the entire higher education sector, notably to enable more conducive environments for seamless transnational cooperation, including to cater for simplified processes for establishing joint educational programmes and degrees[173]. In Spain, European transnational cooperation under the alliances led to legislative progress in relation to degrees and accreditation[174]. Other examples include the involvement of public employment services and social services in adult education, and the expansion of an established ecosystem of Centres of Vocational Excellence into a third country not associated to the programme (South Africa).

Box 5 - Examples of spill-over effects

The KA3 project **Regional Capacity for Adult Learning and Education** (RegALE)[175], awarded under the Social inclusion 2020 Call, aimed to strengthen the networks of adult education organisations and create synergies with regional and local authorities. Spill-over effects beyond the project's remit were achieved by influencing EU policy initiatives on individual learning accounts (ILA) and micro-credentials, a strengthened collaboration and visibility of stakeholders through better inter-ministerial collaboration, and better informed regional network, allowing for more shared information among different actors involved in adult education provision, more opportunities for future projects, collaboration, or synergies.

The **Pilot Platform of Vocational Excellence Water** (Pilot PoVE Water[176]), a 2-year project from the 2019 Centres of Vocational Excellence pilot call, and the following PoVE Water Scale-Up[177] from the 2021 Call, led

[172] Staff Working Document on the results of the open method of coordination in the youth field 2010-2018, p. 50 (SWD(2018) 168).
[173] Gunn, A. (2020). The European Universities Initiative: A Study of Alliance Formation in Higher Education. In: Curaj, A., Deca, L., Pricopie, R. (eds) European Higher Education Area: Challenges for a New Decade. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-56316-5_2
[174] See Case study on EdLab project (HED, ES).
[175] https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/621444-EPP-1-2020-1-BE-EPPKA3-IPI-SOC-IN. See also case study on the 'RegALE' project (ADU, BE).
[176] https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/612632-EPP-1-2019-1-NL-EPPKA2-SSA-P. See also Case study on the PoVE project (VET, NL)
[177] https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/101055851

by CIV Water (Netherlands), aimed to support innovation for water education by developing a regional water skills ecosystem and better align the education programmes with needs of the labour market. In particular, the Scale-Up project has supported the expansion of regional collaborations to a national context in the Netherlands, and supported the expansion by a new partnership in a third country not associated with the programme (South Africa). In the Netherlands, a supportive policy environment has been created at the national level through a memorandum of understanding signed with the Ministry of Education and department of water and sanitation. In Latvia, government resources have been redirected from 10 VET schools to three, which has allowed significant investments in facilities, equipment and tools in support of the Latvian water sector, as well as developing a new curriculum in the sector in collaboration with employers in the water sector.

In the youth field, the Youth Wiki[178] is recognized for supporting evidence-based policy making by providing knowledge and expertise for policy design and implementation across both programme generations. Interviewed organisations[179] acknowledge its contribution to youth policy awareness and advocacy at systemic level, promoting cooperation among ministries, and advocating for the integration of youth concerns across various policy areas, aligning with EU strategies. In Cyprus, for example, it has created a culture of knowledge and evidence-based policy supporting the mainstreaming of youth policy across other policy fields.

The influence of the programme on national education policies and practices is mentioned in 19 national reports [180]. Although the reports do not highlight any distinction between both programme generations, it can be reasonably assumed that these effects can be attributed to the 2014-2020 programme. Contributions to modernisation and internationalisation of education systems were noted in most countries [181]. However, 21 reports [182] indicate limited systemic impacts due to the scale of the programme or challenges in translating project-level successes into broader national systemic change. Systemic impacts on national policies and education systems are evident, but their longevity is less certain and requires continued support, as reported in most countries [183].

Erasmus+ 2021-2027

System level impact is measured against a new indicator established in Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/2710. This indicator measures in a qualitative manner, **the programme contribution to policy development, strategies and cooperation in education and training, youth and sport**, linking directly to the three specific objectives (promote cooperation, quality, inclusion, excellence, creativity, innovation at level of policy) [184]. Consultation activities show positive contributions to policy development, strategies and cooperation, highlighting contributions to quality assurance, political priorities, degree recognition, and cooperation between education and the labour market, among others.

[178] https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki
[179] CS on Youth Wiki (YOU, MT, FR, CY).
[180] BEfr, BEnl, CY, CZ, DE, ES, FI, FR, HR, IE, IT, LT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, SK.
[181] AT, BEde, BEnl, BG, CZ, CY, DE, DK, EE, EL, FI, FR, IE, IT, LV, LT, MT, PL, RO, SE, SI, SK, IS, NO, RS, TR.
[182] BEde, BG, CZ, CY, DE, DK, EE, FI, FR, IE, IT, LI, LT, LU, NL, PL, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK.
[183] Mentioned in all reports except BEde, BEfr and LU.
[184] The following policy areas are specified in the SWD(2023) 296 regarding the metadata of this indicator: i) contributing to building the European Education Area; ii) contributing to the European Skills Agenda; iii) advancing youth policy cooperation under the European Youth Strategy; iv) achieving advanced and developed policies and strategies in the fields of education, training, youth and sport, including contributing to policy sectoral agendas in these fields; v) increased dialogue and cooperation among stakeholders; vii) increased policy cooperation between countries; and viii) development of a European dimension in Sport. At interim stage, the measurement is mainly based on qualitative elements, based on consultation activities, literature review or programme monitoring data.

The study supporting the mid-term evaluation of the European Education Area stresses the role of Erasmus+ as key for its achievement [185]. Erasmus+ 2021-2027 was indeed shaped to be a key component of building the **European Education Area,** to contribute to the **European Skills Agenda,** in line with the **European Pillar of Social Rights**. Erasmus+ flagships actions, such as the European Universities, the Centres of Vocational Excellence and the Erasmus+ Teacher Academies are key to achieve the European Education Area and contribute to the European Skills Agenda. The Commission's communication on a European strategy for universities[186] called to have at least 60 alliances gathering 500 universities by mid-2024 and EUR 626 million under the 2022 and 2023 Calls[187]; this goal has been reached and even exceeded; by mid-2024, 65 European Universities alliances were operational and supported under Erasmus+, encompassing more than 570 higher education institutions from 35 countries, taking transnational cooperation to a different level and forging a novel understanding of the way higher education institutions can work together across borders, with long-term vision going beyond regular cooperation settings. In school education, close to 30 Erasmus+ Teacher Academies are already funded under Erasmus+ for EUR 37.5 million contracted grants (the initial objective set up in policy documents was to support 25 academies by 2025 [188]) and contribute to tackling some of the most relevant issues in the teacher community. In the VET field, the Centres of Vocational Excellence are pillars of excellent vocational education and training in Europe, showing added value with a growing number of projects and networks created. The Erasmus+ programme provides funding for 100 Centres of Vocational Excellence for the period 2021-2027 [189]; 41 have already been funded by end 2023. Currently, about 1 100 organisations, VET providers, higher education institutions, social partners, trade organisations, businesses, public authorities, etc. participate in the ongoing projects, for a total allocation of EUR 148 million under 2021-2023 Calls [190]. Erasmus+ also supports 13 (out 14) actions of the European Digital Education Action Plan (DEAP), which from its side also contributes to the achievement of the European Education Area.

Through its international dimension, Erasmus+ also contributes to the delivery of the **EU's Global Gateway strategy**[191]. Launched in 2021, the Global Gateway is the EU's values-based offer to partner countries across the world, aimed to fund investments in five priority areas: digital, climate and energy, transport, health, education and research. By contributing to a skilled workforce, knowledge sharing and quality higher education and vocational education and training in third countries, Erasmus+ assists the implementation of the Global Gateway and its investment objectives. For example, the most recent Erasmus+ calls for capacity building actions in higher education and VET (KA2) make a direct reference to the Global Gateway, aligning with its investment priorities. In addition, since 2023, Erasmus+ calls for capacity

[185] Study not published yet.
[186] COM(2022) 16 final (Commission Communication on a European strategy for universities - European Education Area (europa.eu))
[187] To this it should be added a total funding allocation of EUR 180 million under the 2019 and 2020 pilot Calls.
[188] Commission's Communication on achieving the European Education Area by 2025, COM(2020)625 final (EUR-Lex - 52020DC0625 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)
189 The Communication on Labour and skills shortages (COM(2024) 131 of 20 March 2024) called to co-finance more Centres of Vocational Excellence with a target of at least 100 projects by 2027, to support European and regional development, innovation and smart specialisation strategies.
[190] Under the 2019 and 2020 Calls the total funding was EUR 34 million.
[191] Global Gateway - European Commission

building in VET underline the priority to the projects that contribute to A new Agenda for the Mediterranean [192] and its Economic and Investment Plan [193].

Case studies carried out by the external evaluator highlight the contributions of Erasmus+ to the objectives of the European Education Area for example in terms of contributing to developing a **Blueprint for a European degree** outlining a vision and objectives for a common European framework for the design and delivery of joint degree programmes and the award of joint degrees matching a set of common European criteria[194] as well as to the European Skills Agenda through the Centres of Vocational Excellence, witnessing spill-over effects [195].

Box 6 –EdLab project (European Degree Label institutional laboratory) supporting the development of a European degree (label)[196]

The policy experimentation project **EdLab, funded under KA3** (2022 Call year), aimed to test European criteria for a European degree (label), providing recommendations towards a possible European degree. As part of this project, significant contributions were made by 26 higher education institutions involved in four European Universities alliances (the ARQUS, ENLIGHT, EUTOPIA and SEA-EU alliances). EdLab, as well as the other five policy experimentation projects [197] supporting the development of a European degree (label), have collectively contributed to fostering an environment more conducive to legislative changes at the national level through close collaboration with national authorities (ministries), higher education stakeholders, students' unions, and Quality Assurance agencies, also showcasing the role of the European Universities alliances in driving progress for the entire higher education sector. The collective effort of these policy experimentation projects has prompted systemic shifts and cultural changes paving the way towards a possible European degree.

University policy and strategy were adapted in a number of institutions as a result of participation in the programme, for example by integrating horizontal priorities into the educational programme and policy for example on sustainability through whole-institutional approaches or adapting the inclusion and diversity policy and programmes based on learnings from other institutions [198]. The programme has generated **policy recommendations** and fostered policy learning in a number of actions, including by mapping reports on LGBTIQ+ discrimination, an e-learning training platform for VET teachers, policy workshops and conferences, and integration of policy briefs to translate research findings into educational offerings [199].

Areas for improvement identified by consulted stakeholders are the need for strengthened connections between project outcomes and policy formulation [200], the need for national and European legislation and funding systems that allows for an effective European Education Area, notably when it comes to removing barriers to transnational cooperation [201].

As for youth policy agenda, the evaluation of the **European Union Youth Strategy (**EUYS) [202] defines Erasmus+ as a **key programme** that contributes to achieving its objectives and

[192] Joint Communication on Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood - A new Agenda for the Mediterranean, JOIN/2021/2 final.
[193] Joint Staff Working Document: Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood Economic and Investment Plan for the Southern Neighbours - European Commission.
[194] Case study CHARM-EU, University of Barcelona (HED, ES).
[195] Case study Pilot PoVE Water, CIV Water (VET, NL).
[196] Case study EdLab, University of Granada (HED, ES).
[197] These are i) ED-AFFICHE; ii) ETIKETA; iii) FOCI; iv) JEDI; v) SMARTT.
[198] Case studies: Universidad de Sevilla (HED, ES); Satakunnan ammattikorkeakoulu (HED, FI); key informant interviews with representatives from 19 countries.
[199] Case studies AKMI Anonimi Ekpaideftiki Etairia (VET, EL); College of Europe (JMA, BE and PL); key informant interviews with European stakeholder organisations.
[200] Based on key informant interviews with 5 respondents from Commission services.
[201] Case study CHARM-EU, University of Barcelona (HED, ES).
[202] SWD(2024) 90 final of 11 April 2024.

advancing youth policy cooperation and concludes that Erasmus+ is key to support its implementation at EU level. It underscores the very clear relationship with Erasmus+, stating that, together with the European Solidarity Corps, Erasmus+ is the main and best-known instrument for the EUYS and that 'funding opportunities have become better focused and more strategic, e.g. as concerns new actions such as Youth Participation Activities, and the renewed Youth Worker Mobility action under Erasmus+'. Erasmus+ contributes to the strategy also through the participation of third countries in the programme, with the EUYS evaluation stating that this 'demonstrates the international reach of the EUYS'.

Within the EU sport policy agenda, Erasmus+ is instrumental in strengthening the **European dimension of sport** and in advancing EU sport policy by addressing the policy objectives set in the **2021-2024 EU Work Plan for sport** [203], in particular as it comes to protecting the integrity and values of sport, promoting its socio-economic and sustainable dimensions, and encouraging participation in health-enhancing physical activity. Erasmus+ cooperation projects and the newly established staff mobility have supported the policy objectives set in this Work Plan through targeted actions aligned with its priorities. This is confirmed in Commission's report on the implementation and relevance of the European Union Work Plan for Sport 2021-2024, which states that Erasmus+ actions provide a substantial basis for furthering European cooperation [204]. In particular, the initiative **HealthyLifestyle4All** (2021 to 2023) further supported EU sport policy priorities, while linking sport and active lifestyles with health, food and other EU policies in a holistic approach aimed at promoting well-being.

Support to the development of **sectoral policy agenda**, to **dialogue and cooperation among stakeholders and to evidence-based policy cooperation between countries** is mainly provided through KA3 activities managed under direct management, with almost EUR 144 million distributed across the different strands in the 2021-2023 period (data 2023 is still partial).

At mid-term, based on available evidence, the progress of the 2021-2027 programme towards contributing to EU policy development, strategies and cooperation in education and training, youth and sport is satisfying and in line with the expectations. Although no clear-cut quantification can be provided, and the assessment is mainly based on qualitative evidence, the level of contribution is estimated as high.

4.1.1.5 Effectiveness of inclusion measures

Erasmus+ 2014-2020

The 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme aimed at promoting equity and inclusion by facilitating the access to participants with disadvantaged backgrounds and fewer opportunities compared to their peers. In the **youth** field, an **Inclusion and Diversity Strategy** was designed in cooperation with the SALTO Inclusion and the SALTO Cultural diversity as a common framework to support the participation and inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in Erasmus+. Since 2014, the strategy was rolled out through continuous follow-up, with an Inclusion and Diversity Steering Group meeting twice a year. Furthermore, it was consolidated at national level by national inclusion strategies, based on specific country needs. A number of promotion tools were developed to highlight the support offered by Erasmus+ when working with young people with fewer opportunities or when tackling inclusion and diversity in projects.

[203] Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the European Union Work Plan for Sport, OJ C 419, 4.12.2020, p. 1.
[204] COM(2024) 73 of 14 February 2024.

However, the 2014-2020 programme did not have a harmonised approach to inclusion themes. SALTO resource centres were active in the youth field only. The VET and youth sectors were using the definition 'fewer opportunities', while the higher education sector was rather referring to 'disadvantaged background'. Neither of these definitions was used in the school and adult education sectors, since the programme only supported staff mobility. Only the definition of 'special needs', with related financial support, was applied across all sectors.

The average share of participants with fewer opportunities or special needs reached out in the youth sector at the end of 2014-2020 was equal to 29%, against 7% in VET and 6% in higher education [205]. This marks the success of the youth inclusion strategy considered 'instrumental in providing a conceptual understanding of inclusion and diversity having served as a key factor both in improving inclusion in youth work and in developing a common operational framework for initiatives, approaches and activities [206]'. Similarly, Commission's evaluation on SALTO resource centres carried out in 2023 found the SALTO I&D and the Inclusion & Diversity Strategy effective in promoting inclusion and diversity in Erasmus+ [207].

When looking at the programme as a whole, the share of participants with fewer opportunities/special needs/disadvantaged background has evolved positively across years, going from 10% in 2014 to 14% in 2020 (average around 10%). Based on NAs' yearly reports, between 2015-2020, the proportion of NAs implementing activities to foster the inclusion dimension of the programme increased from 38% to 78%, while almost all NAs conducted horizonal activities to support 'equity and inclusion', in particular, focusing on newly arrived migrants, asylum seekers and refugees[208]. Furthermore, around 170 Transnational Cooperation Activities (TCA) were organised around these themes since the start of the programming period. As part of Erasmus+ Online Linguistic Support (OLS) [209], the initiative 'OLS for refugees' was launched in 2016 and offered up to 100 000 online language courses between 2016 and 2019 to newly arrived refugees supporting them through the acquisition of new languages skills.

This strengthened focus on social inclusion themes since 2016 led to funding over 31 000 projects, corresponding to more than EUR 2 billion contracted grants under indirect management across the three key actions. Between 2016 and 2020, a specific call on social inclusion and common values was published on a yearly basis under KA3, supporting 178 projects for total grants of EUR 78 million [210].

Overall, Erasmus+ 2014-2020 managed to strengthen the participation of young people with special needs or fewer opportunities in Erasmus+ projects and to develop inclusion-related support instruments for Erasmus+ applicants and beneficiaries, but there was a need for further expansion of access and inclusiveness of these categories. Moreover, the approach remained sectoral, with the youth sector being the most equipped to address inclusion challenges.

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[205] The average share of staff mobility participants in the school and adult education sector was 1%.

[206] European Parliament (2021), Inclusion measures in the Erasmus+ programme (2014-2020) (https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/694225/EPRS_STU(2021)694225_EN.pdf)

[207] European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Assessment of the existing Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities (SALTO) structures' effectiveness, relevance and EU added value – Final report, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/649859

[208] See e.g. the projects supporting ICAM - Including children affected by migration funded since 2016 (https://school-education.ec.europa.eu/en/discover/resources/icam-including-children-affected-migration).

[209] OLS promotes language learning and linguistic diversity. It allows Erasmus+ participants to improve their knowledge of the language in which they will work, study or volunteer abroad, and measure their progress between the start and the end of their mobility period.

[210] See example of successful project in box 5, section 4.1.1.4.

Erasmus+ 2021-2027

Programme data shows that the share of participants with fewer opportunities [211] has increased during the 2021-2023 period compared to the previous programme. In 2023, around 15% of participants in KA1 were individuals with fewer opportunities, vs. around 10% in the 2014-2020 period. 47% of respondents to the NAs/EACEA survey [212] considered that the rate of participation of people with fewer opportunities in Erasmus+ is higher or at least similar to other comparable initiatives.

Despite this progress, **challenges remain for the participation of people with fewer opportunities**, with differences among countries and sectors reported in the 26 national reports that note a general increase in their participation [213].

According to national reports, additional funding and 'top ups' for participants with fewer opportunities are widely implemented; however, their effectiveness varies depending on the cost of living in the host country [214]. While this indicates a recognition of financial barriers, it also suggests that a more nuanced and targeted approach to the provision of supplementary financial support may be needed.

Box 7 – Examples from National reports

Romania: 'In the new Erasmus+ programme cycle 2021-2023, progress has been made in Romania in involving disadvantaged groups. In the school environment, the school inspectors responsible for European education projects confirm that the projects carried out have largely, and very largely, included the following target groups: participants from rural and/or remote/isolated areas (76%); socioeconomically disadvantaged participants (from poor families, Roma) (76%); and participants at risk of dropping out of school (53%). The participation of people with special needs/disability (23%), and those from refugee, migrant and asylum-seeking families (35%), was relatively lower, requiring a careful approach in subsequent programmes.'

Czechia: 'The first effects of the Framework of Inclusion Measures and of the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy were evaluated. [The] current programme attracts [a] wider range of organisations. There is a clear strategy to reach out participants with fewer opportunities, and very effective measures have been put in place by the National Agency.'

Most public consultation respondents highlighted the success of the programme in enabling the participation of individuals facing cultural, social, and economic barriers. On the other hand, a significant portion of respondents expressed uncertainty or had no opinion regarding the programme's ability to include individuals dealing with health issues and challenges within education and training systems. Key informants interviewed expressed the view that remaining challenges relate to insufficient funds to address the often complex need for more targeted forms of support as well as the need to further clarify the definition of 'fewer opportunities' [215].

[211] Article 2(25) of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ regulation establishes that 'people with fewer opportunities' means people who, for economic, social, cultural, geographical or health reasons, due to their migrant background, or for reasons such as disability or educational difficulties or for any other reason, including a reason that could give rise to discrimination under Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, face obstacles that prevent them from having effective access to opportunities under the Programme'. See also section 3.1 of this SWD (changes in the legal framework of the 2021-2027 programme) regarding the approach defined in the framework of inclusion measures adopted in 2021.

[212] NAs/EACEA survey, annex III of ICF study. Q22: 'When considering the monitoring data available in your sector, how do you judge the level of participation of people with fewer opportunities in Erasmus+?'.

[213] AT, BEfr, BEnl, CZ, CY, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, IE, IS, LI, LV, LU, HU, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, TR.

[214] AT, BEfr, BEnl, CY, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, HR, IT, LU, PL, PT, RS, TR.

[215] Key informant interviews at European (stakeholder organisations, SALTO Resource Centres, Commission's services) and national level (representatives from 21 countries). In national interviews, stakeholders in around a third of the countries selected for interviews report a broader understanding of this group, encompassing

Overall, Erasmus+ has progressively placed more emphasis on inclusion, moving from the sectoral approach of the 2014-2020 programme to a structured and uniform approach implemented across all fields. The framework of inclusion measures, adopted in 2021, and its implementation guidelines [216] provided a shared definition across sectors and target groups, specific related inclusion objectives, a set of measures to ensure broad accessibility and guidance to National Agencies. This strategy includes additional funding provided to participants with fewer opportunities in form of top-up, the requirement for all National Agencies to develop inclusion plans and for the SALTO Resource Centres [217] to share knowledge and evidence on promoting inclusion and diversity.

4.1.1.6 Effectiveness of priorities' implementation

Erasmus+ 2014-2020

Two of the European Commission's 2014-2019 priorities, targeting economic and labour market outcomes, lie at the heart of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme ('A new boost for jobs, growth and investment' and 'A deeper and fairer internal market with a strengthened industrial base'). These priorities are reflected in the core of the outputs, results, and impacts defined in the 2014-2020 programme's intervention logic. The programme contributed to them by engaging participants in learning mobilities that may facilitate future labour mobility and support building skills, contributing to positive labour market outcomes for participants. This has ensured full alignment also to the 2019-2024 EU priority 'an economy that works for people'.

Three remaining priorities, targeting the digital market, climate change, and EU civil rights and rule of law [218], are indirectly covered in the objectives of the programme and in its intervention logic, through activities aiming to improve skills and competences, and to address research and teaching about the EU. In the 2014-2020 programme, the focus on digital skills was more limited and mainly covered in the higher education sector [219], there was also no mainstreamed focus on the environment and climate change.

Attention to **environmental themes** appeared more restricted to specific actions, addressed mainly in the youth sector. From 2014 to 2018, 4 226 projects tackled the topics 'environment and climate change' and 'green skills', funded in majority (76%) under KA1 and in the youth sector (71%). In the last two years of the programme, when the European Green Deal was set as one of the EU political priorities, the number of projects addressing these topics increased to 3 087. A similar pattern was followed for **digital skills**. Between 2014 and 2020, 13% of funded projects tackled the topic 'ICT - new technologies - digital competences', with 38% of which being funded in the last two years of the programme implementation. In parallel, the attention on digital skills increased towards the end of the programming period with additional

socioeconomic factors, geographical location, and social backgrounds, beyond traditional definitions focused on disabilities.

[216] See also section 3.1.

[217] Since 2022, a new SALTO Resource Centre for Inclusion and Diversity in education and training is hosted by the Croatian NA (https://saltoinclusion.eu/). The resource centre acts in coordination with the SALTO youth I&D to support NAs and organisations across Europe in the implementation of Erasmus+ projects that focus on inclusion and diversity.

[218] 'A connected digital single market', 'A resilient Energy Union with a forward-looking climate change policy', 'An area of Justice and Fundamental Rights based on mutual trust'.

[219] See the 2018 and 2019 Annual Work Programmes as part of KA1 mobilities in the higher education field called "traineeships in digital skills", and as one of the priorities or outcomes mentioned in the strategic partnerships in the field of education and training and youth, and the knowledge and sector skills alliances.

funds (EUR 10 million under Calls 2018 and 2019) made available from Horizon 2020 to further boost traineeships in digital skills for higher education students and recent graduates.

The programme also paid attention to **democracy and civil rights** priorities leveraging on its objectives. Learning and teaching about the EU and cultures within the EU was specifically on the agenda, as well as improved solidarity, especially in the youth sector and through the European Voluntary Service. Topics related to EU citizenship, youth participation, human rights and rule of law were addressed in close to 22 000 projects (around 15% of 2014-2020 funded projects), the majority of which was under KA1 (78%) and in the youth sector (54%). This has ensured that the 2019-2024 priority 'Promoting our European way of life' was well addressed by the programme.

The priority related to **migration policy**[220] was indirectly addressed, by supporting the integration of newly arriving immigrants, promoting multicultural dialogue and combating radicalisation. As a response to the tragic terrorist events occurred in 2015 and in line with the Communication on preventing radicalisation adopted in June 2016 [221], Erasmus+ mobilised to further strengthen the role of education, training and youth systems in promoting fundamental values, such as freedom of expression, respect of diversity and non-discrimination, reflecting the objectives and challenges addressed by the Paris Declaration in the implementation of all three key actions of the programme, as well as in the actions in the field of Sport.

During the 2014-2020 period, the **international dimension** was covered through actions in the youth and higher education fields. These actions contributed to the 2014-2019 priority 'Europe as a stronger global actor' as well as to the economic and labour market priorities, and later on to the EU 2019-2024 priority 'A stronger Europe in the world'.

Erasmus+ 2021-2027

Erasmus+ 2021-2027 reflects very well the EU's political priorities for the 2019-2024 period in its structure and actions. The four horizontal priorities, introduced in Erasmus+ 2021-2027, can be well mapped against four of the six 2019-2024 EU political priorities. The share of grants allocated to each of these EU priorities are monitored in programme tools. On top of this, the share of KA2 projects addressing each horizontal priority and KA1 activities supporting the green and digital priorities is measured through legal base or Delegated Act indicators. Moreover, all horizontal priorities are mapped in the intervention logic, and the extent to which participants (self-report to) have improved their understanding of or changed their behaviour regarding these topics is regularly monitored through programme indicators (e.g. whether participants are more interested in 'active participation in democratic life and civic society'). The priority 'A stronger Europe in the world' is reflected in the international dimension of the programme through actions supporting public diplomacy, institutional cooperation and people-to-people contacts, while 'an economy that works for people' is reflected at level of expected results (increased skills and competences) and impact (better employability and career prospects).

According to NAs/EACEA, the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme has been **highly effective** in promoting horizontal priorities, with 85% considering it to have **transformative effects** (31% strongly and 54% partially agreed) [222].

[220] 'Towards a new policy on migration'.
[221] COM(2016) 379 final.
[222] Survey of NAs/EACEA, annex III of ICF study.

The programme demonstrated **a positive impact on promoting inclusion and diversity.** Over half of participants in the 2021-2023 period self-declared to be more committed to working on inclusion and diversity issues as a result of their mobility experience, and 70% having learned about inclusion and diversity issues during their mobility [223]. Increases in participants' awareness and behaviour change are noted between 2021 and 2023. Stakeholders' feedback [224] confirms the positive perception on the effectiveness of the programme performance for this priority. National reports indicate progress in implementing this priority, seen as the most successful one in 19 reports[225], in particular with regards to the increased participation of people with fewer opportunities and disadvantaged groups.

The programme has also shown a positive impact on **digital transformation.** 29% of participants in the 2021-2023 period reported to have changed their behaviour and to be willing to use more digital technologies in their studies/work after their mobility experience as a result of their mobility[226] (+4% between 2021 (26%) and 2023 (30%)). In the period 2021-2023, close to 45 000 mobility participants opted for a Digital Opportunity Traineeships (DOT). Around 30 200 learners completed this kind of mobility, with the large majority coming from the higher education sector (around 26 300). In addition, around 14 700 staff of different education sectors have chosen to have a training/course/job shadowing with a focus on developing their digital skills and competences. Stakeholders' feedback provides positive views of the programme's effectiveness on digital transformation, with 77% of public consultation respondents either strongly agreeing or agreeing on the good performance of the programme for this priority and 72% of NAs/EACEA survey respondents agreeing on the transformative effects at system level of the programme thanks to this priority [227]. However, National reports identify mixed progress in the implementation of the digital transformation priority [228]. Although the transformation was accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic [229], 16 reports indicated that further development is needed in this area, especially with regard to the enhancement of digital skills [230].

The milestones set for the activities supporting the **green transition priority** are mostly achieved or on track. Specifically, the 2023 target for KA2 has been exceeded (in terms of the proportion of activities addressing climate change). The targets were also met for three out of four milestones in the sport and youth sectors except for the KA1 sport, which was launched in 2023 only. Finally, **DiscoverEU** emerges for its contribution to the green transition priority by offering young people the chance to explore Europe through sustainable travel, with a total of 179 209 passes.

Progress is observed with the increasing share of **green travel**, with around one third of mobilities using green transport, representing a 25% rise between 2021 and 2023. Stakeholders identified insufficient financial support and additional time and costs associated with green travel as some of the challenges involved in making greener travel decisions [231]. Further, around

[223] Annex I Technical Annex, ICF study. Data reporting on delegated act result indicators on horizontal priorities.
[224] Public consultation, NA/EACEA survey and key informant interview.
[225] BEnl, CY, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FR, IE, IS, IT, LU, LV, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SI, TR.
[226] Erasmus+ monitoring data, 2021-2023 participants' reports, N=569 241.
[227] NAs/EACEA survey, annex III of ICF study. Question: 'To what extent has Erasmus+ 2021-2027 had a transformative effect at system level particularly with respect to the four horizontal priorities of the programme listed below?'
[228] 18 reports: AT, BEnl, CY, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IT, MT, NL, NO, PT, RO.
[229] 7 reports: AT, CY, EL, ES, FR, IT, PT.
[230] BEnl, CY, DE, DK, ES, IE, IT, LT, LV, LU, MT, NL, SE, SI, SK, TR.
[231] Some public consultation respondents mentioned the inadequate top-up related to green transport, as travelling by means other than plane usually entailed additional time and costs. Suggestions such as having an interrail pass to travel with a train everywhere in Europe for a certain period, emission compensations, and having more meetings online were given as examples of how to achieve progress in this field.

half of participants in learning mobility activities declared increased knowledge and behavioural change related to environmental awareness and sustainability following their participation [232].

Stakeholders' feedback on the programme's contribution to this priority is mixed. Public consultation respondents were uncertain about the performance of the programme with regard to reducing its carbon footprint (47% strongly agreed or agreed on this). NAs/EACEA were more positive in this respect, with 72% agreeing or partially agreeing that the programme is performing well in supporting the green transition priority (20% strongly, and 52% partially agreed). In the national reports, some innovative approaches were indicated in 10 countries[233], while 7 reports[234] recommend implementing strategies to evaluate the effectiveness of the green travel top-up and assess its impact on promoting environmentally friendly travel.

Finally, the programme has demonstrated a positive impact in supporting **participation in democratic life and civic engagement**, with approximately half of the participants showing increased knowledge about democratic values and willingness to engage more actively in democratic processes. These positive outcomes have increased between 2021 and 2023. Stakeholder feedback is positive on programme's role in promoting democratic values. 88% of respondents to the public consultation agreed or strongly agreed that the programme performed well in promoting common EU values and strengthened European identity, and 75% affirmed the same about fostering active citizenship and participation in democratic life. 68% of respondents to the NAs/EACEA survey also agreed and partially agreed on the good performance of the programme in this respect[235].

Positive impact of Erasmus+ on building a European identity and engagement was confirmed in 21 national reports[236]. However, there was less concrete evidence of increased civic participation in 13 reports[237]. The new format of Youth Participation Activities, launched in 2021 under the youth chapter and designated as one of the flagship initiatives of the European Year of Youth (EYY) in 2022, has particularly boosted young people to engage and make their voices heard, empowering them to become active citizens, and raising their awareness about EU common values and fundamental rights. The action saw a significant budget reinforcement in the framework of the EYY (from EUR 17 million in 2021 to EUR 30 million in 2022, maintained also in 2023) and supported over 500 youth-led initiatives, boosting civic, economic, social, cultural and political participation of over 100 000 participants, operationalising the "Engage" core area of the EU Youth Strategy.

[232] Based on Programme monitoring data collected through participants' reports, 50% of participants learnt about environmental issues during their mobility and 46% reported to have changed their habits to become more sustainable as a result of their mobility experience (2021-2023, N=546 938). This ranged from 38% amongst higher education participants to 75% of VET participants. On both delegated act indicators, the proportion of participants indicating increased awareness and behavioural change increased between 2021 and 2023.

[233] AT, BEnl, CY, DE, ES, FR, IT, MT, NL, PL.

[234] AT, CY, DE, DK, IE, MT, NL.

[235] In their contribution to the public consultation, the European Student Network (The Student Perspective to the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 Mid-term Evaluation | Erasmus Student Network (esn.org)). points to the long-lasting challenge of facilitating the interaction between international students and local communities during mobility experiences, as one of the aspects of civic engagement. Data from the XIVth edition of the ESN survey (reported in 2022) showed that, on average, before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, only 8% of students engaged in volunteering activities during their mobility. The share of students volunteering during mobility has only slightly increased to 10% according to the ESN survey XV.

[236] AT, BEnl, BG, CY, CZ, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, LI, LU, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SI, RS, TR.

[237] BEde, BEfr, DE, DK, HU, IE, IT, LT, LV, MT, SE, SI, SK.

Overall, the 2021-2027 programme is achieving significant effects among participants in supporting the political priorities 'promoting our European way of life', 'a new push for European democracy', and 'a Europe fit for the digital age'. For political priorities outlined in the European green deal, the programme is making progress, though challenges remain regarding the use of green transport and the programme's carbon footprint.

4.1.1.7 Visibility and dissemination of results

This section analyses jointly both programming periods, highlighting differences or trends, where needed. This approach is required by the strong continuity of the intervention, with limited changes between programme generations, reflected in feedback from stakeholders and national reports.

Erasmus+ is very well-know, and it has become "undoubtedly **one of the most successful European brands"**[238]. The Flash Eurobarometer on Youth and Democracy conducted in 2022[239] shows that Erasmus+ opportunities are very well-known, with 50% of the surveyed young people confirming their awareness of Erasmus+ student mobility across all Member States. Young people showed awareness of Erasmus+ youth exchanges (33%), mobility opportunities for pupils (30%) and apprentices (20%), as well as of DiscoverEU (12%). Collected evidence shows a comparable pattern to what was observed during the mid-term evaluation of Erasmus+ 2014-2020[240], confirming that Erasmus+ 2021-2027 **perception and reputation are positive** [241].

However, despite its success, there are still challenges in communicating the programme's broader range of funding opportunities to the general public. Many people still associate the programme with higher education, and only expert audiences are fully aware of its various components and opportunities; this suggests room for improvement to **further increase the visibility of the programme beyond the higher education sector**, e.g. through communication tools and initiatives tailored to specific target groups.

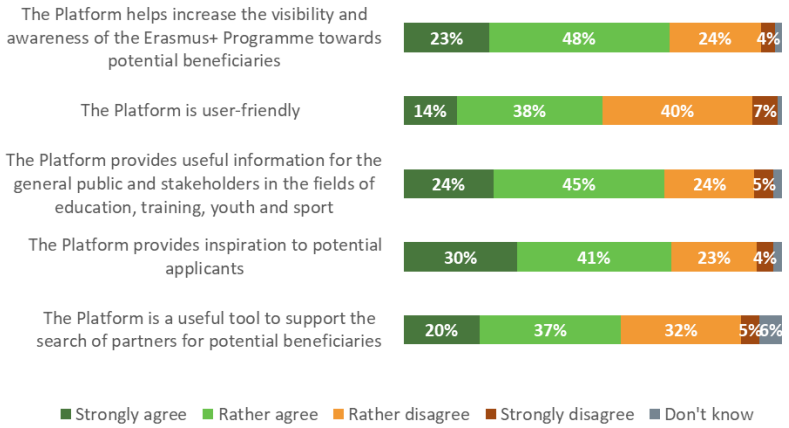
20 national reports[242] noted that, while awareness of the programme is generally high within education and training sectors, public awareness beyond direct beneficiaries remains often limited. Consulted stakeholders [243] recognised the challenges given by the need to reach diverse audiences and target groups. The communication endeavour is particularly challenging when it comes to JMAs or sectoral actions such as eTwinning, EPALE or DiscoverEU, which often do not use Erasmus+ brand, as shown by the social media analysis.

In both programming periods the **Erasmus+ Projects Results Platform** is a central pillar of the programme's dissemination and exploitation activities, offering a comprehensive overview of all projects funded under the current programme and its predecessor [244]. The platform has been revamped at the start of the 2021-2027 period to enhance its functionalities and user-friendliness. Respondents to the NAs/EACEA survey expressed rather positive views on its

[238] Report on the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027 (2023), https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2023-0413_EN.html
[239] https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2282
[240] Combined evaluation of Erasmus+ and predecessor programmes: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/3d783015-228d-11e8-ac73-01aa75ed71a1/language-en
[241] Positive stakeholder views are also supported by the results of the social media analysis run by the external evaluator. Between August 2021 and January 2024, over 91% of the reviewed 71 182 posts were classified as expressing a positive sentiment.
[242] BEde, BEnl, BG, CY, DE, DK, EE, FR, IE, LV, LT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SI.
[243] National Agencies, national stakeholder organisations and case studies participants.
[244] The platform includes projects funding under the period 2014-2020 and 2021-2027, as well as a selection of projects funded under the previous programmes (LifeLong Learning, Youth in Action, Culture 2007-2013, etc.).

effectiveness, also in providing inspiration to potential applicants. Key informant interviews at European and national level confirmed an increasing emphasis on effectively disseminating programme results; nevertheless, recurrent criticism points at the lack of sufficient financial resources for effective communication and dissemination.

NAs/EACEA feedback on Erasmus+ Projects Results Platform



Source: NAs/EACEA survey

During both programming periods, National Agencies have carried out across participating countries a wide range of dissemination activities, ranging from social media campaign, dedicated websites, information events, seminars, publications, engagement of Erasmus+ ambassadors and alumni networks, as regularly reported in their yearly reports [245] and confirmed by the national reports[246]. Despite the shared and multi-layered effort, evidence shows that **the uptake and sustainability of project results remain limited**. National reports from 31 countries [247] emphasise the need for improved communication strategies, broader outreach, and more effective dissemination of project results to maximise impact beyond immediate beneficiaries. Reports from 28 countries[248] highlight insufficient resources for long-term dissemination activities and the importance of providing enhanced support, resources and guidance to help beneficiaries maximise the impact and sustainability of their project outcomes.

4.1.1.8 External influencing factors over both programming periods

During both programme generations, the implementation of Erasmus+ has been affected by several large-scale external factors, which had a significant impact, both at individual and organisational levels, in one case (Covid-19) coming across both programming periods.

Erasmus+ 2014-2020

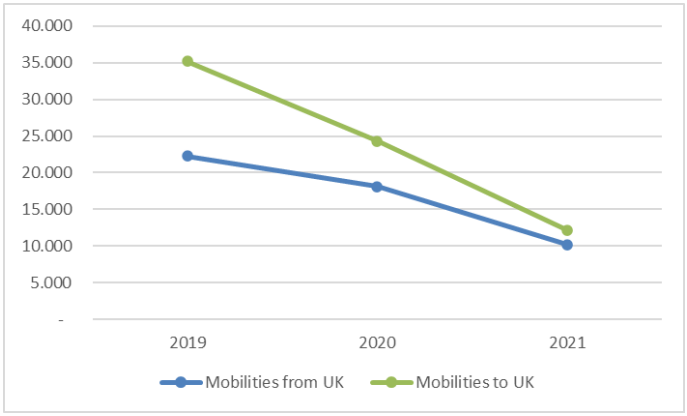
During **Erasmus+ 2014-2020** implementation period, the 2015 terrorist attacks on one hand and the refugee crises of those years on the other hand represented external factors triggering a stronger focus of the programme on the promotion of tolerance, non-discrimination, social inclusion and on the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremisms. The implementation of the March 2015 Paris Declaration, incorporated in the new priority areas under ET2020, was transposed as cross-cutting priority and reflected in Erasmus+ call 2016,

[245] Analysis of 2015-2020 and 2021-2022 NAs yearly reports show a very high level of compliance of the standards set for dissemination and exploitation - between 92% and 98% across the observed period.
[246] For instance, France reported over 1 900 ErasmusDays events taking place in 2023 at national, regional and department levels, and including overseas territories (https://agence.erasmusplus.fr/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Bilan-2023-2.pdf).
[247] All countries who submitted their national report on programme implementation, except Liechtenstein.
[248] All countries, except LI, RS, SI, and TR.

demonstrating the flexibility of the programme in addressing specific rising policy priorities through its actions.

In the same programming period, the **withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union** also impacted the programme, although the country remained a programme country until the end of the programming period. With over 23 000 participations of UK organisations and over 190 000 learners and staff[249] from UK undertaking learning mobility periods abroad, the country was primary beneficiary of Erasmus+. In accordance with the Withdrawal Agreement, all project activities financed through the 2014-2020 programme could continue as planned until their completion, in some cases well beyond 2020. Thanks to this transitory phase, the participation of UK organisations in the programme remained quite stable, showing a slow decline in the years following the referendum (from 3 400 to 3 000 participations between 2016 and 2020). However, programme data indicate a significant decrease of both UK outbound and inbound mobilities of higher education students and staff [250].

Erasmus+ higher education student and staff mobilities



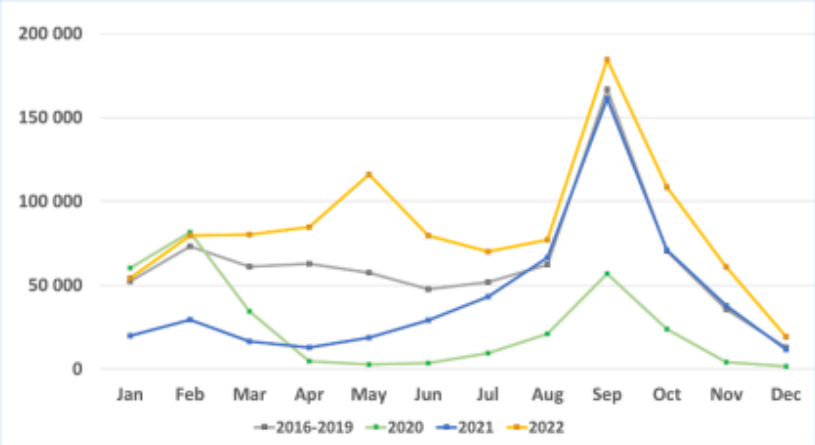
Source: Erasmus+ annual reports 2019-2021. Statistical annexes. Count of mobilities per mobility start year

Brexit, and the resulting withdrawal of the United Kingdom from Erasmus+, triggered the decision of the UK government to launch in 2021 the Turing scheme, with a budget of around EUR 130 million per year, as domestic alternative for students in universities, colleges and schools to go in study and work placements abroad. However, the Turing scheme has a much narrower scope than Erasmus+[251], not fully replacing benefits and partnerships that Erasmus+ offered. Brexit provided a "real-life experiment" of what stopping Erasmus+ may mean for a country and how much a replacement national scheme may cost (see 4.2.3).

The **COVID-19 pandemic** had a significant effect on learning mobility activities, in particular on the last year of implementation of the 2014-2020 programme and on-going activities from previous call years. In 2020, the number of mobilities declined sharply, but in 2021, the programme started to recover, and by 2022, it had returned to pre-pandemic levels [252].

[249] Programme monitoring data, covering the period 2014-2020.
[250] Erasmus+ annual reports 2019, 2020, 2021 - Statistical annex (https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/431386); (https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/038079); (https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/63555).
[251] The Turing scheme does not include dedicated actions in the fields of youth and sport, provisions for staff placements or funding for incoming student mobility.
[252] Di Pietro, G., and Perez-Encinas (2024) "The effects of COVID-19 on international student credit mobility: a gravity model approach", Education Economics (https://doi.org/10.1080/09645292.2023.2297151).

COVID-19 impact on Erasmus+ learning mobilities



Source: Erasmus+ annual report 2022, total count of mobility periods started per month in KA1

The 2014-2020 programme reacted promptly to the outbreak of the pandemic adopting specific measures to support mobility participants in facing the immediate consequences of the containment measured adopted at national levels [253]. As an immediate response to the impact of the pandemic, two extraordinary Calls were published in 2020 under KA2, the Partnerships for Digital Education Readiness and the Partnerships for Creativity, aiming to support fields highly impacted by the pandemic. Both Calls reached over 210 000 estimated participants through over 1 200 projects via funding of almost EUR 225 million (against an allocation of EUR 100 million for each call) [254].

Nevertheless, the pandemic still had a lasting impact on the Programme. Many projects were postponed, and parts of their activities were shifted online. Some project participants also experienced restrained involvement due to the pandemic, 72% of public consultation respondents reported that their projects were affected in some way [255]. Evidence from National Agencies' yearly reports and national reports [256] corroborates the extensive adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Erasmus+ 2021-2027

The start of the 2021-2027 programme was heavily affected by Covid-19 pandemic with 2021 mobility continuing being severely impacted. Mitigating measures, including higher flexibility in both the implementation and the management of the programme (e.g. extended eligibility period for programme activities, higher threshold for the budgetary transfer between actions by NAs) and a stronger focus on KA2 remained in place until 2022, when the programme strived for a gradual return to a regular implementation and to pre-pandemic mobility levels.

[253] https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/coronavirus-impact

[254] The Partnerships for Digital Education Readiness aimed at enhancing online, distance and blended learning - including supporting teachers and trainers, and safeguarding inclusiveness of digital learning opportunities in schools. The Call addressed the higher education, VET and school education sectors, funding 630 projects and reaching an estimated number of 111 126 participants (overall grants: almost EUR 132 million). The Partnerships for Creativity aimed at developing skills and competences that encourage creativity, quality, innovation and recognition of youth work (targeting the school education, adult education and youth sectors). This activity funded 572 projects reaching an estimated number of 99 781 participants (overall grant: approximately EUR 92.5 million).

[255] Public consultation report, annex II of ICF study. (Respondents N=1,092).

[256] All national reports mention substantial decreases in mobility activities, especially in 2020 and 2021, due to travel restrictions and safety concerns; 25 countries report adapting by implementing virtual or blended mobility options to maintain some level of transnational/international exchange (AT, BEnl, BG, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, EL, HR, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, TR).

Rising inflation also negatively affected the first years of the programme implementation, leading many participants and organisations to adjust their activities to accommodate price increases[257]. In contrast, the impact of **Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine** was lower, as reflected by the results of the public consultation, the analysis of National Agencies' yearly reports and of national reports. The programme adapted to face this challenge and mobilised to provide support to people fleeing from Ukraine. The 2023 Annual Work programme included a frontload of EUR 100 million from the 2027 annual budget to reinforce and focus on projects aiming at addressing the consequences of the war.

Facing these challenges, the programme responded through digitalisation, online collaboration, and the development of new formats such as blended mobilities; it adjusted the rates of individual support for 2023 call for proposals to cushion inflation, it refocused project activities and opened mobility schemes to incoming participants from Ukraine in all fields of education and training.

The programme's response to these unexpected and disruptive events is viewed positively by stakeholders. Evidence collected shows that the programme responded and adapted well, demonstrating a high degree of responsiveness and resilience. This is especially the case in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic: respondents to the public consultation considered that the support provided by the sending organisation or programme bodies was excellent or good. 15 national reports [258] noted, as long-term implications of such large-scale external factors, how the programme improved its abilities in responding and adapting in challenging circumstances, building on experiences both from the pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Only the programme response to the inflation surge seems to have been less effective, as some consulted stakeholders highlighted that Erasmus+ grants were not sufficiently rapidly adjusted to rising inflation rates, resulting in insufficient budget provision at the beneficiary organisation's level and increased financial uncertainty.

4.1.2 Efficiency

The overall assessment of the efficiency of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 and of Erasmus+ 2021-2027, is positive. The analysis is based on five evaluation questions that cover the following areas:

- the size of the budget,
- the efficiency of implementation and management modes,
- the efficiency gains through the simplification measures adopted in the transition to the current programme,
- the cost-effectiveness of the main types of actions,
- the efficiency of monitoring arrangements,
- the efficiency of measures to identify and prevent fraud and irregularities.

4.1.2.1 Size of budget

This section analyses the extent to which the size of the budget of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 and Erasmus+ 2021-2027 was/is appropriate and proportionate for the achievement of their objectives, as well as the appropriateness of budget distribution and absorption rates under each programme.

[257] 47% of public consultation respondents (N=329) from organisations reported that they had to revise their project budget internally due to inflation (annex II of ICF study).
[258] AT, BEde, BEfr, BEnl, BG, CZ, EE, HR, IE, IT, LV, HU, PL, PT, RO.

Erasmus+ 2014-2020

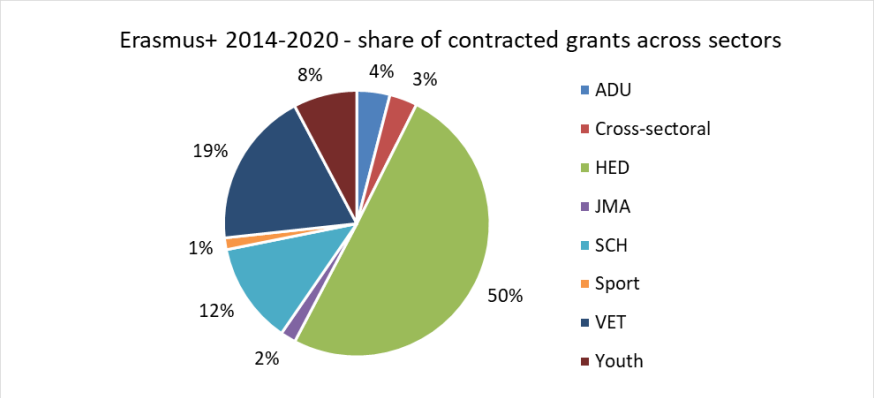
Erasmus+ 2014-2020 had an overall indicative financial envelope of EUR 14.774 billion under Heading 1 (Sustainable growth) of the EU budget, complemented by EUR 1.68 billion under Heading 4 (EU as global player) and EDF. The programme budget was distributed through smaller annual allocations at the start of the programme period (e.g. 10% in 2014, 11% in 2015 respectively) and then increased over time, with 20% of the total programme budget being allocated in 2020. Article 18(2) of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ Regulation sets specific targets for the distribution of funds by sector, with variances allowed for individual years.

At the end of the programming period, the funding share of all sectors has been in line with the final allocation shares set in the afore mentioned Article 18(2) and amended following the entry into force of the European Solidarity Corps Regulation [259].

Actions under indirect management accounted for around 77% of the programme budget. To support optimal budget absorption in indirect management, flexibility rules were in place to allow National Agencies to transfer amounts between key actions and within education and training sectors according to rules and ceilings established in the delegation agreements between the Commission and each National Agency. This allowed to have absorption close to full.

Only for the Student Loan Guarantee Facility, the commitments made were lower (-0.76%) than the target level set by the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ Regulation throughout the programme lifespan [260]. Despite effectiveness in supporting disadvantaged students, it didn't attract enough financial intermediaries offering student loans for studying abroad nor a sufficient number of beneficiaries. The Facility was discontinued in the 2021-2027 programming period.

At the end of the programming period, the programme funded around 160 000 projects, contracting approximately EUR 17.5 billion, which is higher than the indicative financial envelope indicated in the 2014-2020 Regulation. This is due to the contributions to Erasmus+ budget from the non-EU countries participating in the programme and to the internal assigned revenues which are added to the EU budget on annual basis.



Source: EAC monitoring data, Program results dashboard, data frozen at 5 January 2024. The label 'cross-sectoral' applies to actions covering more than one sector (mainly KA3 activities)

[259] Article 26 of the European Solidarity Corps Regulation, adopted in 2018, amended Article 18, paragraphs 1, 2 and 3, of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ Regulation with regards to the indicative overall financial envelope, and the allocation shares for education and training sectors, the youth sector, the Student Loan Guarantee Facility, the administrative expenditure and cooperation projects.

[260] The allocation share for the Student Loan Guarantee Facility was lowered from 3.5% to 1.5% of the overall indicative financial envelope.

The mid-term evaluation of the 2014-2020 programme deemed the programme financial envelope not sufficient to fully satisfy demand. Although the 2014-2020 programme budget was 40% higher than its predecessors', a large share of the public, and many National Agencies consulted in the context of the mid-term evaluation of the 2014-2020 programme, viewed the resources allocated as insufficient for most of the sectors. Based on **programme monitoring data, it is estimated that, overall, it would have been possible to grant around EUR 8.9 billion to more than 44 000 good project proposals scoring above threshold but rejected for lack of funds** (of which EUR 3.5 billion to 33 000 projects under indirect management and EUR 5.4 billion to over 11 000 projects under direct management).

Despite the increased annual allocations in the second part of the programming period, the programme has not been able to fully satisfy the demand, resulting in low success rates (see section 3.1). The national co-funding (EUR 174.4 million from 2014 to 2020) provided to funds for grant support by 13 countries for activities under indirect management and allocated entirely to KA1 is indicative of the insufficiency of programme budget to meet the demand for learning mobility[261]. Furthermore, in countries with very high demand like Poland, Erasmus+ country allocation was complemented by ESF funds managed by the Polish National Agency (close to EUR 220 million for the period 2014-2020).

Youth actions (8% of contracted grants) were among those with the lowest success rate [262]. In 2014, KA1 youth success rate was close to 50%, but it dropped to between 35% and 30% during the remaining part of the programming period; in KA2, the success rate was constantly below 20%, with the lowest peak in 2015 (11%) and reaching 17% in 2020; in KA3 (Youth dialogue – indirect management) the success rate was on average around 30% throughout the programming period. Similarly, mobility activities in school education registered a quite low and decreasing success rate, going from 39% in 2019 to 32% in 2020. In the 2014-2020 period KA1 mobility in the school sector included staff mobility only. Therefore, this share gives a quite clear idea of the level of demand for learning mobility from teachers and school staff.

The available budget has shown largely insufficient for Jean Monnet activities and Sport actions, which counted for the lowest shares both at level of allocation and contracted grants (2% for Jean Monnet activities and 1% for Sport), against high demand throughout the programming period. For Jean Monnet activities, the success rate went from 43% in 2014 to 25% in 2020, with the lowest peak in 2019 (19%), showing an increasing demand over time. For Sport, the success rate slightly improved thanks to the increasing yearly budget allocation, going from 9% in 2014 to 28% in 2020.

The highest share of contracted grants accounted for the higher education sector, with the great majority (81%, EUR 7 billion) granted to learning mobility activities. The design of the higher education intra-European mobility activities, based on non-competitive grant requests, does not allow to establish a success rate comparable to the other sectors. In VET, only 11% of mobility projects were implemented by organisations holding a VET Mobility Charter, accounting for 19% of grants contracted for VET mobility (around EUR 455 million). The majority of VET mobility projects were non-accredited (EUR 1.9 billion), with a success rate of around 50% across the programming period, but 47% in 2020. Conversely, KA2 VET actions under indirect management had the lowest success rate among E&T sectors (from 28% in 2017 to 27% in

[261] The allocation of national co-funding by country authorities to top up Erasmus+ funds for grant support is not compulsory. Their input into programme tools is also not performed systematically by National Agencies, therefore the amount declared may not be fully representative of the actual magnitude of additional national resources topping up Erasmus+ budget.

[262] Success rate is calculated based on the number of contracted projects over the number of received project proposals.

2020), followed by the adult education sector, from 35% in 2017 to 30% on 2020, with the yearly allocated envelope being better able to meet demand across years (16% success rate in 2020).

Erasmus+ 2021-2027

There is a general appreciation for the budget increase of the current programme (+82,8% for Heading 2 budget, compared to the 2014-2020 programme), and the opportunities it provides to fund more projects. This appreciation also includes the budget envelope from the external policy instruments, which compared to the 2014-2020 programming period, has increased by 23.5%.

Budget Headings	2014-2020	2021-2027	Increase in nominal terms
MFF Headings 1 or 2 (billion EUR)	14.5	26.5	82.8%
MFF Headings 4 or 6 (billion EUR)	1.7[263]	2.1	23.5%
Total (billion EUR)	**16.2**	**28.6**	**76.5%**

Although the programme budget profile is distributed through smaller annual allocations at the start of the programme period (10% in 2021, 13% in 2022, 14% in 2023[264]) with an increase in the following years, the yearly budget is still not sufficient to address the demand leading to concerns about the programme's ability to fully meet its objectives. These views from various stakeholders are confirmed by the analysis of national reports, with 13 reports [265] raising that point. 82% of public consultation respondents agreed from 'a very large' to a 'large' extent that increasing the overall programme budget had to be addressed to maximise the impact of a possible successor programme to Erasmus+ [266]. Key national-level informants from 25 Member States and third countries associated to the programme reported that, despite its increase in recent years, the programme budget is still not sufficient to meet demand [267]. Demand for mobility in accredited projects for schools has doubled from 2021 to 2022 and more than doubled from 2022 to 2023, while the average success rate of KA2 was 17% for actions under indirect management in 2023. Around 72 000 projects have been granted in the period 2021-2023 for a total of EUR 9.8 billion budget. **Programme monitoring data show that it would have been possible to grant more than EUR 5 billion of additional budget to more than 29 400 additional quality proposals scoring above the quality threshold but rejected for lack of funds** (of which EUR 2.2 billion to 3 800 quality proposals under direct management and EUR 2.9 billion to 25 600 quality proposals under indirect management).

In the period 2021-2023, six countries have provided national co-funding for programme implementation in indirect management for a total of around EUR 140 million, almost entirely used to support KA1 mobility grants. This amount is more than three times higher to the total national co-funding provided in the first three years of the 2014-2020 programme (EUR 43 million for the period 2014-2016), showing commitment from country authorities to satisfy the greater demand.

[263] Coming from five external cooperation instruments funding Erasmus+ 2014-2020.
[264] In line with the financial programming for the whole period (MFF 2021-2027).
[265] BG, CZ, CY, DE, ES, EL, HR, IT, MT, NL, PT, TR.
[266] Annex II Public consultation report. Question "To what extent do you think the following aspects need to be addressed to maximise the impact of any successor to Erasmus+?" (respondents well or partly familiar with the programme (N=1,231)). Other aspects where respondents expressed agreement to a large or very large extent were: i) simplifying the administrative requirements to access funding (82%); ii) increasing the level of individual grants (76%); iii) providing better access to people with fewer opportunities (74%), iv) increasing the opportunity for international mobility and international cooperation with countries outside Europe (74%).
[267] Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye.

KA1 is by far the largest of the key actions in funding terms (with approximately 50% of the total programme budget in 2021-2023). Compared to the 2014-2020 programme, the relative weight of KA2 has slightly increased in the earlier stages of the 2021-2027 programme due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on mobility activities, but KA1 then recovered a significantly higher share.

Similarly to the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ Regulation, the 2021-2027 programme Regulation sets specific shares for the distribution of funds by sector and field, with variances allowed for individual years. Around 73% of the programme budget has been implemented under indirect management between 2021 and 2023.

The ICF study stated that '*The general increase in funding available across the sectors and fields coupled with more emphasis to sectors and fields other than higher education emerges as a positive element of the current programme, to be strengthen'* and that school education emerges as an underfunded field [268]. In addition, national level interviewees expressed concerns about budget proportionality across sectors such as adult education and VET, which face lower funding levels compared to higher education[269].

As part of the measures put in place to simplify the management of the programme, enhanced flexibility rules were introduced to allow National Agencies to transfer amounts between different budget items (entailing an increase or a decrease compared to the initial budget allocations) according to rules and ceilings established in the contribution agreements between the Commission and each National Agency. The current programme shows larger values of transfers compared to the previous one, as an effect of the greater flexibility allowed under the current programme for indirectly managed actions. A standard 35% variation rule is applied to all budget headings in the context of the contribution agreements signed between the Commission and National Agencies (higher than the standard 25% variation in the Commission's contribution agreement template) [270]. Furthermore, National Agencies can request a change in the budget allocation (increase or decrease) above the 35% threshold via an amendment procedure to the contribution agreement. Since 2021, numerous amendments to contribution agreements have been processed.

In link with COVID-19 pandemic, data for 2021 show a generalised transfer of funding from KA1 mobility activities to KA2 cooperation activities across all sectors and fields. Data for 2023 show smaller variations in absorption rates across sectors and fields, signalling a normalisation of the activities (figures were not yet fully stabilised for 2023 at the moment of this evaluation). In particular, data for the years 2022 and 2023, show considerable improvements for mobility in school education, which in 2023 was over 100% absorption, despite initial difficulties (17.7% in 2021). The adult education sector showed difficulties in absorbing the full allocation of funds for mobility actions at the beginning of the current programme due to the inception of the new action for mobility of adult learners, but has shown considerable improvement since (moving from -44.12% in 2021 to -25.44% in 2023 [271]).

The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic makes the absorption rates for 2021-2023 more difficult to interpret. For example, under KA3, large shares of TCAs (in particular in the E&T sectors)

[268] ICF support study, p. 118.
[269] Synopsis report, Annex V.
[270] In 2021, a higher threshold of 50% was applied in the 2021 Contribution Agreement at the level of Erasmus+ key action sub-totals, as an exceptional measure introduced to respond to COVID-19 circumstances.
[271] Data not final as based on the cut-off date of 31 December 2023.

and DiscoverEU learning cycle funds [272] were transferred towards KA2. However, it is unclear whether and how much such transfers are an effect of the COVID-19 pandemic or reflect a structural extra allocation. A recalibration of funding within adult education (increasing funding for Cooperation Partnerships over mobilities) also seems advisable from the available data but this remains to be confirmed in the coming years. Together with a general appreciation of the flexibility allowed under the programme, national-level interviewees from 18 countries [273] expressed concerns about the distribution of funds across programme fields and key actions, arguing that some sectors are disproportionately funded while others face significant budget constraints. Views on the adequacy of funds by sector vary across countries. Due to the very different national needs and priorities, it is difficult to have a more equitable budget distribution that can fulfil the expectations of stakeholders across all sectors and countries. Some countries suggest adjustments to funding indicators or reallocation of resources or even greater flexibility to better align with very different national needs.

4.1.2.2 Implementation modes and user-friendliness

The management, implementation and supervision of Erasmus+ requires a strong collaboration among a wide array of actors. The programme's implementation structure has remained largely stable **over the two programming periods**. The governance of the programme including a division of responsibilities among the **Commission, EACEA, National Authorities, and National Agencies**[274] is well understood and considered efficient. Stability in the management roles and responsibilities over the two programming periods is highly appreciated both by managing bodies and by beneficiaries. Roles and responsibilities are also deemed clearly defined, confirming that the arrangements applied in both programming periods are efficient and proportionate to the scale and complexity of Erasmus+.

All national reports also praise the cooperation between the different actors involved in the implementation and supervision of the programme, citing efficient communication and collaboration. Stakeholders and beneficiaries alike value the Erasmus+ programme for effectively integrating both directly and indirectly managed actions in both programming periods.

One of the programme's key strengths is its dual approach, supporting shared European objectives through directly managed actions while aligning with national contexts via indirectly managed projects. In most participating countries, **National Agencies play a pivotal role, acting as interface between the European framework provided by the Erasmus+ programme and national and local needs**. In addition to manage the project lifecycle of indirectly managed actions, National Agencies are also entrusted with the implementation of a comprehensive set of support mechanisms, including tailored guidance to (potential) applicants and beneficiaries, the promotion of programme opportunities, including those managed under direct management, dissemination of project results, implementation of strategies and activities to foster the quality implementation of the programme. This wealth of activities is shaped on the basis of countries specificities, to ensure a more targeted implementation of the European priorities, taking into account the variety of stakeholders and target groups the programme aims

[272] Other KA3 activities under indirect management (SALTO Resource Centres, Eurodesk and national VET teams) are not subject to transfers. In 2021, the implementation of the DiscoverEU learning cycle activities (new) was not compulsory, explaining the high share of transferred funds. As for TCA, to better respond to COVID-19 pandemic, it was decided to extend the eligibility period for the implementation of these activities from 18 to 24 months. Consequently, the transfer of 2021 and 2022 TCA funds to other actions was largely influenced by the postponement of the activities funded with 2020 budget.

[273] Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye.

[274] See also Annex VI.

to reach out. All national reports mention the work of National Agencies and the beneficiaries' high level of satisfaction with their support, particularly in terms of knowledge and information sharing, and prompt assistance during project preparation and execution. For example, 80% of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps participants were satisfied with the support received by National Agencies during COVID-19 pandemic, rating it as 'good or 'excellent' [275].

The overall information flow and communication among the actors of the Erasmus+ ecosystem is assessed positively by the consulted stakeholders. The mode and frequency of communication are clearly defined and allow for an effective flow of information in most cases. The main area warranting attention relates to communication between the National Agencies and EACEA. In 2023, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between EACEA and National Agencies. Since December 2023, National Agencies have been given full access to data on selected projects under direct management via dedicated dashboards. These measures will probably show their effects in the coming years; therefore, their effectiveness should be assessed at later stage.

Applicant and beneficiary organisations view the efficiency and clarity of programme communication in a positive way. Two-thirds of beneficiary organisations responding to the survey of Socio-economic actors [276] declared having received some form of support during the application process, with 82% receiving support from National Agencies. The assistance provided to organisations primarily included programme guides (67%), information days (65%), and helpline support, acknowledged by slightly over half of the organisations (57%). Data collected through the survey of expert assessors [277] indicates also overall satisfaction. 99% of surveyed experts stated having received guidance on assessing applications and projects, assessing the received guidance very or somewhat useful for their work, indicating an overall high-quality guidance system.

Erasmus+ 2014-2020

In the 2014-2020 programme, most of the administrative steps for the management of the project lifecycle were performed efficiently by National Agencies. With exception of Call years 2014 and 2020, which - for different reasons – presented a number of management and implementation challenges, the indicator 'time to award' [278] remained quite stable across years, with an average of 132 days across the programming period. Project contracting [279] was performed in average 73 days across the programming period; however, this indicator was highly impacted by the complex management of the KA2 School exchange partnership, normally requiring more than 90 days to be finalised.

Improvements across years are noted at level of executing the first pre-financing payments for indirectly managed actions, with 95% of timely performed pre-financings in 2019 (+6% compared to 2014) and a slight decrease to 92% in 2020 due to COVID-19 impact. In average, only 57% of final payments were performed within 60 days deadline across the programming period; notable improvements are noted across years, passing from 40% of 2014 Call to 64% of 2020 Call, while the average number of days for performing final payments

[275] Survey run by the Commission in May 2020, addressing over 57 000 participants representing all types of mobility supported under Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps and corresponding to 40% of the estimated number of people in mobility at the time of the Covid-19 outbreak. The response rate 21% of the survey's population (11 800 participants over both programmes). https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-09/coronavirus-mobility-impact-results-may2020_en.pdf.
[276] Socio-economic actors' survey, annex V of ICF study.
[277] Expert assessors' survey, annex IV of ICF study.
[278] Number of calendar days between the project submission deadline and the grant award decision.
[279] 'Time to contract': number of calendar days between project award date and project contract date.

decreased from 113 days of 2014 Call to 68 of 2020 Call [280]. Across the programming period, the average share of timely received final reports is 80%, which is considered satisfying.

The efficiency of the implementation modes put in place for the management of the programme, and of their coherence in the programme infrastructure, can also be measured against the **distribution of staff in terms of full-time equivalents (FTEs)** employed by the different implementing bodies. In the period 2014-2020, out of the total number of FTEs employed by NAs and EACEA[281], 90% worked for the implementation of actions under indirect management, which appears substantially in line with the volume of budget and number of projects implemented under direct and indirect management (92% of projects and 77% of the budget concerned actions indirect management).

Another key indicator of efficiency are the **administrative and management expenditures**. In the 2014-2020, the administrative costs for EACEA represented 5% of the operational budget executed under direct management, while, for indirect management, the EU contribution to NAs' management costs ('management fees') represented around 4% of the budget entrusted to the National Agencies for the implementation of indirectly managed actions. The cost for the functioning of National Agencies tends to be higher in the first years of the programme, due to the need to hire and train staff, set up tools and internal procedures for the remaining part of programme implementation. The amount of management fees also tends to increase proportionally with the yearly increase of the entrusted budget. Nevertheless, the share of management fees has remained largely stable during the programming period, with a slightly decrease between 2014 (4.66%) and 2019 (4.46%). In 2020, the publication of two exceptional Calls to respond to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, determined a slight increase at 4.60% to support these additional tasks, confirming in any case a general trend of stability.

Erasmus+ 2021-2027

2021-2023 data indicates improved time efficiency for most the administrative steps required for the management of indirect management actions. In the 2021-2023 period, project awarding ('time to award') is performed in average 111 days (-21 days compared to the average of the previous programme), with improvements over years (average of 105 days in 2023). Under 2023 Call, 97% of pre-financing payments were performed on time (+5% compared to 2020 and +6% compared to 2021 Calls), with a reduction of the average number of days passed between grant agreement signature and first pre-financing (from 15 days in 2021 to 10 in 2023 against 14 days in 2019). Regarding final payments, data for Call years 2021-2023 show improvements compared to the 2014-2020 period. The percentage of final payments processed within the deadline stands at 79% for 2021 Call, 87% for 2022 Call and 75% for 2023 Call, requiring an average of 50 days, which represents a remarkable reduction compared to the previous programming period. Improvements are also noted regarding the share of timely received final reports, which stands at 89% in 2023. However, this indicator should be assessed on a longer timeline to draw more reliable conclusions.

The improved performance appears more evident in the light of the **overall stability of the number of FTEs employed at the National Agencies between programming periods**, with only a 3% increase compared to 2020 [282]. In parallel, the number of National Agencies entrusted

[280] Covid-19 impact can be seen in particular in the treatment of the payments related to 2019 and 2020 Calls, which – due to project duration – were processed between 2020 and 2023, overlapping with the start of the 2021-2027 period.
[281] In 2020, the FTEs employed by EACEA were 272, while those employed by NAs were 2 363.
[282] FTEs employed by National Agencies have increased from 2 363 in 2020 to 2 430 in 2022 (+3%), while those employed by EACEA have increased from 272 in 2020 to an average of 296,6 (+8%) in the period 2021-2023

with the implementation of the programme, across the 33 participating countries, has decreased from 58 in 2020 (including UK) to 54 in 2024 due to the merging of the youth and E&T NAs in Austria, Liechtenstein and Cyprus. This implies more synergies in the implementation of the programme in these countries and a more efficient use of resources [283].

Importantly, the share of payments made on time stands at a higher level as regards directly managed actions, as presented in EACEA's Annual Activity Reports. Overall, the term for receiving pre-financing and final payments (for both directly and indirectly managed actions) was considered very reasonable or somewhat reasonable respectively by 55% and 35% of participants in the survey of socio-economic actors [284].

The distribution of FTEs employed by NAs and EACEA has remained balanced and very close to the previous programming period, with 89% of the FTEs employed by National Agencies [285]. This share appears in line with the budget distribution (73% of the budget is implemented under indirect management) and the number of projects contracted in the period 2021-2023 (94.4% were under indirect management), considering also that as part of their tasks National Agencies deal with information activities at national level of directly managed actions, including promoting synergies with other funding instruments and the Seal of Excellence [286].

For the 2021-2023 period, the **administrative costs amount at 3% and 5%, respectively for direct and indirect management**. Similarly to the 2014-2020 programme, the cost for the functioning of National Agencies is higher in the first years of the programme implementation. However, compared to the volume of the entrusted budget, the share of management fees has decreased from 5.54% in 2021 to 5% in 2022 and 2023[287], with further decreases in the subsequent years up to the average shares of 2014-2020 programme [288]. This shows substantial stability of the administrative expenditure between programming periods.

A set of **IT tools** has been designed to support the actions managed by the National Agencies during the different stages of the project lifecycle, as well as the contractual and financial management of the National Agencies. These tools are accessible through a single-entry point and consist of five modules[289]. This set of tools is complemented by Commission's corporate

(see also Annex IV). The number of FTEs employed by EACEA have been calculated based on the Erasmus+ budget delegated to EACEA (significantly increased for the 2021-2027 MFF) according to the cost-benefit analysis set up by the Commission. Moreover, other new Erasmus+ actions not foreseen in the cost-benefit analysis were delegated to EACEA during the current MFF, without modification of the Specific Financial Statement.

[283] Financial support is provided to National Agencies as a contribution to their management costs for the implementation of the entrusted budget implementation tasks ('management fees'). This EU contribution is allocated at country level in the Erasmus+ Annual Work Programme and contracted to each National Agency separately via contribution agreements. In countries where more than one National Agency has been designated for the implementation of the programme, this EU contribution is split by the responsible National Authorities according to the number of National Agencies set up in their country. In line with Article 27 of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ regulation and Article 26 of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ regulation the designation of National Agencies falls under the responsibility of National Authorities.

[284] Socio-economic actors' survey, annex V of ICF study.

[285] The shares of FTEs distribution do not take into account the human resources at Commission's level, devoted to actions implemented directly by DG EAC as well as those allocated to few other actions under indirect management not entrusted to National Agencies (Cooperation with OECD, Council of Europe).

[286] The Seal of Excellence is awarded to flagship actions under direct management (European university alliances and Centres of vocational Excellence).

[287] The frontload of EUR 100 million from the 2027 annual budget to address the consequences of the war in Ukraine implied also a proportional increase of Management Fees in 2023 due to the additional tasks.

[288] 4.68% in 2024 and 4.33% in 2025.

[289] i) Project Management Module (PMM), ii) Beneficiary Module (BM), iii) Assessment Module (AM), iv) National Agencies' Module (NAM) and the v) Qlik Sense Hub Dashboard.

tool eGrants, used for the management, monitoring and reporting of actions under direct management by EACEA.

Evidence suggests that functional problems with some crucial parts of the IT landscape and the underlying infrastructure for indirect management actions have been experienced until the end of 2023. This is echoed in the European Parliament's 2023 Implementation Report on Erasmus+ 2021-2027[290], which called for immediate corrective actions. The systems were not fully developed to support the various project stages at the beginning of the programming period. Additionally, functional issues, such as errors, time-outs, and lack of communication between systems, hindered data collection necessary for programme monitoring and management. However, efforts have been made to address the most pressing issues and improvements are observed more recently (early 2024), as shown by the number of signalled and resolved issues, which have dropped to lower numbers. Such efforts and corrective actions are to be continued.

The onboarding to the corporate IT tool eGrants at EACEA, aiming at streamlining business processes across programmes managed at centralised level for the sake of simplification, also resulted in a temporary increase of workload for applicants and beneficiaries, in particular during the contracting phase, mostly due to the novelty of the tool [291]. As highlighted by interviewees consulted for the recent evaluation of EACEA, the challenges resulting from the tool complexity affect in particular smaller organisations with lower grants.

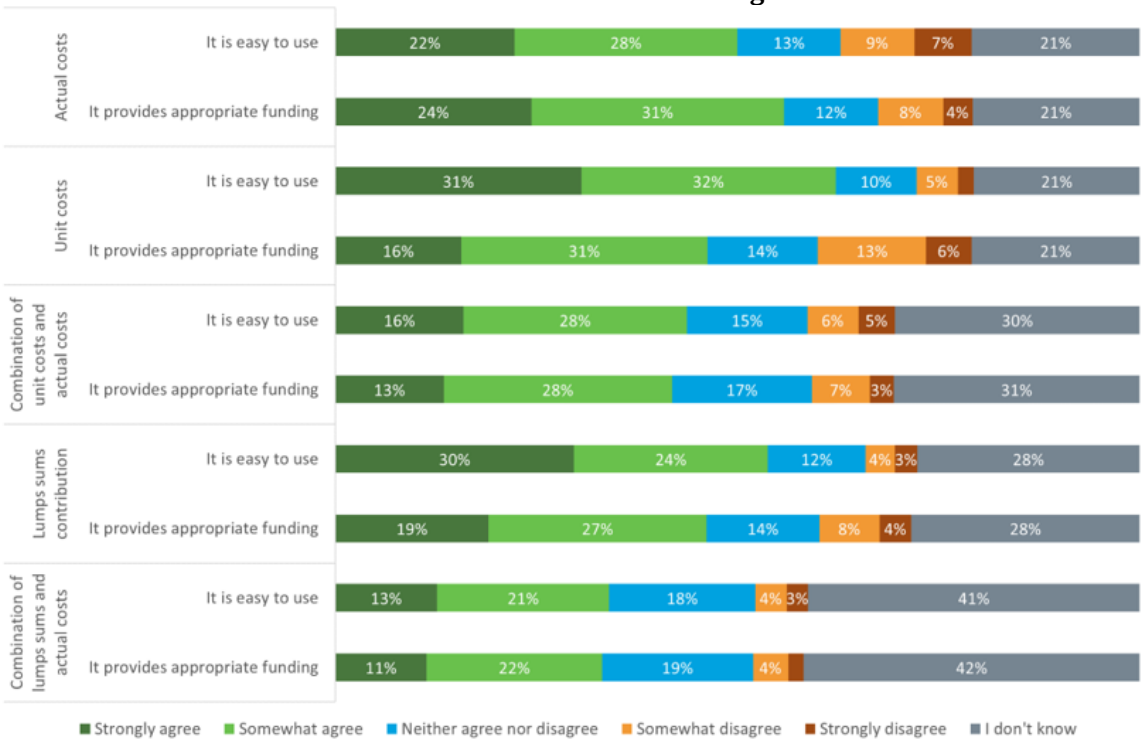
4.1.2.3 Efficiency gains and simplification

The design of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 took into account the call for increased administrative simplification to make it easier for participants, newcomers and smaller or low-capacity-organisations to benefit from the programme.

The results of the public consultation indicate that the most familiar funding mode under Erasmus+ is still 'actual cost' (68%), followed closely by 'unit costs' (65%). Fewer respondents had experience with lump sum contributions (43%), and an even lower share had used a combination of unit costs and actual costs (37%) or lump sums and actual costs (22%). 55% indicated that actual costs provide adequate funding, yet the majority of respondents either 'strongly agreed' or 'somewhat agreed' that unit costs are user-friendly (63%). Stakeholders appreciate the efficacy of unit costs and lump sum funding for adequacy of funding and user-friendliness, confirming the appropriateness of transitioning away from the actual cost model.

[290] Report of the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education (A9-0413/2023) of 6 December 2023 on the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027 (2023/2002(INI)).
[291] European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Study supporting the evaluation of CHAFEA, EACEA, EASME, ERCEA, INEA & REA 2017/2018-2021 – Final report – EACEA, Publications Office of the European Union, 2024 (https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/440417).

Public consultation feedback on funding models



Source: Public consultation

The wider introduction of the lump sum funding model is generally appreciated and brings important simplification (for instance, speeding up of award procedure for National Agencies[292], quicker and straightforward resource planning, no need to collect and submit supplier invoices, provide payslips, etc.) for both contracting authorities (National Agencies/EACEA) and beneficiaries. Together the unit costs (KA1), which were already in use in the 2014-2020 programme, the use of lump sums in KA2 has considerably simplified the calculation of the grant amounts, offering greater predictability for grant beneficiaries, simplifying reporting requirements and reducing administrative burden for implementing bodies. However, it is too early to fully assess the adequacy of lump-sums allocations and provide a quantification of the efficiency gain, due to the incompleteness of data at this stage. No financing year has been closed yet and monitoring data is still insufficient, due to the length of the projects' lifecycle.

Views expressed in interviews and in position papers submitted via the public consultation confirm that the introduction of new types of smaller grants under the current programme is welcomed and that the Erasmus Accreditation, introduced in the fields of school education, VET, adult education and youth, constitutes another important area of simplification. Furthermore, public consultation respondents very familiar with the programme either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that the user-friendliness of the grant application to the programme has improved (64%); the management of the programme has been effectively simplified (61%); and the user-friendliness of the guidance and support tools (namely IT tools, Programme Guide, etc.) has generally improved over time (57%).

[292] The indicator 'time to award' has passed from an average of around 142 days for 2014-2020 KA2 actions to around 130 for KA2 actions in the period 2021-2023, reaching 115 days under Call 2023. Considering that the overall number of number FTEs employed at the NAs has remained stable across both programming periods (only a 3% increase), this improvement is likely to be (at least partially) attributed also to the simplification brought by the assessment of the new funding model, considering also the challenging start of the 2021-2027 programme.

According to consulted stakeholders, further areas for simplification and improvement related to funding modalities include:

- Simplification of grant agreements is needed, particularly for smaller-size grants, for which they appear to be disproportionately complex;
- Green top-up for individual mobilities is insufficient to cover the actual costs that green mobility entails;
- The administrative workload for the project submission under KA2 directly managed actions is too heavy for grassroots organisations with limited capacity.

All national reports suggest that there have been some improvements in the efficiency of the programme's management architecture; preliminary results of the legal base indicator monitoring the 'share of organisations and institutions considering that procedures for taking part in the programme are proportionate and simple' are promising and well above targets (settling around 92% across sectors in 2022 [293]). However, all countries participating in the programme describe challenges in the administration, implementation and reporting architecture.

The new accreditation scheme is assessed very favourably across most (28) national reports [294]. The reports acknowledge its role in significantly streamlining the application process and programme management, facilitating long-term planning and financial security and increasing trust among (potential) partners. The simplification logic of accreditations is based on avoiding repetitive procedures that do not bring an added value for quality of implementation. The approach is based on the experience of the 2014-2020 programme and its predecessors where accreditation schemes were present in some[295], but not all fields.

The most directly visible savings take place at application stage. Recurrent beneficiaries, which make up a large portion of Erasmus+ target groups, are accredited once and can then apply for funding under a simplified procedure, which does not require repetition of the qualitative part of the assessment, which is time-consuming and incurs significant costs for payment of external assessors. In fact, grant requests for accredited projects are assessed by NA staff only, while applications for non-accredited project proposals are normally assessed by 2 external expert assessors, this translates in shorter and less expensive assessment procedures for non-accredited projects. It is estimated that the indicative savings for assessing accredited projects under 2021-2024 Calls is between EUR 1 million and EUR 5 million [296]. These estimated savings increase every year when accredited applicants use their accreditation to make a new simplified funding request, thus becoming higher and more visible in the second part of the programming period. In fact, an 'Erasmus accreditation' is assessed only once in the programming period (one-off cost), potentially generating several projects over 7 years. This

[293] Programme Performance Statement, EU core performance indicators table.
[294] AT, BEde, BEfr, BEnl, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SK, SI, TR.
[295] In higher education mobility (ECHE) and partly in VET mobility.
[296] This estimation is based on a total of 40 659 accredited projects (contracted at 24 February 2025) and 17 491 organisations awarded with an Erasmus Accreditation in the period 2020-2023 (the accreditations issued in 2024 are excluded from this calculation because they are issued at the end of year for the next call). The estimation is calculated by assuming that in absence of accreditations, all accredited projects would have to be evaluated at a cost ranging between evaluation cost for a non-accredited project application and an accreditation application. Indeed, accredited projects include applications of varying sizes from small simple projects with grants below EUR 60 000 to large consortia with high grants and hundreds of mobility activities. For example, the average grant for accredited projects contracted in the period 2021-2024 is slightly above EUR 70 000, while the one for non-accredited projects is around EUR 34 000. Similarly, the number of learning mobility supported by the accredited projects (KA121 and KA151) contracted in the same period is more than the double of those facilitated by the corresponding type of non-accredited projects (KA122, KA152 and KA153).

generates savings, as without the scheme, the number of projects undergoing a full assessment process would be much higher than currently is.

At level of beneficiary organisations, accredited organisations may gain indicatively about 70% time to prepare a grant request instead of submitting a full application form [297]. Despite the incompleteness of 2023 data at the cut-off date of the evaluation, the number of accredited projects contracted under 2023 Call is three times compared to those contracted in 2021 (from 4 567 in 2021 to 12 236 in 2023), while the number of non-accredited projects has remained quite stable (from 5 399 in 2021 to 5 812 in 2023) [298].

Efficiency gains are also noted at level of performance indicators applied to the selection procedure performed by NAs. The average time to award and notify selection results of non-accredited projects in VET, school, adult education and youth sectors is slightly higher compared to accredited ones and is even bigger within E&T sectors, which include the highest proportion of accredited projects, compared to non-accredited one [299].

4.1.2.4 Cost-effectiveness

The cost-effectiveness analysis is conducted using a multi-step approach, identifying inputs and benefits (results and added value) and, where possible, comparing with other similar instruments. The analysis is carried out for the main actions, though to a different extent based on available data and evidence. However, due to the absence of monetised outcomes, a formal cost-benefit analysis could not be performed. The analysis should also be read in the light of the caveats described in section 1.1.4, particularly for key action 2, key action 3 and Jean Monnet actions, where part of collected evidence is qualitative and based on perceptions.

Erasmus+ 2014-2020

- ***Cost-effectiveness of key action 1***

Under the 2014-2020 programme the average cost of learners' mobility was approximately EUR 16 per day, while the average daily cost of staff mobility was EUR 180 (KA1, indirect management). Compared to the average cost highlighted in the mid-term evaluation of the 2014-2020 programme, the average cost per day has remained quite stable in second part of the programming period (from EUR 16 per day in 2016 to around EUR 17 per day in 2020), while for staff, the daily cost has increased from an average of EUR 171 in 2016 to EUR 204 in 2020. Notable differences among sectors can be observed, in particular, for staff mobilities, with an average daily cost ranging from EUR 230, in the adult and school education sectors, to EUR 102 in the youth field.

[297] This is calculated on the basis of structure of the grant request for accredited organisation (4 tables, out of which 3 concern activities and costs, no textual information required) against the structure of a full application form for KA1 proposals (27 free text questions, 9 tables out of which 8 concerning activities, participants and costs).
[298] Contracted accredited projects are as follows: 4 567 under Call year 2021, 7 923 under Call year 2022, and 12 236 in 2023. Non-accredited projects were contracted as follows: 5 399 under Call year 2021, 7 822 in 2022, and 5 812 in 2023.
[299] On average, the results of non-accredited projects in VET, SCH, ADU and Youth require about +20 days to be notified compared to accredited ones, while the indicator 'time to award' presents a +4 days difference for non-accredited projects. The difference is higher in the E&T sectors: in average, the award and results notification of non-accredited projects required respectively +9 and +26 days compared to accredited ones. This difference reflects the time savings only partially because the National Agencies tend to wait with notifications to accredited projects until the non-accredited selection reaches a late stage and they are able to identify any leftover funds that should be transferred to accredited projects. The quicker notification of selection results is also confirmed by at least one Case study (E29 (formerly, Ifjúsági Nomád Klub) (YOU, HU))

This difference between the average cost of staff and learners' mobility is due to the shorter average duration of staff mobility (6.2 days) and the higher subsistence costs [300]. Compared to the mid-term evaluation, between 2016 and 2020, the average grant per mobility has increased of 19% for learners and 20% staff, ending with an average grant of EUR 1 743 for learners and EUR 1 274 for staff in 2020 [301].

A benchmarking has been carried out against the funding for learning mobility provided by the Nordplus programme in the higher education sector (students and teachers) [302]. The average mobility grant provided by Nordplus for teachers in the academic year 2018/2019 amounted to EUR 610, with an average daily grant of EUR 119 for an average duration similar to Erasmus+, which is lower than the average grant provided by Erasmus+ for higher education staff in the same period (EUR 950, for an average duration of 5.2 days, EUR 184 per day). On the other hand, the daily cost of student mobilities appears higher under Nordplus (EUR 22.84 per day, average grant of EUR 1 176, and average duration of 51.5 days) compared to Erasmus+ (EUR 12.17 per day, average grant of 1 880,64, average duration of 154.5 days). Close to 70% of the student mobility awarded under Nordplus in the same period had an average duration of 6.9 days, with a daily grant of EUR 169.49, while only 28% of Nordplus student mobility had a comparable average duration (151 days) with a much lower daily grant of EUR 7.78/day. Considering the proportion of grants for longer mobilities, the broader geographical scope, the volume of mobilities, the variety of activities and the benefits derived in terms of skills acquisition, Erasmus+ costs appear highly competitive.

Box 8 - The Fulbright programme [303]

The Fulbright Program is an international academic exchange program administered by the US Department of State in partnership with more than 160 countries worldwide. The Fulbright student program is open to U.S. and non-U.S. graduate students, graduating seniors, artists, and early-career professionals. The Fulbright also support Teacher Exchanges providing opportunities for U.S. and international educators to develop their educational practice. Colleges, universities, and research institutions, both in the United States and abroad, serve as hosts and share costs to support the academic and professional development of Fulbrighters.

In the period 2018-2020, the Fulbright programme benefitted only around 28 000 grantees, both US citizens and foreign grantees, including students, research scholars, teacher exchanges, lecturing scholars, Hubert H. Humphrey Program, seminars. The total funding for this period was around EUR 1.2 billion. In the fiscal year 2019-2020, teacher exchanges were 348, while students were 5 788.

In the same period 2018-2020, Erasmus+ funded learning mobility activities of more than 2.3 million learners and staff (KA1) in the higher education, VET, school education, adult education and youth sectors, contracting more than EUR 5.7 billion. Out of this, only in the higher education sector, Erasmus+ supported more than 1.2 million students and staff, including from third countries not associated to the programme, contracting EUR 3.2 billion.

[300] Staff mobilities might be used mainly for the short-term, which may be easier to access mobilities (e.g. shorter absence from place of employment, family reasons…). Evidence is, however, insufficient to understand whether this is due to lack of awareness or more practical reasons). Another factor influencing the lower mobilities costs for learners is the large numbers of learner mobilities in higher education, which have relatively long duration and are relatively low cost (since they are designed to supplement other sources of funding/income).

[301] Differences with mid-term evaluation of the programme are also due to the incompleteness of the dataset used at that time regarding the number of completed mobility, which is likely to determine the difference in average cost for staff mobility.

[302] Nordplus offers mobility activities within three sub-programmes: Higher Education, Adult (informal, unformal, formal adult education including vocational training), Junior (preschool, school up to upper secondary level including vocational training). Higher Education being the largest sub-programme regarding both grants and mobility followed by Junior. Cost per individual is only possible in Higher Education when it comes to individual mobility (for teachers and students).

[303] Source : ICF support study and Fulbright 2020 annual report: fulbrightar_2020_web.pdf

KA1 activities are consistently identified as the most effective actions targeting learners and staff across all fields, according to NA/EACEA survey[304], with high performance at level of output and result indicators and **no substantial areas of inefficiency**, thanks also to the use of simplified cost (unit costs), providing predictability of cost coverage to final beneficiaries. Observed benefits of participation in learning mobilities are described under section 4.1.1.2 and touch a wide range of skills and competences. Although no quantification is possible, these benefits can contribute to build more skilled labour forces and more cohesive societies, providing benefits much beyond the individuals who directly benefit from them. The competitiveness of the cost and the EU added value generated by the lack of comparable alternatives show the very high cost-effectiveness of KA1 learning mobilities.

Differently from the other KA1 mobility actions, **Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees (**EMJMD) was implemented under direct management and partially funded, through external policy instruments [305]. In the 2014-2020 programming period, it offered to over 17 000 scholarship holders from all over the world the opportunity to take part in high-level integrated international study programmes. In total, over 60 000 mobilities took place[306]. The average grant of mobility was EUR 74 per day (increasing from EUR 69 in the first two years of the programming period to EUR 96 in 2020), while the average grant per mobility amounted at EUR 12 500 [307], which is higher than the average amount granted to students for international credit mobility (indirect management) (EUR 4 273.65). The available evidence (mainly qualitative) suggests that the action delivered **positive changes, both at individual and organisational levels,** ranging from enhanced competencies, improved career prospects, personal growth, more positive attitudes towards Europe and the EU, deeper subject matter expertise and enhancing international cooperation among higher education institutions worldwide.

- ***Cost-effectiveness of key action 2***

By the end of the programming period, Erasmus+ had granted EUR 5.4 billion to over 25 300 [308] **cooperation projects among organisations and institutions (KA2).** As observed during the mid-term evaluation carried out in 2017, the variety of projects and activities funded under this key action, the difference between types and size of projects across sectors, as well as the differentiated budget items, makes the analysis more complex and prevents to generalise, contrarily from learning mobility activities. Furthermore, no comparable intervention was identified for benchmarking project costs.

[304] Respondents to this survey were asked to identify the three most effective and least effective types of action for learners, staff, organisations and systems per sector: higher education (n=28), VET (n=27), school education (n=32), adult education (n=26), youth (n=29), sport (n=19).
[305] An EMJMD is a high-level integrated international study programme, delivered by an international consortium of HEIs from different countries and, where relevant, other educational and/or non-educational partners with specific expertise and interest in the study areas/professional domains covered by the joint programme. The action supports the following activities: i) the delivery of an EMJMD programme corresponding to 60, 90 or 120 ECTS credits, organised through an international consortium of HEIs including the participation of invited scholars (guest lecturers) for teaching, training and/or research purposes; ii) the award of scholarships to excellent students worldwide for their participation in one of these EMJMD programmes.
[306] One scholarship holder takes part in several mobilities during the enrolment in the study programme, apart from the fact that the great majority of them are recruited from a different country than the one where the programme begins; therefore, the format is substantially different from learning mobility activities implemented under indirect management.
[307] The average grant per scholarship for the overall duration of the EMJMD study programme (normally 2 academic years) amounts at EUR 25 000.
[308] The figure does not include projects funded under the Sport chapter.

Strategic partnerships (indirect management) were the main KA2 action type, representing 90% of KA2 contracted projects and 72% of contracted grants**.** The average grant of Strategic partnership projects ranged between EUR 190 000, at the beginning of the programming period, to EUR 175 000 in 2020. Although the average grant per project varied quite importantly across sectors, programme data show a higher average grant in sectors such as higher education, VET and school education, lower ranges for adult education projects, and much smaller (but increasing) average grants in the youth field. The number of contracted projects increased steadily in the seven years of programme implementation for all sectors involved. The low success rates, ranging from 17% in youth to 36% in the school sector, demonstrate the high interest and the high demand for the action, which should be matched with the benefits generated for organisations and staff illustrated in sections 4.1.1.1. and 4.1.1.4.

Knowledge Alliances were among the large-scale partnerships funded under KA2 since the beginning of the 2014-2020 programming period under direct management. In total, 160 projects involving 1 769 organisations have been contracted until 2020, for a total of over EUR 147 million, and an average cost of around EUR 920 000. The yearly allocation to the action was increasing from year to year, together with the number of funded projects and average size of grants, showing the tendency to go towards bigger scale projects. The action only represented 1% of KA2 contracted projects and 3% of contracted grants, but contributed significantly to achieve programme objectives, particularly in boosting cooperation between universities and business. The cost-effectiveness analysis carried out for the action in a recent study[309] shows that the number of countries and participating organisations had little impact on the size of the awarded grant, highlighting that the cost-effectiveness of the action should be analysed in terms of the achieved project goals. Most projects were well focused on the intended goal of the action, addressing the development of new innovative and multidisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning, promotion of entrepreneurship and knowledge exchange, highly contributing to the different areas of university-business cooperation. On average, the funded projects obtained high evaluation score regardless of the size of the grant, suggesting their successful implementation.

Capacity building actions were implemented in the higher education and youth sectors under direct management, through funds from external cooperation instruments. The action represents 7% of KA2 contracted projects and 17% of KA2 contracted grants, supporting in total 1 830 projects, with an average grant of EUR 190 000 in higher education and between 44 000 and 135 000 in youth. The action provided European added value in enhancing international cooperation in the fields of higher education and youth, promoting EU values and supporting the role of EU as global actor leveraging the role of education.

Under KA2, the programme was also funding **platforms to facilitate the online cooperation in the school and adult education sectors, such as eTwinning and EPALE**. The cost for set-up, maintenance and community management amounted at EUR 15.5 million for the eTwinning platform and at EUR 9.7 million for EPALE for the whole 2014-2020 programming period, generating a large community of users for virtual cooperation across Europe and beyond. The relative low cost of this collaborative platform, compared with the increased functionalities and the continuous growth in terms of registered users, suggests that these activities are particularly cost-effective. The eTwinning community continued to grow, reaching towards the end of the programming period an overall number of over 760 000

[309] European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Kirdulytė, G., Abozeid, O., Abraham, E., Buitrago, H. et al., Assessment of the instruments, deliverables, results and impact of university business cooperation – Final report. Publications Office of the European Union, 2024, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/514543

registrants, proving how the platform stepped up the support to teachers and fostered exchanges. Similarly, in the last few years of programme implementation, EPALE developed further the discussion and exchange of good practice between stakeholders involved in areas such as basic skills, outreach and guidance as well as innovative teaching methods. The number of users continued growing reaching 61 000 by the end of 2019 [310].

Based on available (mainly qualitative) evidence, **KA2 activities have been instrumental to contribute to programme results and impacts at organisational level**, supporting programme objectives on international cooperation with third countries in higher education and youth, reinforcing cooperation with business, enhancing internationalisation, and improving learning and teaching methods. The high demand and the lack of comparable interventions, both in terms of scope and types of activities covered, mark its European added value, showing a general cost-effectiveness. The funding model in place for KA2 activities, mostly based on unit costs and real costs, led to some inefficiencies which have been tackled in the current programming period through the introduction of a lump-sum funding model. Other inefficiencies concern the complex mechanism of the School Exchange Partnership (KA229, indirect management), which required that each participating organisation involved in a selected project had to sign a separate (mono-beneficiary) grant agreement. The action was facilitating exchanges of school classroom and mobility of pupils, which in the 2021-2027 has been moved under KA1, thus harmonising the format of the KA2 school cooperation partnership to those of the other sectors.

- ***Cost-effectiveness of key action 3***

KA3 includes a very diversified spectrum of actions and activities, both in terms of outputs (e.g. transnational projects, networks, evidence-based activities), and funding mechanisms (e.g. open calls for proposals, calls addressing identified beneficiaries, public procurements, contribution agreements with international organisations). This makes it challenging to perform an analysis at level of the key action and draw uniform conclusions. Because of these features, the analysis below only takes into account some of the main actions implemented under KA3, which can be representative of its costs and benefits.

In total, EUR 494.5 million have been granted to KA3 activities, corresponding to around 3% of the total contracted grants during the 2014-2020 programming period. 90% of KA3 contracted grants went to activities under direct management, while one youth action '**Youth dialogue**' was under **indirect management**. This activity granted around EUR 51.7 million to over 1 900 projects, benefitting around 442 000 young people. It fostered the active participation of young people in democratic life in Europe, offering opportunities of interaction and dialogue with decision-makers on topics and themes aligned with those set in the EU Youth Strategy. The action had similar implementation and funding rules as learning mobility, making use of unit cost. The average daily cost per participant was around EUR 44, therefore higher than learning mobilities for learners under KA1. This was due to the shorter duration of the activities, which was on average 2-3 days (mostly participation in meetings, events, seminars, consultation activities or debates). Despite the limited budget, the action proved effective in supporting the programme (youth) objectives of fostering active citizenship and involvement in democratic life, benefitting participants in terms of acquisition of soft skills (problem solving, autonomy) beyond its objectives and generating high demand (31% success rate in 2020).

[310] The number of users continues growing in the current programming period reaching 139 000 at the end of 2023, showing that this one-off cost continues producing benefit over time and beyond the programming period.

The activities implemented by means of open calls for proposals under direct management included **experimentation actions funding initiatives for policy innovation**, aimed to develop new policies or prepare their implementation. Under this heading, the programme contracted 36% of KA3 grants, funding around 300 projects and involving over 2 500 organisations. More than half of the projects supported under this heading were contracted under the Calls on social inclusion and common values, implemented between 2016 and 2020 to contribute to the Paris Declaration. The action supported 180 projects, involving 1 380 organisations, for total grants of EUR 78 million, with the highest value of contracted grants in 2020 (close to EUR 22 million). Examples from funded projects show effectiveness in supporting programme objectives and deliver systemic impact, influencing EU policy initiatives (see section 4.1.1.4, box 5). Similarly, effective contribution to the delivery of policy/systemic impact is shown by policy experimentation activities [311], supporting the development of practices with impact on national education systems (see section 4.1.1.4, box 4).

Another action implemented by means of open Calls for proposals (direct management) was **European Youth Together**. The action aimed at creating networks promoting regional partnerships for youth organisations, both from grassroot to large-scale level, to share their ideas about the EU, encourage wider civic participation and help foster a sense of European citizenship. 37 of such cross-border partnerships were supported by the programme, for a total grant of over EUR 14 million (average size in terms of grant around EUR 400 000). The number of applications raising from call to call between 2018 and 2020, showed the appreciation and high interest for this action. In line with the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 and the European Youth Goals, the action built or strengthened partnerships focusing on solidarity and inclusive democratic participation and empowered youth organisations by supporting new innovative ways of cooperation.

Around 48% of KA3 contracted grants (around EUR 237 million) was awarded through national allocations, with grants awarded through non-competitive procedures. These included **activities supporting transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications,** which included support to e.g. the implementation of the EQF recommendation [312]. The programme provided grants for EQF National Coordination Points ("NCPs"), with a total multi-annual allocation of EUR 4.5 million under the 2018 Erasmus+ Annual Work Programme for three years implementation (national allocations to 38 countries, withing a range of EUR 39 000 and EUR 268 000). The average contracted amounts were within a range of EUR 20 000-60 000 per year/country, representing a maximum EU co-financing of 75 % (requiring a national contribution of at least 25%). These grants are deemed adequate by the EQF evaluation, which reports the EU funding provided by Erasmus+ as often mentioned as a main source for activities for EQF implementation [313]. An area of improvement lies in the use of real cost, which made the implementation burdensome for beneficiary organisations.

Under KA3, **Erasmus+ 2014-2020 also supported activities contributing to evidence-based policy knowledge and coordination in the E&T and Youth field**, providing financial support

[311] These activities were normally led by high-level public authorities, involving field trials on policy measures in several countries, based on sound evaluation methods. Overall, 37 policy experimentations projects (EUR 58.8 million) were funded in the period 2014-2020.
[312] Council Recommendation of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, OJ C 189 of 15.6.2017.
[313] Evaluation of the Council Recommendation of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (SWD (2024) 141).

to the national Eurydice network units[314] and the Youth Wiki National Correspondents Network [315]. The funding provided for these activities corresponds to about 6% of KA3 contracted grants (EUR 31 million). Qualitative evidence suggests these actions are effective to support knowledge-based policy coordination and provided European added value, as without programme support Member States alone wouldn't be able to support tools for knowledge sharing like the youth wiki.

The collected evidence is not sufficient to express firm conclusions on the cost-effectiveness of the entirety of KA3. However, the available evidence suggests a reasonable cost-effectiveness, given by the limited funding they represent coupled with significant system level benefits , support to policy objectives and fostering active citizenship. Consulted stakeholders perceive them as delivering high added value due to their role in supporting EU policy coordination in programme fields, implementation of EU tools, creation of networks, which could not be achieved without the programme intervention. The challenges related to these actions rely in their diversified character, which generates multiple sub-actions with small budgetary envelopes and the use, in some cases, of real costs.

Erasmus+ 2021-2027

- ***Cost-effectiveness of key action 1***

The **average cost of learners' mobilities under the current programme (2021-2023) is approximatively EUR 22 per day, while staff mobilities cost around EUR 215 per day**. Similarly to the 2014-2020 programme, the higher cost of staff mobility is largely due to their shorter average duration and higher subsistence costs (shorter mobilities tend to have a higher average cost per day, moreover, by design of the actions, individual support for staff is often higher than the corresponding unit costs for learners) [316]. The short-term **benefits** of staff mobilities extend beyond personal development, as they also deliver immediate benefits for their organisations, colleagues and the learners they engage with. Short-term benefits and impacts of learner mobilities primarily focus on development of skills and competences as well as employment prospects [317], although longer-term and higher-level benefits are expected from supporting the development of a more skilled, cohesive, innovative and competitive society through more skilled individuals.

Despite the lack of directly comparable alternatives[318], the **unit costs of learner and staff mobilities appear competitive and comparable to those for the previous programming**

[314] The goal of Eurydice network is to contribute towards a better mutual understanding of education systems in Europe through the production of country specific information, comparable country descriptions, indicators and comparative studies in the field of education and training (https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems).
[315] In line with the EU Youth Strategy and the objective of improving the knowledge on youth issues in Europe, Erasmus+ 2014-2020 provided an action grant to the structures of National correspondents ensuring the support needed to create and maintain a Youth Wiki tool on youth policies in Europe. The National correspondents are designated by each national authority, located in a participating country (https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki).
[316] See footnote 321. The design of staff and learners' mobility has not changed much between programming periods, therefore the same explanation regarding the different duration and costs of between staff and learners' mobility apply also to the 2021-2027 programme.
[317] Around half of the case studies provided evidence of short-term benefits for learners that were focused on the individual and this was consistent across all fields.
[318] Programmes taken into account for comparing learning mobility costs are CEEPUS, Visegrad Fund, Nordplus and EEA and Norway grants, while EU added value has been compared with additional 15 programmes as indicated in section 4.2.1. As noted in ICF support study, Erasmus+ presents a much more extensive coverage across multiple countries, sectors, fields, target groups and activities. Other programmes tend to have a more

period, as estimated in the mid-term evaluation of the 2014-2020 programme and in the section above [319]. The rising inflation and increasing costs of living from 2021 have led to an 8% increase in average grants value between 2021 and 2023, both for staff and learners mobilities across all fields[320]. Challenges linked to rising inflation are not unique to Erasmus+ and are not considered likely to have negatively affected the cost-effectiveness of KA1 activities compared to other similar programmes. Stakeholders suggest that further increasing both the 'green top-ups' and the top-ups for participants facing fewer opportunities, could ensure a better coverage of these costs. These aspects could further improve the programme's effectiveness with regards to its sustainability and inclusivity.

Stakeholder consultations also suggest that the cost-effectiveness of mobility activities has improved between both programming periods. This is largely due to the accreditation scheme, which has simplified access to KA1 funding in all E&T sectors and youth, and reduced the cost and administrative burden for beneficiary organisations and implementing bodies. As indicated in section 4.1.2.2, the Erasmus Accreditation has produced savings related to the assessment of KA1 proposals estimated between EUR 1 and 5 million for the period 2021-2023, reducing of indicatively 70% time required by beneficiary organisations to submit grant request. These elements together with the benefits yielded as organisational growth for the holding organisations and the implementation of high-quality mobility activities for learners and staff mark a very high cost-effectiveness.

- ***Cost-effectiveness of key action 2***

The variety of **KA2** outputs makes it challenging to assess costs and to draw meaningful comparisons with other programmes. Nevertheless, the analysis suggests a positive cost-effectiveness judgement. Drawing on the assessment carried out under the effectiveness criterion, Cooperation Partnerships are viewed as effective across a broad spectrum of stakeholders[321], particularly in VET, school education, and sport. Small-scale partnerships are similarly viewed as effective, in particular in school education and youth. Data show a trend towards funding fewer projects, involving fewer organisations, with larger grants. This trend is more evident for Small-scale Partnerships in school education and youth, and for Cooperation Partnerships in youth and sport. Also, the demand for KA2 activities has exceeded the initial funding allocated in the 2021-2023 period (EUR 1.79 billion), despite the 20% increase compared to the predecessor programme.

The introduction of the **lump sum model** was positively received as it reduces the administrative burden, however, some concerns are raised. Some national reports mention that this funding model encourages "application factories" to submit more proposals for financial gain [322], and stressed the importance of fraud prevention procedures for participating

specific focus on particular sectors and/or geographies, and do not have the same broad scope as the Erasmus+ programme, which remains the largest programme of its kind in terms of participant numbers and coverage of different countries and sectors. For this reason, a proper benchmarking analysis can only be done with a programme similar in scope and activities, such as the predecessor programme.

[319] Under 2021 Call, the average grant of both learners and staff mobility is slightly lower compared to those performed under 2020 Call (respectively -7% and -2%); however, both 2020 and 2021 Calls were heavily impacted by Covid-19, therefore this factor should be taken into account in the comparison both between these two years and the rest of the period. Furthermore, the number of completed mobility under 2022 and 2023 Calls is still very high, which doesn't allow at the moment a more complete comparison with the 2014-2020 programme.

[320] Average grant value increasing from EUR 1 626 in 2021 to EUR 1,632 in 2022 and EUR 1 760 in 2023 per mobility for learners, and from EUR 1 245 in 2021 to EUR 1,318 in 2022 and EUR 1 341 for staff mobilities.

[321] Evidence from the NA/ECEA survey, key informant interviews, and case studies.

[322] AT, IE, NO.

countries [323]. Few reports indicate that the use of the lump sum model has introduced uncertainty regarding activity eligibility, justification and flexibility, potentially reducing its advantages, with further clarifications needed [324]. Further simplifying the requirements for application, implementation and reporting of actions under direct management could also allow wider participation of small organisations in the youth and sport field [325], improving the cost-effectiveness of these activities.

- ***Cost-effectiveness of key action 3***

The cost-effectiveness analysis of **KA3** is partial and mainly based on a qualitative analysis, due to the diversified character of the activities it supports (see also in Annex VI).

Given their support and policy character, KA3 activities, predominantly institutionally focused, are perceived as more effective at system level (see also section 4.1.1.4), while their effectiveness appears lower or harder to assess at the level of individual participants. This also entails lower awareness from the majority of Erasmus+ stakeholders and citizens, as reflected in the public consultation, where the majority of respondents (62%) had no opinion or were uncertain in relation to their cost-effectiveness, and only one third of respondents (35%) considered them cost-effective [326]. Evidence from case studies confirms that these activities are viewed positively in terms of effectiveness at system and policy level. In the **youth** sector, case studies suggest that KA3 projects have brought benefits in bringing learners and policy makers together, improved engagement and participation, and have led to increased knowledge and skills. Overall, the outputs of KA3 activities have helped develop and shape strategies and policies at both organisational and systemic level, with consequent benefits on both levels [327].

Based on views and experiences shared by stakeholders, a broader adoption of lump sum for the activities under indirect management could provide additional simplification. A shift from real cost to lump sum was applied to Eurodesk information centres, national VET teams and SALTO resource centres in 2022, while Training and Cooperation Activities (TCAs) are still implemented with real cost. While evidence is still preliminary, the adoption of simplified grants seems to have increased the cost-effectiveness of the funded activities, reducing the administrative burden for National Agencies.

- ***Cost-effectiveness of Jean Monnet Actions***

Also, in the case of **JMAs**, only a partial cost-effectiveness analysis could be carried out, mainly based on qualitative feedback from case studies and interviews. Furthermore, no comparable activities funded through other programmes were identified. The budget allocations for JMAs shows that the funding distribution across its different strands is similar to the previous programming period, while the qualitative evidence from interviews and case studies suggests that JMAs are generally perceived to be effective, thanks in particular to the solidly established higher education strand. JMAs are also deemed to yield European added value in terms of raising awareness, knowledge and understanding of the EU and increase participation in democratic processes, both within Europe and beyond (see section 4.1.1.4). Despite some initial difficulties, the new actions in the school and VET fields have seen

[323] AT, DE, IE, LI, NO.
[324] DE, LV, NL.
[325] Highlighted in particular in the stakeholders' workshop on the draft final report of ICF study of 9 July 2024.
[326] Out of 1 092 respondents to the public consultation, 35% agreed' or 'fully agreed' that support policy reforms in the education, training, youth and sport sectors (KA3) are cost-effective.
[327] Case studies Youth for Exchange and Understanding International (YOU, BE), Edlab, Universidad de Granada (HED, ES), Youth Wiki (YOU, MT, FR, CY).

progressive improvements and show some initial positive results. The delivery mechanisms of these new actions could be re-assessed once more data is available to further improve their cost-effectiveness.

4.1.2.5 Monitoring mechanisms

Erasmus+ 2014-2020

Stakeholders consulted for the mid-term evaluation of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 found the monitoring framework of the previous programme overly complex and called for streamlining, particularly regarding the monitoring responsibilities of National Agencies for actions under indirect management (about 80% of the programme's budget). Similarly, while acknowledging improvements compared to the predecessor programmes, various limitations were highlighted regarding the 23 indicators in Annex I of the 2014-2020 regulation. These limitations encompassed the inadequate coverage of specific actions, such as KA2, of the organisational level of the intervention [328] and difficulties to link the measurement of system level indicators to the interventions [329]. This underscored the need for a more refined and comprehensive approach.

Erasmus+ 2021-2027

The monitoring framework of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 has seen important improvements compared to the previous programming period and appears overall appropriate, with clearly established mechanisms, tools and responsibilities which have been described and further clarified in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of Erasmus+ adopted in 2023.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework took into account the scope for simplification identified in the interim evaluation of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme, while addressing key areas aligned with the programme's intervention logic and the requirements established in Article 23 of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ Regulation. The 15 indicators laid down in the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ Regulation, supplemented with 12 additional indicators introduced with the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/2710, enabled a more **complete overview of programme performance**. The newly introduced indicators allowed to cover in a uniform way aspects related to all Erasmus+ horizontal priorities, with a special focus on inclusion (in line with the Erasmus+ regulation) and improved the tracking of performance and impact of the programme through the introduction of specific results and impact indicators[330]. This represented one of the major improvements compared to the monitoring framework of the previous programme. A gap at level of formally established indicators is identified for Jean Monnet Actions, for which used indicators are not associated with yearly milestones or final targets.

[328] The only indicators addressing KA2 refer to the number of organisations and pupils participating in the School Exchange Partnerships (KA229).

[329] This is the case of the four indicators concerning i) Europe 2020 headline education target, which were based on national data not linked with Erasmus+ intervention, and ii) Mobility benchmark, in line with the Council conclusions on a benchmark for learning mobility to which Erasmus+ clearly contributed but that were supposed to include also data stemming from other interventions (see section 4.1.1.4).

[330] The additional output and result indicators are operationalised in the same way as the legal basis indicators they complement, i.e. on the basis of data from application forms, programme tools, and participants reports. As indicated in the SWD(2023) 296, reporting on the two additional impact indicators is planned in narrative only. Their measurement is carried out based on activities run by contractors in charge of the evaluations with additional data collected through ad hoc studies performed by the Commission or evaluations and studies run by the National Agencies and the RAY network (Youth). The activities described in section 5.2.2 also aim to enhance the measurement of these indicators in view of the final evaluation of the programme.

Overall, **satisfaction in terms of the effectiveness of monitoring indicators and reporting** is expressed by 71% of respondents to the NAs/EACEA survey, who agreed that the monitoring indicators defined in the current Erasmus+ legal framework ensure an effective measurement of the progress made in the implementation of the programme. This represents a considerable improvement (up from 30%) compared to the results of the same survey carried out for the mid-term evaluation of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 [331]. At the same time, several National Agencies and some national reports [332] consider that the emphasis on quantitative outputs is still high, whilst qualitative information is used to a much lesser extent. This approach is considered to fall short of capturing the impact of the programme, particularly in the areas like behavioural change, development of soft skills and long-term influence on participants and organisations. The meta-analyses and desk research carried out for the evaluation confirmed such gaps. Quantitative studies making use of counter-factual methodology for the analysis of the organisational and system-level impacts of Erasmus+ are scarce. A research gap exists also around the topic of EU values, where no research paper making use of recent datasets and fitting with the required methodology could be found. This highlights the need of more targeted research activities to ensure improved monitoring and evaluations in the future, based on comparable cross-country analyses.

Overall, the **monitoring mechanisms of the current programme are effective** when it comes to providing an up-to-date view of programme implementation to the Commission services, implementing bodies and national authorities, but also to the general public, through the recently launched data visualisation page on Europa. Furthermore, as part of their tasks under both programme generations, National Agencies implement a range of monitoring activities, combining project on-site visits, primary checks, financial audit and ongoing support to ensure project quality and compliance, as underlined in national reports. In parallel, National Agencies carry out evidence-based activities through surveys, studies and research concerning the fields under their responsibility. In the youth field, these activities are coordinated under a single network covering all National Agencies managing the youth field (RAY); however, with exception of a recently set up network under the adult education sector [333], no similar coordination exists across National Agencies managing Education and Training sectors.

Some **areas for improvements** for the 2021-2027 programme have been identified, namely:

- Continue the simplification effort in reporting and monitoring requirements, that are still perceived by stakeholders as workload-heavy and sometimes cumbersome;
- Further strengthen monitoring mechanisms, going beyond output and results indicators, undertaking robust quantitative studies examining Erasmus+ long-term results and impacts at individual, organisational and system-level[334];
- Ensure stability and continuous improvement of IT landscape used for actions under indirect management (see also section 4.1.2.3). This emerges as one of the main issues that has hindered the first years of current programme implementation, impacting data collection, and increasing the administrative burden of National Agencies and beneficiaries;
- Better utilise the wealth of monitoring data collected and integrate feedback into programme design and policymaking.

[331] Combined evaluation of Erasmus+ and predecessor programmes, Annex 4 Results of programme agencies survey.
[332] Seven reports (BEde, BEnl, BG, CY, EE, LU, PL) state that the current programme indicators are primarily financial and output-oriented, focusing on quantifiable results mostly.
[333] Research-based Impact Analysis of Erasmus+ Adult Education programmes (RiA-AE).
[334] Emerging from the NAs/EACEA survey, analysis of national reports and meta-analyses results.

4.1.2.6 Anti-fraud measures

This section analyses jointly both programming periods, highlighting differences or trends, where needed. This approach is required by the strong continuity of the intervention, with limited changes between programme generations, reflected in feedback from stakeholders and national reports.

The mid-term evaluation of the 2014-2020 programme determined that the anti-fraud measures in place were robust for the most part, with the Commission's anti-fraud strategy providing the overall framework for preventing and detecting fraud.

National Agencies have clear guidelines[335] on dealing with fraud and minimum requirements, with high compliance rates reported in their yearly reports, particularly as regards the follow-up of identified cases of irregularity and fraud. 45% of respondents to the NAs/EACEA survey find the current anti-fraud measures appropriate for preventing and timely detecting suspicions of irregularity and fraud, while the remaining share considers them partially appropriate (47%) or not appropriate (9%). The survey also revealed some concerns and suggestions for improvement, identified in the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to create applications, multiple submissions from the same organization, and the new 'lump sum' grant scheme. To address these issues, respondents suggested improving the anti-plagiarism software available for EACEA and National Agencies, providing clearer rules and guidelines, and increasing cooperation between National Agencies. They also suggested establishing a specialized working group to address fraud and provide enhanced guidance and training for National Agencies' staff [336].

The mid-term evaluation of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 found that the number of fraudulent cases was very low compared to the total number of projects. This is coherent with the results of the NAs/EACEA survey carried out for this evaluation, in which most respondents from both EACEA and NAs indicate spotting suspicion of irregularity no more than once or twice a year (54%) or even never (29%).

Overall, the review of statistics confirms that the number of fraud and irregularity cases remains low without much variation across the two programming periods. For actions under indirect management, there were no OLAF cases referred by the European Court of Auditors as a result of its audit sampling both for the period 2014-2020 and for 2021-2023. As for actions under direct management, the review of EACEA annual activity reports 2014-2022 reveals a small number of cases and recoveries. This holds also true to indirectly managed actions.

The Commission has taken action to ensure that projects are carried out in line with the highest ethical standards and European values, and the applicable EU, international and national rules. Mechanisms framed by the EU Financial Regulation have been put in place to protect the EU values, including by adding new provisions in the Erasmus+ documents and grant agreements. In line with these provisions, National Agencies are tasked to ensure that indirect management beneficiaries commit to and ensure the respect of basic EU values (such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights, including the rights of minorities), as set out in the grant agreement as from 2023 [337]. EACEA ensures similar vigilance to protect EU budget against breaching these obligations. Rigorous monitoring

[335] NAs' responsibilities and ways of dealing with fraud are defined in the 'Guide for National Agencies implementing the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programmes', annex VI of the Contribution Agreement signed every year between the Commission and each National Agencies. The document is not publicly available.
[336] A consultative National Agencies' working group on risk management has been established in 2024 to discuss in co-creation mode the treatment of dubious cases in view of preventing fraud and irregularities.
[337] These provisions were introduced in the 2023 Guide for National Agencies (annex VI of the Contribution Agreement signed between the Commission and each National Agency).

procedures are implemented through checks and follow-ups on compliance with EU values. This includes regular audits and feedback from individual participants. An assessment of these measures should be carried out at a later stage, after more years of implementation and in the light of the recast of the Financial Regulation, adopted in 2024[338].

The efficiency of anti-fraud measures across both programming periods was covered also in 16 national reports, with 7 [339] considering effective the anti-fraud measures in place and 8 [340] reporting a mixed picture and bringing examples of measures of success and remaining challenges. Identified challenges include the need for more efficient cooperation and information sharing at transnational and national level [341], clearer and more operational guidelines including for risk assessment, inspections and controls [342], and improved digital infrastructure [343].

4.1.3 Coherence

The assessment of the coherence of Erasmus+ is **overall positive**, both internally (compared to its predecessor) and externally (compared to other interventions). This assessment has been informed by 5 evaluation questions that looked into the extent to which:

- the programme's internal coherence improved compared to its predecessor;
- the Erasmus+ objectives were consistent and mutually supportive across fields;
- synergies or duplications between fields and actions existed and were dealt with;
- the structure of KA2 is appropriate and coherent;
- the actions complemented each other;
- Erasmus+ is coherent with relevant policies and programmes and complementary to other interventions in the same fields at EU or national/international levels respectively;
- the evolution of external coherence between the two programming periods is positive.

4.1.3.1 Internal Coherence

Erasmus+ 2014-2020

The final evaluation of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 confirms overall the findings of its mid-term evaluation, with good level of internal coherence. This results from the strong learning dimension that informs all its activities at transnational level, in view of supporting better skills, competences and EU values through learning mobility. The funding addressing internationalisation of organisations and the support to policy development and cooperation in the programme fields is instrumental to the objective of improving E&T, youth and sport systems, for the benefit of individuals and the entire society. From this point of view, the programme overall architecture with its three levels of interventions appears logic and coherent for the delivery of its objectives.

[338] The 2024 Financial Regulation recast introduced an explicit ground under the early detection and exclusion system for excluding entities from receiving EU funds if they have engaged in activities contrary to the values on which the EU is founded, such as incitement to discrimination, hatred, or violence (Article 138(1)(c)(vi) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast), OJ L 2024/2509, 23.9.2024. ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/2509/oj).
[339] CZ, MT, LT, PL, PT, RO, RS.
[340] BEnl, DE, ES, FI, FR, IS, IT, NO. CY report considers too early to assess the impact of these measures.
[341] ES, FI, FR, IT, PT.
[342] ES, FI, IT.
[343] FI, LT, NO.

Support to grassroot sport is coherent with the programme objective of supporting social inclusion through non formal learning with closer links with the youth sector. The sport sector was, however, the only one not directly benefitting from an individual dimension, and not included in the key action system. Both gaps have been addressed in the 2021-2027 programme. Similarly, the separation of Jean Monnet activities from the key actions is found confusing and impractical by stakeholders, with suggestions to integrate them into the structure of key actions [344].

The level of cross-sectoral cooperation has improved throughout the programming period. The connection with businesses has increased, especially in the VET sector, while the adult education sector was the second – after VET – registering the higher level of participation of SMEs in KA2 indirectly managed actions [345]. In line with their objectives, the Knowledge Alliances supported well the university business cooperation, while youth and adult education activities strengthened ties with NGOs and organisations with civic engagement. Moreover, around 5 700 higher education institutions participated in close to 6 000 KA2 projects implemented under indirect management in sectors other than higher education.

The pilots for the Centres of Vocational Excellence and the European Universities alliances, launched in the last two years of the programming period, have further reinforced this cross-sectoral dimension. Their ambition to bring strong systemic and organisational impact in the higher education and VET systems, to enhance learning mobility, support the building of high-quality skills and competences, boost internationalisation and long-term cooperation appears coherent the objectives of the programme and has positively contributed to their achievement.

Erasmus+ 2021-2027

The overall structure of the 2021-2027 programme has remained largely unchanged compared to its predecessor, with most actions being continued, simplified, or only slightly refined. Only few actions were discontinued or newly added [346], thus maintaining a stable and familiar framework for participants. This continuity has contributed to the internal coherence of the programme, which results improved compared to the 2014-2020 programme. Erasmus+ 2014-2020 was the result of the merge of several programmes, which were consolidated into a single comprehensive structure. This merger required substantial adjustments and learning, resulting in initial challenges. In contrast, the changes introduced in Erasmus+ 2021-2027 (see section 2.2) contribute to a more streamlined and integrated structure with a higher degree of consistency and logical alignment with its objectives, facilitating smoother implementation and better stakeholder navigation (‘*evolution not revolution*’).

This structure is generally viewed as coherent by stakeholders. Echoing the findings of the mid-term evaluation of the 2014-2020 programme, the majority of respondents to the NAs/EACEA survey (87%) agreed that the programme has, in the current programming period, a good internal coherence, that its architecture is coherent (74%), and its actions do not overlap with each other (73%). The objectives and intended effects of all actions are well thought through, each contributing to achieving objectives set out in the programme’s intervention logic.

The programme architecture comprising of a mix of directly and indirectly managed actions, of three levels of intervention, with specific opportunities for individuals, organisations and policy development and cooperation, is deemed sufficiently clear and consistent. The overall value of the Jean Monnet Actions is clearly recognised; however, as noted in the context of the

[344] Source: scoping interviews, workshop with National Agencies held in June 2023, workshop on draft final report held in July 2024.
[345] 1 592 SMEs participated in 1 631 KA2 adult education projects, and 2 148 SMEs in 2 166 KA2 VET projects.
[346] See overview in Annex VII.

final evaluation of Erasmus+ 2014-2020, their current separation from the key actions is found confusing, with suggestions to integrate them into the structure of key actions [347].

The current Erasmus+ offer is considered comprehensive and complementary. Consulted stakeholders [348] generally agree that there are no patently missing actions. However, the wide scope and – to some extent inevitable – complexity of the programme can make it difficult for newcomers and less experienced organisations to grasp the full range of opportunities available.

The current programme presents strong focus on **cross-sectoral collaboration**, which is seen in line with the programme's core objectives and strengthening its internal coherence. The cooperation between the higher education and the VET sector is an essential part of the Alliances for Innovation, as embedded in the design of the action; cross-sectoral cooperation is fostered under the Centres of Vocational Excellence and the European Universities alliances[349] and encouraged in the other types of partnerships funded under Erasmus+. Knowledge flow and cooperation across the school and higher education sectors takes place among others through the newly established Jean Monnet Actions for the school and VET fields[350]. Cross-sectoral cooperation occurs also frequently between the youth and sport sectors, considering target audiences often show similarities.

The coherence and appropriateness of the structure of KA2 was also investigated. Results of the NAs/EACEA survey and key informant interviews suggest a good level of coherence between KA2 and the rest of the programme. However, while it is appreciated that KA2 provides distinct types of funding opportunities under both direct and indirect management, some stakeholders find that its scope has become overly broad, resulting in a loss of its prior focus on driving innovation. Further, as stated in section 4.1.1.3, the collected evidence doesn't allow to affirm with certainty the extent to which the partnerships formed under the 2014-2020 programme lasted over time, which may question KA2's capacity to deliver longer-term results.

While the role and place of KA2 show coherence with the programme intervention logic (i.e. deliver change at institutional and organisational level), questions arise regarding its strong emphasis on producing tangible outputs in many actions (e.g. apps, websites, manuals, learning material). Projects have a specific contractual duration and often grants are not sufficient to ensure the continuity of the results and their further dissemination after the end of the funding[351]. The experienced challenges in supporting the sustainability of these tangible outputs across both programming periods, as well as stakeholders'[352] views on an excessive focus of their requirement, suggest that, in many instances, the **collaboration process may be more important than the concrete outputs to meet programme objectives**, as it can lead to the

[347] Source: scoping interviews, workshop with National Agencies held in June 2023, workshop on draft final report held in July 2024.

[348] Source: workshop with National Agencies held in June 2023, NAs/EACEA survey, EU-level key informant interviews.

[349] European Commission (2025), Report on the outcomes and transformational potential of the European Universities initiative (https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/db43f6ca-da14-11ef-be2a-01aa75ed71a1/language-en), pp. 87-88: 'European Universities alliances also engage with education and training institutions, university networks, research institutions, national and regional governments and public authorities, quality assurance bodies, businesses, SMEs, civil society organisations, various associations and other entities as associated partners'.

[350] JMA Schools Network and Teacher Training actions aiming to develop training modules and advanced tools for teachers. See also the case study on Istituto Statale d'Arte - Liceo artistico "Edgardo Mannucci" (IT).

[351] INDIRE (2019), Strategic partnerships for innovation in Erasmus+. A study on the impact (https://www.erasmusplus.it/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Erasmus-2-ENG-X-WEB.pdf)

[352] These views were shared during the workshop with National Agencies staff of June 2023. In addition, the analysis of a sample of 180 projects across both programming periods, conducted by ICF as part of the external consultancy study, found that a good share of the project websites developed were no longer accessible.

establishment of an extended community of practitioners. This collateral benefit is crucial to build strong networks that can contribute to the development and implementation of policies in the fields covered by the programme, in line with the relevant expected result in the intervention logic. In that spirit, also the funding of online portals facilitating cooperation (i.e. the European School Education Platform, including eTwinning, EPALE, the European Youth Portal) under KA2 is logical and coherent.

KA2 demand remains high with an average success rate [353] for KA2 actions under indirect management dropping from 38% in 2021 to 18% in 2023 (26% in 2022). This has to be seen against the background of the budget shift towards KA2 during the pandemic when mobilities could not be implemented. After the end of the pandemic, the budget has again been re-focussed on KA1 mobility activities since 2022.

Based on the feedback collected through case studies, NAs/EACEA survey, key informant interviews, KA2 coherence and its contribution to programme objectives could be further enhanced by:

- **Fostering the participation of newcomer and small organisations**: through e.g. limiting the number of projects per organisation also for actions under direct management, or allocating a share of the budget specifically to new organisations.
- **Increasing the budget available for KA2** to satisfy the demand and ensure achievement of programme results.
- **Introducing KA2 sport projects under indirect management**: to contribute to further professionalisation and enable smaller sport organisations to apply at national level.
- **Reconsidering the difference in lump sum size** between KA220 (cooperation partnerships) and KA210 (small-scale partnerships) introducing intermediate grant size.
- **Improve sustainability of KA2 project results**, reflecting on support measures or funds provision to ensure lasting collaborations and sustained exploitation of developed results.

4.1.3.2 External coherence

Given the high continuity between programmes, most of the analysis pertaining to the external coherence is carried out jointly for both programming periods, while highlighting differences or elements of evolution between the two programmes.

The final evaluation of the 2014-2020 programme confirms the conclusions of its mid-term evaluation, noting **high external coherence** between Erasmus+ and other relevant EU policies and programmes (e.g. European Social Fund, Horizon 2020). Erasmus+ 2014-2020 had a clear and institutionalised position across EU interventions. The programme invested in individuals enrolled in all levels of formal education and in those participating in informal and non-formal education activities, it supported organisations active in education, training, youth and sport fields and promoted policy development across its fields. The educational dimension encompassing all its activities, the focus on strengthening skills and competences to support growth and jobs, as well as its transnational character marked a clear element of distinction with respect to other EU interventions investing in education at national or regional level with a different perspective. This determined its coherence with ESF (strong focus on labour market), ERDF (focus on infrastructures, and equipment and cooperation across borders in the case of Interreg), Horizon 2020 (focus on research dimension), ensuring complementarities of objectives (support to EU values, skills and competences contributing to better employability and a more cohesive society). The large-scale actions piloted in the last years of the programming period, i.e. European Universities alliances and Centres of Vocational

[353] Success rate is calculated based on the number of projects contracted versus the number of projects received.

Excellence, have further increased coherence with other EU instruments, strengthening programme support to innovation and smart specialisation strategies [354].

At policy level, the mid-term evaluation of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 highlighted a clear and satisfactory alignment with different EU-level policies. This was the case for the Europe 2020 strategy, the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), Copenhagen process and tools in the context of VET actions, modernisation of higher education agenda, Communications on 'New Skills Agenda for Europe', the European Youth Strategy, EU Work Plan for sport. The review of project topical coverage carried out in the mid-term evaluation showed a higher trend towards ET2020 themes, in particular social inclusion, while topics of early school leaving of the Europe 2020 strategy were covered in lower number of projects. Contribution to other policy areas is identified with regards to the participation in democratic life and active citizenship, in particular in the youth field (2015 Paris Declaration), the support to integration of refugees and asylum seekers (migration policies), while in the second part of the programme period, there was an increasing focus on digital skills (European digital education action plan) and on sustainability (Life programme).

The strong continuity between the previous and the current programme generations in term of architecture and key objectives (focus on learning mobility in a lifelong learning perspective) has confirmed the aspects of external coherence with respect to the 2021-2027 generation of EU funding programmes. The new mobility actions of adult learners and sport staff funded under the 2021-2027 programme have further increased programme coherence vis-à-vis other instruments, supporting skills formation on a wider spectrum of target groups. These new actions reinforce support to grassroot sport (mobility of sport staff), offer mobility opportunities to adults enrolled in adult education (mobility of adult learners), and offer non-formal learning to 18-years old young people (DiscoverEU), all putting a strong emphasis on social inclusion. These activities appear coherent and complementary with the objectives of other funding instruments, in particular ESF+.

According to the 2023 European Parliament study on the early implementation of Erasmus+ 2021-2027, the programme **demonstrates a high degree of alignment with all six priorities of the 2019-2024 Commission and relevant EU policies**[355]. Erasmus+ 2021-2027 appears well-embedded in EU policy agendas and thus provides strong support for their implementation (see also section 4.1.1.6). For example, 77% of public consultation respondents either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that Erasmus+ is supporting EU policies and priorities. The horizontal priorities established under the 2021-2027 programme mark a strong commitment to support, through a lifelong learning perspective [356], skills development and behavioural changes addressing the areas of social inclusion (**Erasmus+ inclusion framework**), climate change and sustainability (**European Green Deal**), the digital transformation (**European Digital Education Action Plan**), including tackling disinformation, active citizenship and participation in democratic life (**2015 Paris Declaration**). Erasmus+ flagships actions, such as European Universities alliances, Centres of Vocational Excellence (both already piloted under the 2014-2020 programme) and Erasmus+ Teacher Academies are key to achieve the **European Education Area** and contribute to the **European Skills Agenda**. To date, the

[354] In their study, Esparza Masana and Woolford consider that initiatives like the European Universities and the Knowledge Alliances offer a means to increasingly integrate HEIs into regional development and innovation policies, including S3, and integrate them within their innovation ecosystems, through facilitating their contribution across research, teaching and outreach/community and in S3 governance (Esparza Masana, R. and Woolford (2023), https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/429140)

[355] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2023/747442/EPRS_STU(2023)747442_EN.pdf

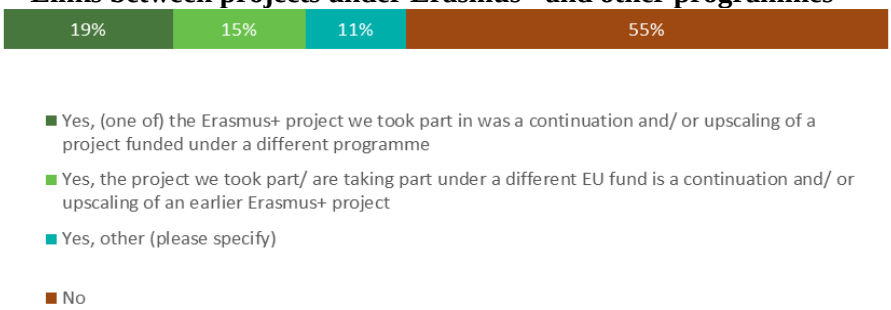
[356] As described in the EU Framework on key competences: https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/improving-quality-equity/key-competences-lifelong-learning

quantitative targets set for Erasmus+ contribution from these actions have been achieved or show high progress (see section 4.1.1.4). While at this stage a full assessment of the impact of these actions towards these key policy initiatives is not yet possible, the collected evidence shows positive signs of spill-over effects producing changes and driving progress at systemic level. Thanks to its international dimension, Erasmus+ is also coherently contributing to external policies, including the Global Gateway strategy, which has education and research as one of its investment priorities. Furthermore, the interim evaluation of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 found that Erasmus+, together with the EU Youth Dialogue and European Solidarity Corps, is the instrument fostering the most synergies [357].

The collected evidence points at a very high level of complementarity between both generations of Erasmus+ and **other EU programmes with similar objectives**. 66% of the public consultation respondents indicated that Erasmus+ is fully or partially coherent with other EU funding opportunities, while only 3% believe it is not and close to one third of respondents (31%) didn't know[358]. Furthermore, almost 80% of respondents to the NAs/EACEA survey stated that Erasmus+ complements other EU programmes, while 28% indicated that it overlaps with similar actions under those programmes. Coherence with other EU initiatives is pointed out as good in reports from 14 countries[359].

At level of projects, about one third of the beneficiary organisations responding to the survey of socio-economic actors stated that they took part previously (35%) or were taking part currently (30%) in another EU-funded programme [360]. Among these, 45% indicated that this project had a link with their Erasmus+ participation a total of 34% indicated that this project was the continuation and/or upscaling of a previous project, showing a good level of connections between Erasmus+ and other EU programmes.

Links between projects under Erasmus+ and other programmes[361]



Among respondents to this survey who had previously participated in other EU-funded programmes, the most common were the **European Social Fund** (ESF/ESF+) (31%), **Interreg** (21%), and **Horizon 2020/Horizon Europe** (13%), with similar patterns regarding the participation in on-going projects funded by other programmes. These funding instruments

[357] SWD(2024) 90 of 11 April 2024, p. 46.
[358] Respondents well or partly familiar with the programme were asked to indicate whether they found Erasmus+ fully coherent, partially coherent, not coherent at all (or didn't know) with other EU funding opportunities/instruments addressing the education, training, youth, and sport sectors (such as the European Social Fund Plus, European Solidarity Corps, Interreg programmes, the National Recovery and Resilience facility, etc.). The question, not mandatory for respondents partly familiar with the programme, gathered 1225 responses.
[359] AT, BE, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, IT, LU, NL, PL, PT, RO.
[360] Survey of Socio-economic actors, annex V of ICF study. Q9: 'Before participating in Erasmus+ activities, have you been involved as a partner or coordinator in another EU-funded project?'; Q10: 'Is your organisation currently involved as a partner or coordinator in another EU-funded project?'.
[361] Survey of socio-economic actors, annex V of ICF study. Question: You said that your organisation has participated/ is participating in other EU-funded project(s). Does this have any link with your Erasmus+ participation?

were also the most mentioned by the stakeholders consulted for case studies and interviews and emerge as those having the highest potential for synergies and complementarities[362].

Horizon Europe was mentioned in international and national level interviews, case studies and national reports as being very coherent with Erasmus+, complementing Erasmus+ with its research dimension, in particular with regards to the higher education sector, while some complementarity exists also with the VET sector too [363]. Similar findings emerged from the study 'Innovative Europe' contributing to the interim evaluation of Horizon Europe. The quantitative analysis carried out on the basis of common beneficiaries encoded in the eGrants system indicated Erasmus+ as one of the most complementary programmes with the actions supporting innovation under Horizon Europe Pillar III 'Innovative Europe'[364]. However, this analysis only took into account the Erasmus+ actions under direct management (approximately 20% of the Erasmus+ budget). Under Pillar III of Horizon Europe, the study also highlights synergies between Erasmus+ and the **European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT).** For example, the EIT Food has partnered with other organisations in its network to submit bids for Erasmus+ funding, leading to successful Erasmus+ projects such as I-RESTART and GEEK4Food. The study 'Excellence science' addressing Pillar I of Horizon Europe highlights that the collaborative networks established under Erasmus+ often also serve as platforms for collaborations under Horizon Europe. Further synergies were identified under Pillar II of Horizon Europe (Global Challenges & European Industrial Competitiveness) in relation to addressing inequalities in green and digital transitions, skills, and labour shortages.

Synergies and complementarities with Horizon 2020/Horizon Europe were also identified regarding capacity-building for research excellence and learning mobility between universities located within and outside of Europe[365]. Erasmus+ presents strong complementarities with **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)** (Horizon 2020 / Horizon Europe, Pillar I), with the possibility for Erasmus+ participants to take part in MSCA research teams and for MSCA researchers to participate in Erasmus+ activities[366]. Interviewees in EU Delegations indicated for example that Erasmus+ facilitates mobility for PhD students previously involved in Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters (EMJM) and that it contributes to excellence in research. The **European Excellence initiative** under Horizon Europe provides complementary support for the development of the research dimension of the **Erasmus+ European Universities**

[362] National studies like those carried out by INDIRE in 2020 confirm that most synergies happened with ESF/ERDF national programmes. (https://2014-2020.erasmusplus.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/erasmus_summary_q3_WEB.pdf)

[363] International mapping study on good practices of applied research in vocational education and training | ETF, https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/international-mapping-study-good-practices-applied-research

[364] European Commission (2024): Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, Naujokaitytė, R., Cakić, M., Didžiulytė, M., Zharkalliu-Roussou, K. et al., Evaluation study of the European framework programmes for research and innovation for an innovative Europe – Report phase 2 (support study for the interim evaluation of Horizon Europe), https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/499132, p. 88-89.

[365] The Case study on the University of Sevilla shows that participation in Erasmus+ facilitated the participation in Horizon Europe, with positive effects on the quality of the projects granted under Horizon. The Unite! European Universities alliance, funded under Erasmus+, secured funding for the development of its research and innovation dimension under the European Excellence initiative with the project 'Unite.! Widening'. The Unite! alliances also set up an MSCA Doctoral Network 'Energy Storage Network' aiming to nurture a new generation of enterprising researchers, fostering integration of hydrogen in the energy sector through interdisciplinary excellence.

[366] The ex-post evaluation of Horizon 2020 also confirms that in education Horizon 2020 complemented Erasmus+ well (SWD(2024) 29 of 29 January 2024). The guidance on ensuring synergies between MSCA and Erasmus+ actions in the field of higher education provides examples of such synergies. European Commission, DG for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Synergies between the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions and Erasmus+ in the area of higher education, Publications Office of the European Union, 2021, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/958920.

alliances [367]. The ability to supplement core Erasmus+ funding with complementary support from Horizon 2020 / Horizon Europe is seen as instrumental to enable higher education institutions to access additional funding for the development of their research and innovation capabilities.

Programmes funded under the **European Social Fund (ESF)+ and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)** are generally viewed as very coherent with Erasmus+, supported also by different types of synergy examples. The ESF+ Regulation [368] explicitly emphasises collaborative efforts with Erasmus+ in supporting various initiatives, particularly in facilitating the participation of disadvantaged learners in learning mobility. This alignment extends to the ESF+ focus on human resource development, which encompasses upskilling and reskilling, including digital skills and green initiatives, echoing the priorities of Erasmus+. The ESF+ Regulation also provides an incentive in the form of a higher EU co-financing (up to 95%) for scaling up innovative approaches tested on a small scale and developed under other Union programmes, including Erasmus+ [369]. Regarding ERDF, investments in infrastructure and equipment strengthen equal access to quality and inclusive services with a focus on addressing socioeconomic and territorial disparities. Such support can complement Erasmus+ objectives and actions by reinforcing the enabling environment for mobility opportunities and cooperation in the fields of education, youth, and sport. As novelty in 2021-2027, ERDF can also directly fund skills development opportunities in the framework of smart specialisation strategies, thus increasing complementarities beyond investments in education infrastructures and equipment.

The opportunities for synergies between Erasmus+ and Cohesion policy funds have been enhanced in 2021-2027 programming period through mirroring provisions establishing new tools and mechanisms, such as the Seal of Excellence [370] and the possibility of transferring funds from programmes under shared management to those under direct or indirect management, like Erasmus+[371], to facilitate the building of effective synergies.

Erasmus+ 2021-2027 is piloting the implementation of the Seal of Excellence as from the 2023 Call through its flagship actions, such as European Universities alliances and Centres of Vocational Excellence. The tool aims to facilitate the alternative funding of high-quality proposals awarded with a Seal of Excellence under Erasmus+ from ESF+/ERDF in case of insufficient funding under a given Erasmus+ Call for proposals. However, despite the potential of this tool, its uptake appears challenging given the transnational (multi-beneficiary) character of Erasmus+ proposals. Mainstream cohesion policy programmes have a clear national and regional scope. The provision established in 2021-2027 Common Provisions Regulation for the funding of Seal holders under Cohesion policy funds do not apply to Interreg programmes. While there is opening from ESF+ to fund Erasmus+ transnational proposals with impact at national level, there is no information yet of schemes launched by ESF+ Managing Authorities

[367] Currently, the European Excellence initiative is the sole initiative allowing the alliances to receive support at the institutional level for the development of their alliance' research and innovation dimension (around 13% of existing alliances receive funding support under this Horizon initiative).
[368] Regulation (EU) 2021/1057 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 establishing the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1296/2013, OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 21.
[369] Article 14(2) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1057.
[370] See Article 32 of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ Regulation and Article 73(4) of the 2021-2027 Common Provisions Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy, OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 159).
[371] See Article 26 of the 2021-2027 Common Provisions Regulation and Article 17(8) of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ Regulation.

to fund Erasmus+ Seal holders. Consulted stakeholders showed limited awareness of the Seal under Erasmus+. However, as the launch of the Seal under Erasmus+ is still quite recent, it is not possible to provide firm conclusions on the effectiveness of this tool.

The new mechanism for budgetary transfer has been used by Germany, which decided to transfer a share of its ESF+ resources amounting to EUR 57 million for the period 2022-2027 to support higher education student mobility, targeting students with fewer opportunities [372]. This mechanism allows the transferred resources to be managed under a single budget on the basis of the rules of the receiving programme (i.e. Erasmus+), thus providing a high degree of simplification both for the National Agency and the beneficiary organisations. However, despite its potential, to date this possibility has been used by Germany only. Other mechanisms for the injection of ESF/ESF+ funds into Erasmus+ and requiring separate budget management have been used in other countries, for instance in Lithuania (2014-2020 programme), Poland and Italy (both programming periods).

The Interreg programmes addressing the **European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) objective under ERDF** aim at fostering cooperation and cohesion across border regions. Interreg promotes economic, social, and territorial integration by supporting cross-border, transnational, and interregional cooperation projects. Human capital support (such as skills development and language trainings, joint education and training schemes and cross-border school exchanges), infrastructure and equipment support and measures to reduce legal and administrative obstacles (such as joint recognition of qualifications and joint delivery of services) are eligible under Interreg making it complementary to Erasmus+, with Interreg being more territorially focused, whereas Erasmus+ fosters stronger internationalisation aspects[373].

The **European Solidarity Corps** was established in 2018, with the incorporation of the European Voluntary Service (EVS), implemented under Erasmus+ until 2018[374]. The objectives and beneficiaries of Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps are similar and the importance of synergies between the two programmes is paramount. The two programmes share a joint framework of inclusion measures and an inclusion and diversity strategy; they are managed under a single National Agency in the countries participating in both programmes[375], and share the same IT landscape for the management of actions under indirect management. National Agencies managing both programmes have reported actions to foster synergies, such as joint events, trainings, and information sessions.

The European Parliament report on the implementation of Erasmus+ 2021-2027[376] of December 2023 asked for greater synergies between both programmes. Furthermore, the evidence collected from key informant interviews, the public consultation, and the NAs/EACEA survey show that the differences between these two programmes are not always clear to all stakeholders and that some concerns exist about risks of overlaps. Both programmes cover similar goals and challenges stemming from the 2019-2027 EU Youth Strategy by supporting youth participation and non-formal learning. At the same time, while they address

[372] Commission Implementing Decision of 18.9.2023 on the financing of Erasmus+: the Union Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport and the adoption of the work programme for 2024. https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-09/eplus-awp-20240-C-2023-6157_en.pdf

[373] This was pointed, for instance, in the case study on the Chambre de Métiers et de l'Artisanat Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (VET, FR).

[374] EVS was covered under Erasmus+ 2014-2020 under KA105 (mobility projects for young people and youth workers) until 2017. In 2017, KA135 Strategic EVS was launched and in 2018, in preparation of the European Solidarity Corps, volunteering was moved from KA105 to KA125 Volunteering projects.

[375] Serbia and Norway do not participate in the Corps.

[376] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2023-0413_EN.html

similar target groups, the European Solidarity Corps has lower barriers to participation, making it more accessible to young individuals outside formal institutional frameworks, as observed in the evaluation of the programme.

A potential area of duplication concerns Erasmus+ Youth Participation activities and Solidarity projects funded under the European Solidarity Corps, both supporting youth-led initiatives run by informal groups of young people, fostering active citizenship and sense of initiative. Solidarity projects have a stronger solidarity component, supporting mostly bottom-up local solidarity activities with a view to addressing key challenges within the communities the young people carrying the project live in. Nevertheless, the many common areas of action suggest the need to reflect on potential overlaps and improve communication on the differences to potential applicants. The support activities aiming at increasing the quality implementation of the two programmes[377] also emerge as examples for possible overlaps. Both activities are run by the same National Agencies, active in the youth field, and fund very similar activities, reaching out to target groups that are often the same [378]. These activities represent opportunities for synergies between the programmes, they could also be looked at to seek for some economy of scale and improve efficiency.

Regarding **Creative Europe**, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a specific selection round was held under the 2020 Call of the Erasmus+ Strategic partnerships, called 'Partnerships for creativity', with the allocation of an indicative EUR 100 million budget to address the priority "Skills development and inclusion through creativity and the arts". In the current programme, areas of synergies are found in the Erasmus+ projects supporting skills for the arts and cultural sectors, for architecture and design and the fashion sector[379].

Complementarities with the **RRF** are developed under pillar I (green transition), II (digital transformation), IV (social and territorial cohesion) and pillar VI (policies for the next generation, children and the youth, such as education and skills) of the Facility. There is good alignment with Erasmus+ objectives, particularly in fostering digital skills and supporting the green transition through educational initiatives. Most of Erasmus+ KA3 activity types supporting policy development and coordination in programme fields have the potential to stimulate reforms at national level, thus showing complementarity with pillar VI of the RRF. Support to national educational reforms is also provided through National Agencies, which, as part of their yearly work programmes, are requested to identify Erasmus+ priorities of particular relevance in their national context in view of addressing European Semester country-specific recommendations. In 2023, the Ministry of Education in Italy developed an Operational Plan to support through RRF funds more Erasmus+ mobility projects in the school education sector (EUR 150 million, to be managed by the Italian National Agency INDIRE). The synergy targets schools in disadvantaged areas with limited participation in Erasmus+ to foster skills and internationalisation through mobility projects (pillars IV and VI of the RRF).

Only few respondents to the public consultation drew attention to some missed opportunities and potential areas of overlap between Erasmus+ and the **CERV** programme at level of the

[377] Training and Cooperation Activities (TCA) under Erasmus+ and Networking Activities (NET) under European Solidarity Corps.

[378] 60% of National Agencies dealing with the youth sector reported taking specific actions to ensure synergies between the two programmes, such as joint events, trainings, information sessions or similar types of activities, NAs/EACEA survey, annex III of ICF study.

[379] For example, more than 70 Erasmus+ projects support skills for sustainable fashion, around 150 concern the textile industry and more than 3 700 relate to 'arts and culture' (source: Erasmus+ project result platform. Search made using keywords 'arts and culture', 'sustainable fashion' and 'textile industry').

Erasmus+ priority on democratic participation and civic engagement and similar strands in CERV. However, the collected evidence was not sufficiently large to build a stronger case.

Regarding the **Life programme**, the strongest evidence of synergies appears in the 2014-2020 programme, when the Life programme made available EUR 9 million to fund further long-term European Voluntary Service opportunities in the areas of environment, nature conservation and climate action in 2017 and 2018. In the 2014-2020 programme, complementarities are built at level of the horizontal priority 'environment and fight against climate change' through activities aiming to raise awareness around environmental matters and boost more sustainable behaviours.

The collected evidence also suggests that Erasmus+ is generally coherent with and complementary to **national interventions** in the programme fields. A vast majority (88%) of the public consultation respondents considered Erasmus+ and national funding opportunities/instruments addressing the education, training, youth and sport sectors fully or partially coherent[380]. The analysis of national reports also shows that the programme aligns well with national education and youth policies[381], as confirmed in the evaluation of the EU Youth Strategy [382]. In some cases, national programmes are specifically designed to complement Erasmus+ by providing additional funding to supplement Erasmus+ grants or by focusing on bilateral mobility. This complementary approach can enhance the overall effectiveness of mobility and educational opportunities, suggesting that a higher exploitation of synergies with national interventions could further enhance the impact of Erasmus+.

Respondents to the public consultation also considered that, in both programming periods, Erasmus+ is coherent with other **international funding opportunities/instruments** in the education, training youth and sport fields (53%), although a high share of respondents (42%) had no opinion [383]. **EEA and Norway Grants** and **Nordplus** emerge as the 'international' instruments having the highest degree of complementarities with Erasmus+.

Synergies between Erasmus+ 2014-2020 and **EEA and Norway Grants[384]** can be identified in the funding of additional learning mobility (Poland), upscaling of innovative practices tested under Erasmus+ (Romania [385]) or the funding of projects and learning modules with future evolutions under Erasmus+ (Czechia [386]). The EEA and Norway Grants are often managed by

[380] Public consultation report, annex II of ICF study: Question: 'Please comment whether, and if so to which extent, the Erasmus+ programme is coherent with: National funding opportunities/instruments addressing the education, training, youth and sport sectors'. The question was asked to respondents familiar and partly familiar with the programme, gathering a total of 1,227 responses. The full range of replies was as follows: 43% fully coherent, 35% partially coherent, 7% not coherent at all, 15% don't know.

[381] Highlighted in 13 reports: AT, BE, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, LU, NL, PL, PT, TR.

[382] See p. 48 of SWD(2024) 90.

[383] Public consultation report, annex II of ICF study: Please comment whether, and if so to which extent, the Erasmus+ programme is coherent with Other international funding opportunities/instruments for the education, training, youth and sport sectors (such as from the World Bank, Unesco, EEA and Norway Grants, Nordplus etc.). Overall, the share of respondents with no opinion (42%) was highest in comparison to EU level and national level instruments.

[384] At the time of running the evaluation the EEA & Norway Grants 2021-2028 generation had not started yet; therefore, findings concern the 2014-2021 generation, mostly in link with the Erasmus+ 2014-2020.

[385] The EEA and Norway grants project, "Digitalisation of the water sector and water education (DIGIWATRO) in Romania, successfully built on the Erasmus+ Knowledge Alliances project "Digitalisation of water industry by innovative graduate water education" to address more specific national challenges, demonstrating the potential for complementary, rather than overlapping funding.

[386] The EEA and Norway Grants project "Supporting threatened plurality: Languages and Medieval Literatures" (Czechia) was designed to prepare a Master's degree programme that aimed for future funding under the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's degree. This exemplifies the sequential funding approach, where initial projects funded by EEA and Norway Grants pave the way for further development under Erasmus+. Similarly, the project, 'Use of modern technologies in vocational education' project, also in Czechia, highlights successful long-term partnerships initiated under EEA and Norway Grants having in mind future developments under Erasmus+.

hosting organisations of Erasmus+ National Agencies, which facilitates coordination across programmes. However, as indicated in the national report of Norway, the coordination among these instruments should be reinforced to further exploit synergies.

Nordplus promotes Nordic and Baltic cooperation in education, offering funding to projects that enhance collaboration between educational institutions in the Nordic and Baltic countries. Stakeholders' feedback highlights several synergies between Nordplus and Erasmus+. For example, initiatives first funded by Erasmus+ are often continued through Nordic cooperation projects or receive complementary funding through Nordplus to enhance cooperation and impact [387]. Nordplus can fund shorter mobilities compared to Erasmus+, thereby complementing each other.

The **evolution of the external coherence** between both programming periods is assessed positively. Erasmus+ 2021-2027 has successfully built on the strong foundation of the predecessor programme, continuing being well aligned with policies and instruments at EU, national or international level. The emphasis on synergies given by the inclusion of specific provisions in the legal bases of the different EU funding instruments has strengthen the effort for building more effective synergies producing fruitful experiences, though to a lower extent than potentially expected.

4.2. How did the EU intervention make a difference and to whom?

The analysis has been carried out jointly for both programming periods, while highlighting differences or elements relevant to the final or the interim evaluation, and stressing elements of evolution between the two programmes. Evidence points to the **strong European added value** of both programme generations. The analysis was informed by 5 evaluation questions that examined to what extent Erasmus+ 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 support:

- a scale of actions between countries which would not otherwise be achieved (volume effects);
- target groups or sectors that would not be otherwise covered (scope effects);
- processes translated into own practice by participating countries (process effects);
- internationalisation of organisations, systems and policies (role effect);
- contribution to 'Europeanness';
- international added value.

4.2.1 European added value as compared to what could be achieved at regional, national or other international level

The strong European added value of the programme is demonstrated when it comes to its **volume, scope and benefits**. Among other evidence, this is showcased by the national reports which highlight that **Erasmus+ 2014-2020 provided significant European added value beyond what could be achieved through national or regional initiatives alone and that this added value continues in the 2021-2027 programme**. Its unique contributions in fostering learning mobility, promoting European identity and driving innovation in education are widely recognised across participating countries.

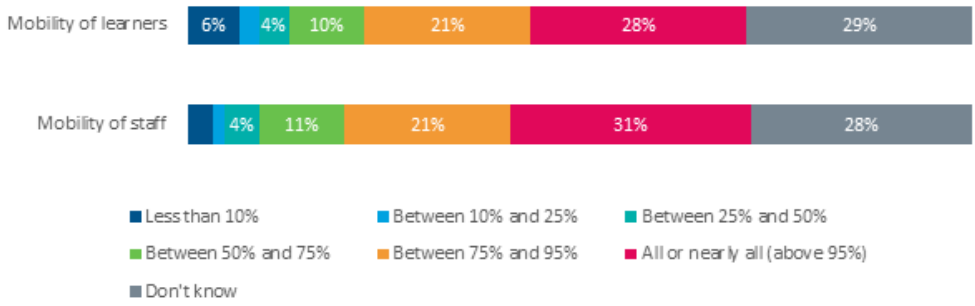
The support study conducted by ICF compared Erasmus+ to 19 other programmes selected based on their geographical diversity, the type of collaboration, sector, and actions they

[387] See for example the Erasmus+ project "STEM skills and competences for the new generation of Nordic engineers" (2018, KA2): https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2018-1-SE01-KA203-039142

cover [388]. With an average annual budget of EUR 2.6 in the period 2014-2020, and a MFF total envelope of EUR 16.2 billion (including both heading 1 and heading 4 budget) for the 2014-2020 programming period, **Erasmus+ 2014-2020 had, by far, the largest number of participants and budget for mobility, cooperation and capacity building activities in the fields of education and training, youth and sport**. The same applies to **Erasmus+ 2021-2027, thanks to its annual budget of EUR 4.4 billion in 2023, and EUR 28.6 billion, including both heading 2 and heading 6 budget, for the period 2021-2027.**

At least 60% of NAs/EACEA survey respondents estimated that more than half of the learning mobilities in their sector are supported by Erasmus+ [389].

Share of Erasmus+ learning mobilities compared to other programmes according to NAs /EACEA



Source: NAs/EACEA Survey

UNESCO-OECD-Eurostat data on learning mobility in higher education[390] shows that Erasmus+ funds over half of credit mobilities in the Member States. There is no comparable data in other sectors. However, as most funding schemes outside Erasmus+ are focussed on higher education, it can imply that the shares of mobilities funded by Erasmus+ in VET, school education, adult education, youth and sport sectors are substantially higher. For example, unlike any other scheme identified, Erasmus+ 2021-2027 is the only one funding sport staff mobility at grassroots level.

Box 9 - Credit mobility under different funding schemes[391]

The Education and Training Monitor 2023 indicates that credit mobility financed under EU programmes involved most credit-mobile graduates at the bachelor and master levels (52.8%). There are only four countries where less than 50% of the credit-mobile graduates took part in programmes financed by the EU: the Netherlands (40.0%), Denmark (37.8%), France (37.5%), and Sweden (37.0%). By contrast, programmes financed by the EU supported more than 80% of credit-mobile graduates in 16 EU countries. Mobility at bachelor level (60.9%), but it accounts for less than half of the credit mobility taking place at master level (45.8%). The corresponding percentages for short cycle tertiary education (data from 13 EU countries) and doctoral or equivalent level (data from 21 EU countries) are 48.7% and 32.3% respectively.

[388] These are: 1) African Research Universities Alliances, 2) Association of Commonwealth Universities grants, 3) Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 4) Ausbildung Weltweit, 5) Baltic-American Freedom Foundation professional internship programme, 6) Carnegie Foundation, 7) Central European Exchange Program for University Studies (CEEPUS), 8) EEA and Norway Grants, 9) Franco-German Youth Office DFJW, 10) Fulbright, 11) DAAD scholarship programme, 12) German Polish Youth Office DPJW, 13) Programmes de mobilité du Bureau International Jeunesse, 14) Nordplus, 15) NORPART - Norwegian Partnership Programme for Global Academic Cooperation, 16) OKM (Club support (OKM)), 17) Turing Scheme, 18) Visegrad Scholarship Programme, 19) Visegrad Grants and Visegrad+ Grants. See also box 8, section 4.1.2.4 for a comparison for the Fulbright programme.

[389] NAs/EACEA survey, annex III of ICF study. Question: 'Taking into consideration other programmes/ funding schemes operating in your sector, what proportion of the learning mobilities are supported by Erasmus+?'.

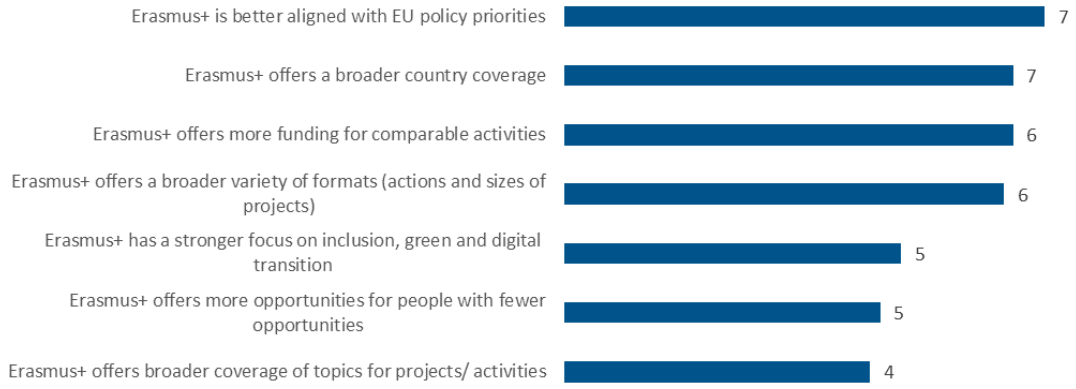
[390] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/EDUC_UOE_MOBC01__custom_6711802/bookmark/table?lang=en&bookmarkId=b6a9ff9f-9a24-499e-ba94-1a2d51b27df6&page=time:2021

[391] Education and Training Monitor 2023, Box 18. Credit mobility under different funding schemes. Link: https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor-2023/en/comparative-report/chapter-5.html

Both programme generations are unparalleled in terms of **volume** in **fostering the educational, professional, and personal development of individuals** and **boosting cooperation** in education, training, youth, and sport across Europe and beyond, setting it apart from other similar schemes.

Findings from ICF study point out that the European added value of the Erasmus+ programme lies not only in its volume but also in **its wide scope,** which encompasses an extensive range of activities that complement and enhance each other, **its broad fields and target groups as well as its geographical coverage**. While other national and international schemes exist, very few cover the fields and the type of opportunities provided by Erasmus+. This is particularly the case of the adult education, youth and sport fields, where Erasmus+ covers activities that are less likely to be addressed by other initiatives[392], thus playing a more vital role for these target groups.

Comparison with other comparable initiatives



Source: NAs/EACEA Survey (score out of 10). Question 'To what extent to you agree with these statements about the comparison between Erasmus+ and other comparable initiatives'

Furthermore, case studies show that, across both programme generations, stakeholders highly value the programme's unique scope and that organisations would not have been able to undertake similar activities or the activities would have been on a much smaller scale without Erasmus+ 2014-2020 or Erasmus+ 2021-2027. This is also confirmed by 84% of the respondents to the public consultation. Erasmus+ 2021-2027 also offers specific added value in supporting individuals with fewer opportunities, thanks to its comprehensive and mainstreamed approach to inclusion. This is particularly the case in the adult education and youth sectors, where respectively 24% and 28% participants belong to this category. Inclusion and diversity is also the most predominant priority addressed across all key actions of the 2021-2027 programme.

Erasmus+ 2014-2020 served as a reference in many cases and positively influences national schemes. This is noted also in the current programme, as an effect of the continuation of the intervention. Several **spillover effects** on **processes** have been identified with relevant examples of other programmes aligning with best practices from Erasmus+ and harmonising their rules with the programme's. For instance, Bulgaria has set similar priorities, objectives and procedures to Erasmus+ for their national programmes; Spain is developing a programme to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities based on Erasmus+ applications forms[393]; some 2021-2027 Cohesion policy programmes in Portugal refer to Erasmus+ unit costs funding

[392] NAs/EACEA survey, annex III of ICF study. Participants were asked if they aware of other national or non-EU programmes in their country providing similar activities. For higher education, VET and school education, at least half of the respondents answered positively. However, less than a third were aware of schemes funding mobility of learners, staff or cooperation activities in the fields of adult education, youth and sport.
[393] Source: key informant interviews at national level.

model [394]; EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021 require that 'the national practices for the management and financing of the educational programmes shall be established following the principles of Erasmus+ and/or Horizon 2020 EU programmes'[395], similarly Nordplus learning mobility in higher education are shaped as complementary to those funded by Erasmus+. At EU level, across both programming periods, Erasmus for young entrepreneurs shares comparable approaches with Erasmus+ mobility. As showed in the mid-term evaluation of the 2014-2020 programme, the schemes launched in the 2014-2020 period, such as the European Solidarity Corps or the EU AID scheme for volunteers in humanitarian aid, follow similar selection principles as the European Voluntary Service (EVS). This extended further with the inclusion of EVS under the European Solidarity Corps, when the Corps was formally established as a fully-fledged programme in 2018, and continues in the 2021-2027 programming period, with the Corps adopting the same types of support structures used by Erasmus+, such as SALTO Resource Centres and schemes such as 'networking activities' (reflecting very closely the model of Erasmus+ TCAs).

Over both programme generations, the programme has facilitated cooperation among organisations across countries, enabling transnational exchanges, mutual learning, and dialogue. This allows for an **expansion in involved organisations' perspectives and enhances their internationalisation**. Internationalisation takes the form of support to transnational mobility and partnerships that would not be achievable through national schemes alone, as reported in 24 national reports [396]. Erasmus+ also has an effect on the internationalisation of policies and education systems, which would not have happened to the same extent or at all, without Erasmus+. 86% of respondents to the public consultation were of the opinion that Erasmus+ contributed to improving the national, European and international support measures for the education, training, youth and sport sectors.

The programme **influences national policies and systems** in most countries, albeit to a varying degree, with many examples being reported by Member States in their national reports[397]. The long-term and systemic effects of KA3 activities is consistently highlighted for both programming periods. The European Parliament study [398] on the early implementation of EU programmes such as Erasmus+, issued in 2023, indicates that a number of countries uses Erasmus+ as a "serious co-contributor to address certain national challenges such as internationalisation of the higher and vocational educational establishments in Bulgaria or Spain". Across both programming periods, Erasmus+ has played a unique role in supporting evidence-based policy cooperation in the fields of education, training, youth and sport. In the youth field, the Youth Wiki is recognised for facilitating comparative analyses of youth policies across different countries, aiding youth policy stakeholders in understanding international youth policies. The case study carried out under the support study highlighted this role, stressing that it fosters peer learning and cooperation among stakeholders, enabling the

[394] See e.g. Norte Regional Programme 2021-2027.
[395] See EEA Financial Mechanism and Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, Guideline for educational programmes. Rules for the establishment and implementation of programmes falling under programme area 3 "Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeships and Youth Entrepreneurship, p. 5. https://eeagrants.org/sites/default/files/resources/2014-2021%20Guideline%20for%20educational%20programmes.pdf
[396] AT, BEde, BEfr, BEnl, BG, CZ, DE DK, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SK, TR.
[397] For example, strengthening of the adult education field in Austria, development of national policies on mobility in upper secondary education in France, policy changes in the youth field on quality of youth work in Estonia.
[398] 'Early implementation of four 2021-2027 EU programmes: Erasmus+, Creative Europe, European Solidarity Corps and Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (Strand 3)', European Parliament, Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services, 20 July 2023. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_STU(2023)747442

identification of good practices and the establishment of a network of information providers[399]. The Youth Wiki is seen as **essential for understanding and comparing youth policies across Europe, which would not be achievable through national resources alone**.

The programme **has a unique and strong impact on fostering a sense of European identity and belonging**. Evaluation findings consistently demonstrate its value in developing knowledge for European integration, raising awareness of EU common values, and cultivating a sense of belonging to the EU. Building or maintaining European identities and European values provides key benefits for participating countries, in terms of supporting social cohesion, the preservation of democracy and the rule of law, but also for building relationships as well as supporting capacity building across the world and strengthening the geopolitical standing of the EU. This is also supported by the European Parliament study mentioned above that reports that the programme has **increased relevance in strengthening the EU strategic autonomy, including in building a European identity**.

Erasmus+ 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 have a range of other benefits, including supporting **inclusion, diversity, fairness and equal opportunities** (89% of respondents to the public consultation agreed or strongly agreed with this statement) and contributing to **innovation** (86% agreed or strongly agreed). Evidence collected through different sources (beneficiary surveys, case studies, meta-analysis, national reports) all show that participation in Erasmus+ offers numerous benefits for individuals. According to 29 national reports[400], Erasmus+ fosters the development of intercultural competences, language skills and international networks. Moreover, Erasmus+ supports learners' ability to learn, especially for VET learners, school pupils, adult learners, participants in youth activities and those with fewer opportunities. The programme also reduces the likelihood of poor performance despite effort and enhances social integration among students.

Monitoring data from participants' surveys and national reports point that the programme increases self-confidence, problem-solving, autonomy, initiative, entrepreneurship and civic engagement in participants, the degree of which vary depending on the sectors.

4.2.2 European added value of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 compared to what was achieved by Erasmus+ 2014-2020

The Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027 has been built on the success of the 2014-2020 programme, keeping substantial stability and continuity in the structure and management mode compared to its predecessor. The continuity between the two generations of programmes and well-known branding, ensures overall **increased awareness, greater visibility and positive perception** [401].

When comparing the two programming periods, Erasmus+ 2021-2027 shows a **clearer added value in terms of its scale, scope, effects and cooperation with third countries**.

As outlined in section 2.1, the 2014-2020 programme was designed to support the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy and the ET 2020, responding and adapting well to the emerging challenges of the increased digitalisation and the migration crisis. Similarly, the 2021-2027 programme was designed to better respond to the newest challenges and needs aligning well to

[399] Case Study on Youth Wiki (You, FR, CY, MT). Finding based on stakeholders' perception.
[400] AT, BEde, BEnl, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LI, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, NO, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, TR.
[401] The Report from the European Parliament on the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027 and the social media analysis carried out by the external evaluator report popularity of the programme and positive sentiment towards it.

most of the 2019-2024 EU political priorities, while the analysis in section 4.3 shows that its relevance has evolved positively compared to the 2014-2020 programme. The **learning mobility opportunities** offered by the programme can be considered its **most significant added value**, magnified by the sustained actions between the two programmes. The high numbers of programme beneficiaries add up over time, expanding the benefits of mobility to an increasing share of learners, as well as staff and organisations. This applies also to **international mobility** which has in general increased over the period 2014-2020, particularly from third countries associated and not associated to the programme as sending countries, except a down point in 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic, providing an important legacy for the current programme and further reinforced by the expansion of available opportunities in terms of funding and type of actions.

Furthermore, the evidence collected does not point to any lost added value as a consequence of the discontinuation of actions from Erasmus+ 2014-2020. In 2018, the European Voluntary Service was moved from Erasmus+ to the European Solidarity Corps. As the action still exists in a similar form, it cannot be said that its added value has been lost. Similarly, the Student Loan Guarantee Facility (higher education) was discontinued at the start of the 2021-2027 programming period, following the detection in the mid-term evaluation of 2014-2020 programme of several factors that were hindering its effectiveness, including the overlaps with national schemes. Consequently, it was considered that its added value could be more suitably achieved in the context of the InvestEU programme. On this basis, no loss in the European added value of the Erasmus+ programme can be advocated.

Participants in the 2021-2027 programme have also benefited from a **greater alignment between Erasmus+ and national priorities**. Representatives from around half of the countries consulted as part of national level interviews report that the alignment between Erasmus+ and national priorities has strengthened in the current programming period compared to the previous one. This improvement is often attributed to the clearer and more focused priorities set by the programme, which have better resonated with national policy objectives.

Even if challenges persist, Erasmus+ 2021-2027 shows **specific added value to the benefit of disadvantaged groups**. The increased focus on inclusion and diversity, combined with the efforts for simplification introduced in the current programme, have provided clear benefits. The programme has become more accessible for smaller organisations and newcomers with new actions and measures, such as the use of lump sums in KA2 and the Small-scale Partnerships. The 2023 European Parliament study [402] reports positive outcomes from these measures, with significant appreciation from national stakeholders. Case studies carried out in the frame of the support study also suggest that the 2021-2027 programme has become more user-friendly.

4.2.3 European added value as compared to what would be the most likely consequences of discontinuing the programme

In terms of funding, the **discontinuation of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 would remove in average EUR 4 billion of annual funding across education and training, youth and sport sectors** and would thus drastically limit financial support for mobility, cooperation and internationalisation in these sectors in most participating countries. The programme's funding is particularly crucial in countries and fields where no similar schemes are available, while in countries where comparable schemes are available maintaining the current levels of support without Erasmus+ would require considerable budgetary efforts at national level.

[402] See p. 34 (EPRS_STU(2023)747442_EN.pdf (europa.eu)).

No other national or EU level programme has a comparable scope, capacity and scale, thus making the Erasmus+ programme unique. The evidence analysed for this evaluation demonstrates that without the Erasmus+ programme, the activities currently funded via the programme in the relevant sectors would not be supported to a comparable extent and the level of relevant activities taking place would be significantly lower.

In higher education, Erasmus+ is the primary funding tool for short-term (at least three months) learning mobility across the programme countries. Based on Eurostat data, EU programmes like Erasmus+ supported around 2 out of 3 (65.6%) of the credit mobile graduates from bachelor's or equivalent at EU level, including Serbia and Norway, in 2022 [403]. EU programmes are the only possibility to go abroad for a short period during studies in countries like Cyprus and Ireland, where 100% of short mobility is financed by Erasmus+. This share is higher than 90% in 11 countries [404] according to data from Eurostat. If Erasmus+ were to be halted, and no similar alternatives were to be provided, 12 programme countries would see higher education international mobility virtually disappear (with under 100 grant-supported mobilities a year [405]).

Without Erasmus+, it is likely that the benefits deriving from programme actions for individuals and organisations are drastically reduced. Internationalisation of education and training, youth and sport sectors would be reduced to close to zero in several countries, especially in sport and youth. The positive results achieved for individual participants and beneficiary organisations would not be achieved to the same extent.

4.2.4 Contribution to 'Europeanness'

The Erasmus+ programme plays an essential role to support the development of knowledge of the EU, raise awareness of the EU common values and foster a European sense of belonging. Evaluation findings show **widespread recognition** of Erasmus+ in **promoting shared values, EU identity, and intercultural understanding.**

Participation in the programme is positively associated with a sense of European identity and positive feelings towards the EU. 23 national reports refer to the positive impact of the programme on promoting awareness of shared European values, EU identity, and intercultural understanding and openness [406]. 91% of the public consultation respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the fact that Erasmus+ contributes to building a sense of European identity/sense of belonging and raises awareness of European values [407].

The 2014-2020 programme monitoring data show that more than 70% of HE, VET and youth mobility participants declared being more aware of European values and European topics after their mobility, with the highest share (82%) registered by participants in youth mobilities. Under Erasmus+ 2014-2020, participation in the KA3 Youth Dialogue is positively associated with increased active citizenship and involvement in democratic life, while participation in the

[403] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Learning_mobility_statistics#Credit-mobile_graduates

[404] RO, SK, EL, BG, MT, LV, PT, SI, PL, HR, HU.

[405] Bulgaria, Czechia, Greece, Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, and North Macedonia. Data source: Eurostat, educ_uoe_mobc01 (ICF own calculations).

[406] AT, BEde, BEfr, BEnl, CZ, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SK, TR

[407] Public consultation report, annex II of ICF study. Respondents familiar or partly familiar with the programme (N = 1 231) were asked to what extent they agreed with a series of statements, including that Erasmus+ contributes Erasmus+ building a sense of European identity/sense of belonging and raises awareness of European values. 60% strongly agreed, 31% agreed, only 7% had no opinion and the remaining 2% disagreed/strongly disagreed.

European Voluntary Service is associated with a positive feeling towards the EU, compared to non-participants[408].

In the higher education field, the 2020/21 and 2022/23 Erasmus Mundus Graduate Impact Surveys [409] consistently report that attitude towards Europe and the EU was among the areas of main personal impact following Erasmus Mundus studies. In both surveys, the area of greatest personal impact was the development of intercultural competences, which appears important given the strong international dimension of this action. Also, the XV ESN Survey [410] concluded that, before mobility, HE students have the weakest sense of belonging to the EU, and rather felt strongly connected to their hometown and their country. In contrast, post-mobility data show that those feelings and perceptions change. Students with a learning mobility experience feel strongly connected to Europe and to the world as a whole, with a striking increase in their sense of belonging towards the EU. On a wider institutional scale, 76% of the European University alliances support the development of democratic competencies and citizenship, reinforcing the role of higher education in strengthening democratic European values [411].

Results from the beneficiary (learners) survey run by ICF show that 88% of the participants in mobility over the period 2014-2023 felt that they had increased their sense of belonging to the EU. Programme participation is positively associated with respondents' sense of European identity and positive feelings towards the EU, particularly for participants from higher education and the youth sector. 49% of surveyed participants since 2014 indicated that they saw themselves as European, compared to 40% of non-participants. Also, 79% of surveyed participants indicated positive feelings towards the EU, compared to 74% of non-participants.

Box 10 – Examples from National Reports

Portugal: 'Erasmus+ is key in promoting the European values of tolerance and acceptance and can be seen as a major investment in the promotion of participation in democratic life and civic involvement, on a more immediate and individual context, and promotion of peace and conflict management, on a broader and global arena. By encouraging the mobility of people, under any of its Key Actions, the Erasmus+ programme provides participants from Portugal with the opportunity to learn about the history, culture, and values of the host countries, thus stimulating tolerance and open-mindedness, a raised awareness of the EU's common values and citizenship, a sense of belonging to a diverse Europe/world, and, ultimately, peace'.

The added value of the Erasmus+ 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 is undisputable when it comes to focusing on **teaching and research on the EU**. Across both programme generations, Jean Monnet Actions focus specifically on spreading knowledge about European integration matters. The operating grants received by the seven Jean Monnet Designated Institutions under Erasmus+ 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 enable them to deliver teaching, training, research and dissemination activities focused on the EU, with a scale of impact that would not otherwise be

[408] Source: beneficiary surveys for learners run by ICF.

[409] Juhlke, R. & Unger, M. (2022). Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Graduate Impact Survey 2020/21. Comprehensive report of results. Institut für Höhere Studien – Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS). Pp. 40 and 43 (https://www.esaa-eu.org/fileadmin/esaa/content/news/files/2022/gis_202021_definite_report.pdf); Robert Jühlke R., Dau J., Unger M. (2023). Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Graduate Impact Survey 2023. Comprehensive report of results (https://www.em-a.eu/post/graduate-impact-survey-2023-results). The 2020/21 impact survey analysed Erasmus Mundus (EM) Joint Master Degree graduates from graduation cohorts 2010/11, 2015/16 and 2019/20 (2 015 responses). The 2022/23 impact survey was conducted among Erasmus Mundus Master Alumni who graduated in one of three double cohorts 2012/13, 2017/18 and 2021/22 (3 396 responses).

[410] ESN survey XV is a quantitative and deductive research based on an online questionnaire that was launched on 29 May and closed on 31 July 2023, constituting a collection period of 2 months for the survey. The data collected are from students who were enrolled in Higher Education in the academic year 2021-2022 and/or the academic year 2022-2023
(https://esn.org/sites/default/files/news/participation_in_learning_mobility_as_a_driving_force_to_change_the_eu.pdf)

[411] European Commission (2025), Report on the outcomes and transformational potential of the European Universities initiative (https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/db43f6ca-da14-11ef-be2a-01aa75ed71a1/language-en).

possible. The College of Europe, the European University Institute, the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) and the International Centre for European Training (CIFE) actively contribute to promoting cultural diversity, cohesiveness and inclusiveness, intercultural and multilingual understanding, and provide a space for research and debate. They also support professionals entering into EU careers. For example, the European University Institute has run the Max Weber programme for talented postdoctoral researchers with an EU-focused research interest. It has created the School of Transnational Governance, running a master in Transnational governance and training mid-career professionals on this topic with a focus on the EU. All these specific activities would not have been possible without Erasmus+ funding.

4.2.5 International added value

Across both programming periods, the programme **conveys international added value** through **cooperation** between EU Member States and third countries not associated to the programme. Furthermore, it **fosters people to people contacts and global connections**.

Mobility activities to/from non-associated third countries represent a small share of the total number of mobilities supported by the programme, yet they benefit participants from almost all countries in the world. Various interviews with beneficiary organisations from the higher education field in non-associated third countries highlight that the projects funded under Erasmus+ 2014-2020 have had a positive impact in facilitating peer learning, upgrading and modernising higher education curricula in countries such as Georgia, Uzbekistan, as well as in some African countries, and in supporting institutional capacity building across various fields. For candidate countries, interviewees also mentioned that the programme has influenced the perception of citizens in candidate countries, aligning with EU priorities during accession negotiations.

Box 11 - Examples of added value for non-associated third countries

Erasmus+ has significantly impacted individuals, organisations, and the higher education system in **Sri Lanka**. Participants experienced personal and professional growth, such as securing internships abroad and pursuing higher education opportunities. The programme facilitated the development of new courses, master's courses, and MOOCs, enhancing university-industry collaborations and improving graduates' employability. Additionally, it boosted language skills, intellectual competence, and global competitiveness, with positive effects including a sense of European identity, social cohesion, and breaking down cultural barriers.

In **Thailand,** the programme promoted higher education internationalisation, establishing it as a key quality indicator at both institutional and national levels, and strengthening relationships with European institutions and the EU.

In **Ukraine**, Erasmus+ has led to revisions to the curriculum for VET teacher training, incorporating more practical elements to enhance work-based learning. Erasmus+ funding is also used to develop the offer of micro-credentials and to use micro-credentials for the professional development of teachers in higher education. On a general level, interviewees stressed the importance of their participation in the programme and the measures taken to adapt to the needs of Ukrainian participants, as a sign of solidarity with their country in times when it is suffering from the Russian aggression.

Source: key informant interviews performed under ICF support study

Some remaining barriers to participation were also mentioned such as:

- Difficulties to take part in joint activities due to visa requirements, limits to eligibility (third countries not associated to the programme do not have access to the same funding opportunities as programme countries), or variations in exchange rates;
- Need for increased coordination, communication and awareness of programme opportunities. Reinforcing the capacity of Erasmus+ National Focal Points (ENFPs), established in the current programme, could contribute to address these needs.

Since 2014, Erasmus+ is **leveraged in EU international relations**, with the programme's mobility component facilitating **people to people contacts, international cooperation and boosting relations with other countries**. The 2021-2027 capacity building actions in higher education and VET sectors support the delivery of the Global Gateway in third countries, in particular in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean. It also plays a role in **attracting talent and bridging gaps in international mobility**. The programme can be further used to extend EU influence in third countries, with suggestions to further expand cooperation in VET and increase synergies with bilateral actions.

4.3. Is the intervention still relevant?

The analysis has been carried out jointly for both programming periods, while highlighting differences or elements relevant to the final or the interim evaluation, and stressing elements of evolution between the two programmes. The assessment was performed against 5 evaluation questions regarding:

- relevance to socio-economic needs and challenges;
- relevance to emerging needs for skills and growth;
- relevance to stakeholder needs;
- relevance to people with fewer opportunities;
- evolution of relevance between the two evaluation periods.

The assessment **is generally positive**. Stakeholders generally agree that the relevance of the 2021-2027 programme has increased compared to 2014-2020 programme, in particular due to clear and explicit horizontal priorities set in the current programme. Two-thirds of the respondents to the NA/EACEA survey[412] confirmed that the 2021-2027 programme is more relevant to the current and emerging needs than the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ generation. Respondents to this survey also reported an improved alignment of programme actions with EU priorities (90%) and with national priorities (62%) compared to the previous programme.

All 32 countries submitting a national report[413] assessed positively the evolution of the programme relevance between programming periods, with regards in particular to: i) the diversification of participants and increased participation in previously underrepresented sectors, such as youth and sport; ii) additional funding for social inclusion; iii) the programme's focus on digital transformation and environmental sustainability.

4.3.1 Relevance of programme objectives and priorities

Based on the consultations carried out for the programme's evaluation, stakeholders generally agree that the **objectives and priorities** set by the current Erasmus+ programme **address well the most pressing socio-economic needs and challenges Europe is facing today**. Around 80% of respondents to the public consultation rated the objectives and priorities of Erasmus+ as relevant. Respondents to the NAs/EACEA survey generally expressed positive views, with 48% affirming its full relevance in the context of today's socio-economic needs and challenges, and an additional 51% finding it partially relevant [414]. Respondents to this survey also perceived strong alignment between individual actions and projects funded by the programme and specific EU priorities such as 'increasing the number of learners and staff who spend some time

[412] NAs/EACEA survey, annex III of ICF study. Question 'Overall, how relevant do you find the Erasmus+ Programme considering today's socio-economic needs and challenges?' (Respondents N=164).
[413] MK did not submit a national report.
[414] NAs/EACEA survey, annex III of ICF study. Question: 'Overall, how relevant do you find the Erasmus+ Programme considering today's socio-economic needs and challenges?' (Respondents N=164).

abroad' (80%), 'improving the quality of education and training', 'promoting equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship"; and 'improving green and digital skills' (69% each) [415]. The mid-term evaluation of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 showed that the pogramme was **better aligned with EU policies** than its predecessor programmes and that it entailed sufficient flexibility to adapt to EU-level emerging needs. This is confirmed in the final evaluation, when looking in particular to the last part of the programme implementaiton. The programme showed a good alignment with the EU political priorities 2019-2024 in its last two years of implementation, paving the way for the 2021-2027 programme and showing adaptability to emerging needs.

The **Digital Education Action Plan** [416], adopted in 2018, relied on Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 for the implementation of its priorities aiming to help education and training systems make better use of innovation and digital technology and support the development of relevant digital competences (see 4.3.3) [417]. The **Communication on preventing radicalisation adopted in June 2016** [418] emphasised the preventive role of the educational and youth sectors by tackling the root causes of radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism. Erasmus+ reflected the objectives and challenges addressed by the 2015 Paris Declaration in the implementation of all three key actions of the programme, as well as in the actions in the field of Sport. This permeated the programme action throughout most of the programming period, with further emphasis on the promotion of multicultural dialogue as from 2018 with the launch of Erasmus+ Virtual Exchanges, funded with Heading 4 of EU budget, also contributing to priorities of EU as a global actor. The piloting of the European Universities initiative was set as a follow up to the European Council conclusions of 14 December 2017, laying the foundations for the European Education Area.

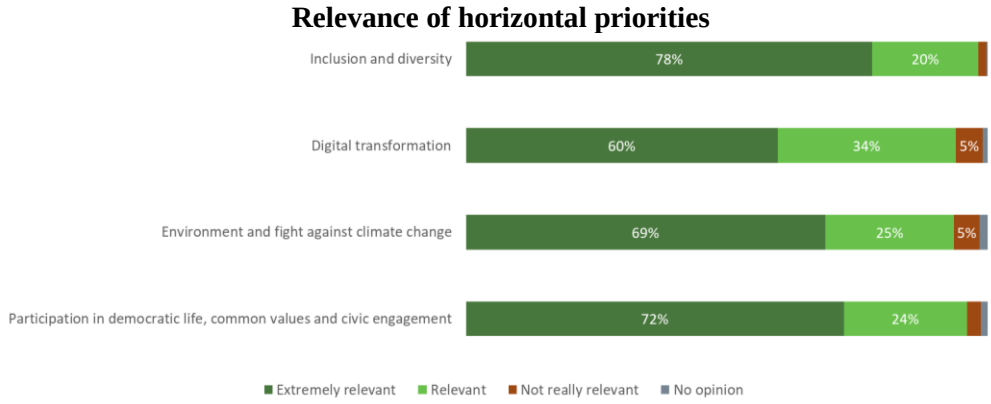
As for Erasmus+ 2021-2027, the promotion of learning mobility in formal, informal and non-formal settings, including its embedded inclusive dimension, addresses both individual and societal needs supporting the building of skills for life and for jobs, and their circulation to form and attract talents worldwide. In parallel, the programme includes 'excellence' and 'innovation' in education as part of its objectives, translated into deepened transnational cooperation among educational institutions. These activities contribute to pursue a set of objectives that, since its early implementation stage, has shown flexibility and adaptability to respond to major challenges (see 4.1.1.8) and effectively contributing to key policy areas, such as the European Education Area, the European Skills Agenda, including the Pact for Skills (see 4.1.1.4). Therefore, they appear relevant to continue support the adaptation of education systems to the rapidly evolving world and to supply the European single market with the skills required by the technological changes and to support EU competitiveness (see 4.3.2).

B**road support is highlighted for the four horizontal priorities**, which were praised by many stakeholders as highly relevant. EU-level stakeholders, in particular, agreed that the programme's priorities aligned well with EU-level socio-economic goals. Four of the 2019-2024 Commission's priorities are embedded into the programme's horizontal priorities, showing a direct correspondence among them [419]. Erasmus+ priorities address those aspects of the broader European agenda that are most relevant to the needs of people in education, training, youth and sport. Between 2021 and 2023, a significant part of both the total number

[415] NAs/EACEA survey, annex III of ICF study. Question: 'To what extent are the individual actions and projects funded under Erasmus + aligned with key EU policy priorities?' (Respondents N=113).
[416] COM(2018) 22 final.
[417] The plan set three priorities for the Commission's work on digital education: (1) Making better use of digital technology for teaching and learning; (2) Developing relevant digital skills and competences for the digital transformation; (3) Improving education systems through better data analysis and foresight.
[418] COM(2016) 379 final.
[419] Priorities of the European Union 2019-2024 | European Union (europa.eu)

of projects funded and grants awarded by the programme were allocated to some of the main EU priority areas. In particular, 12% and 17% of all the projects relate to the 'European Green Deal' and 'Europe fit for the digital age' respectively, with a total of 43% of the total grants spent on these two areas. A mapping of the programme's priorities against public opinions as measured in the Eurobarometer survey in 2022 further confirms their relevance as respondents mentioned 'working on environmental issues and climate change' (22%) and 'defending European values' (18%) as the fourth and fifth most pressing challenges facing Europe today.

The relevance of the 2021-2027 horizontal priorities is confirmed by the results of the public consultation, with more than 90% of respondents agreeing that the programme's horizontal priorities are 'extremely relevant' or 'relevant' to the current needs and challenges of our societies.



Source: Public consultation report

As regards the international dimension, the interviews carried out with EU delegations in Sub-Saharan Africa countries also show a general good alignment of Erasmus+ priorities with overarching ones. In Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Kenya, South Africa and Tanzania, alignment is reported with Erasmus+ priorities, with links to the Global Gateway strategy, particularly regarding support for digitalisation and the green transition. Enhancing connectivity, digitalisation, and innovation are key areas of alignment with Erasmus+, also reflecting broader trends in global education and development.

4.3.2 Relevance to emerging needs for skills and growth

According to the recent Letta Report [420] on strengthening the EU Single Market, learning mobility is part of the environment suitable for knowledge transfer, and acquisition of much needed skills for sustainable growth that Europe should focus on. Skills are also a key pillar of the Draghi report on strengthening European competitiveness[421], representing an essential investment for building a thriving, competitive, and fair economy. This report underlines that over the years, the EU has regularly reiterated the importance of skills' provision and has intervened to promote general policy frameworks for investment in skills and stimulate the formation of general and sector-specific skills across a broad coalition of actors, with a major part of this investment in skills coming from ESF+ and the Erasmus+ programme. The acceleration of the twin – green and digital – transitions has been among the top priorities for the European Union, together with boosting the skills needed for it. Under Erasmus+, two out of four horizontal priorities address the twin transitions. As displayed in the chart above most

420 Enrico Letta (2024), Much more than a market.
421 Mario Draghi (2024), The future of European competitiveness.

respondents to the public consultation consider "the environment and the fight against climate change" and "digital transformation" priorities as either "extremely relevant" or "relevant").

These results are confirmed also by other stakeholders' consultations which show that the 2021-2027 programme is more relevant to green transition and digital transformation than the previous one and that the alignment of project and priorities has improved [422]. 69% of respondents to the NAs/EACEA survey found that Erasmus+ actions and projects have a strong alignment with the EU policy priority "improving digital and green skills" for education and training, right after "increasing the share of students and staff who spend time abroad" [423]. When requested to compare with the previous programme generation, this share rises to 84%, appearing as the priority gaining with the strongest alignment with Erasmus+ projects and actions compared to the previous period. The programme's focus on digital transformation and environmental sustainability is widely recognised as an improvement in the 2021-2027 period in national reports, with 18 explicitly mentioning this [424], although 9 countries [425] noted that these priorities are not yet fully integrated into participant experiences or project implementations.

- ***Relevance to digital transformation***

Erasmus+ is heavily mobilised to respond to the necessary **digital transformation** of education and training, youth and sport fields. Digital aspects of learning mobilities have been progressing in all education sectors in particular since 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic hampered physical learning mobility activities and led to the rapid development of new learning mobility patterns, including remote elements, emphasising the need to accelerate the digital transition and the acquisition of digital competences. The pandemic accelerated the use of blended mobility, as well as the community's debates and efforts to utilise the digital aspects of mobilities more broadly and efficiently [426]. 42% of respondents to the survey run by the Commission in May 2020 [427] to collect views of mobility participants on the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak replied that they continued their activities with different arrangements, such as distance or online learning, with variation between sectors. All 32 countries submitting a National Report have indicated that the pandemic catalysed and accelerated the adoption of digital tools and platforms for project management, communication and virtual learning in Erasmus+. For example, the online self-reflection tool SELFIE for schools, launched in 2018 to help schools reflect on their digital readiness, saw a rapid growth following Covid-19 pandemic, going from 150 000 users in 2018 to more than one million users in April 2021, and up to two million in November of the same year. In July 2023, the tool has reached 6.6 million users [428].

The importance of digitalisation has also been growing in the youth sector. The Council conclusions on digital youth work [429] encouraged the exchange of best practices and peer learning activities, inviting to carry out research to increase knowledge in the field as well as to improve digital competences through non-formal learning and training. Building on the Council conclusions, and in response to such needs for innovation and competence

[422] Survey of expert assessors, annex IV of ICF study.
[423] Survey of NAs/EACEA, annex III of ICF study. Question 6: "To what extent are the individual actions and projects funded under Erasmus+ aligned with key EU policy priorities?"
[424] AT, BE, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LT, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO.
[425] AT, BE, CY, DE, DK, IE, NL, NO, PT.
[426] European Commission (2023), Study on supporting learning mobility: progress, obstacles and way forward (https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/036d1f45-82ad-11ee-99ba-01aa75ed71a1/language-en).
[427] https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-09/coronavirus-mobility-impact-results-may2020_en.pdf
[428] 2021 and 2023 Erasmus+ Annual Reports.
[429] Council conclusions on digital youth work (OJ C 414, 10.12.2019, p. 2).

development, since 2021 17 National Agencies and 4 SALTOs have led a long-term Training and Cooperation Activity on the topic [430]. The project has been cooperating closely with the RAY [431] network, in particular with the RAY DIGI research [432], exploring dimensions of digitalisation in European youth work. Since 2019, the Erasmus+ programme guide highlights digital youth work among the competences and methods relevant for youth workers' professional development, becoming one of the criteria for assessing the relevance of mobility projects of youth workers. Around 500 youth projects, funded between 2021 and 2023, for a total of over EUR 39 million contracted grants, focused on the topic of digital youth work.

The programme nowadays complements physical mobility by promoting distance and blended learning. In the period 2021-2023, 90 000 mobilities were flagged as blended. It also includes a broad offer of learning opportunities focusing on basic and advanced digital competence development (see section 4.1.1.6.) and virtual exchanges, and it supports cooperation projects on digital education, with around 40% of contracted KA2 projects addressing this priority. The overall contribution of the programme to digital transformation priority amounts at EUR 2 018.1 million at the end of 2023 (equal to 21% of the total 2021-2027 implementation)[433]. Particularly important appears the role of the newly set SALTO Resource Centre on Digital to produce resources and materials to help applicants integrate the digital transformation priority in their projects.

KA2 actions such as the Centres of Vocational Excellence contribute to the **development of skills for the digital transformation** by promoting the creation of ecosystems for sustainable collaboration between education and training providers and other stakeholders, including companies in this area. They provide opportunities for initial training of young people as well as the continuing up-skilling and re-skilling of adults, through flexible and timely offer of training that meets the needs of a dynamic labour market, in the context of the green and digital transitions. The 2023 ETF reports on building evidence to support vocational excellence for the digital and green transitions [434] focus on the role of Centres of Vocational Excellence in the green and digital transition, exploring how national Centres of Vocational Excellence are managing the whole-institution change connected to these transitions.

Among the actions supported by Erasmus+ under the **Digital Education Action Plan**, the Erasmus+ Teacher Academies support the creation and application of digital pedagogies and teachers' digital expertise. SELFIE for Teachers, launched in October 2021, helps primary and secondary school teachers assess their digital competences and plan further training, reaching more than 100 000 users by January 2023. Erasmus+ also funds activities related to the priorities of the Digital Education Action Plan, such as the Digital Opportunity Traineeships.

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[430] The project aims, among others, to make suggestions for developing national youth strategies with links to digitalisation, to analyse and promote STEAM activities in youth work, develop new practices for online youth work as well as for virtual and blended mobilities in the framework of EU Youth Programmes: https://www.oph.fi/en/education-development-and-internationalisation/long-term-cooperation-projects/digital-youth-work

[431] Research-based analysis of European youth programmes. The RAY network is an open and self-governed European research network of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps National Agencies. Funded under TCA (KA3), the network conducts research on international youth work and youth learning mobility and contributes to evidence-based youth policy development in the youth field: https://www.researchyouth.net/

[432] The research project conducted more than 60 digital youth work case studies, in and beyond Europe, between 2022 and 2024. The RAY DIGI report was published in October 2024. https://www.researchyouth.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/RAY-DIGI_Key-Findings_20241020.pdf

[433] Source: 2023 Programme Performance Statement (https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/eu-budget/performance-and-reporting/programme-performance-statements/erasmus-performance_en).

[434] https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-11/CoVEs%20in%20the%20digital%20transition.pdf and https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-11/P233084_ETF_Green%20transition_EN_v2-4COL_0.pdf

In 2022, one of the cross-sectoral priorities of the Forward-looking projects Call was specifically dedicated to supporting **high quality and inclusive digital education**, in line with the aims of the Digital Education Action Plan, with projects called to address at least one of the following three areas: a) Key success factors for inclusive and high quality digital education and training; b) Artificial Intelligence in Education; c) High quality digital education content.

The **Erasmus Charter for Higher Education** (ECHE) require institutions to undertake the necessary steps to implement digital mobility management. Contribution to digital and green priorities is considered in award criteria. The **European Student Card Initiative** (ESCI) introduces digital solutions, such as Erasmus Without Paper (EWP) and the Erasmus+ App, to facilitate the exchange of student data and mobility information in a digital, secure and efficient way; it also sets standards to enable the cross-border authentication of students on mobility through the European Student Card. By the end of 2023, 2.3 million European Student Cards had been issued and the Erasmus+ App had registered 218 546 downloads, whereas 3 342 higher education institutions were connected to the Erasmus Without Paper network, leading to 152 253 interinstitutional agreements and 185 027 learning agreements completed fully digitally [435]. Between the end of 2022 and the end of 2023, there was a 12% increase in the number of higher education institutions connected to the EWP network; a two-fold increase in the number of interinstitutional agreements completed digitally; and a 165% increase in the number of learning agreements approved through EWP.

Similarly, organisations awarded with an **Erasmus Accreditation** have to align with 'Erasmus quality standards' including digital education, relevant to the facilitation of the digital transformation priority, as well as green transition aspects.

The programme is supporting the digital transformation in education, leading to the adoption of digital tools, applications and innovative methodologies enabled by digital technology, often following practices discovered during international mobility activities. In certain cases, the programme has contributed to organisations adopting digital transformation as an objective[436]. Digitalisation is also fostered through European Universities alliances. Their long-term joint strategies, which include the development of shared governance structures and pooling of resources to create new **digital resources and virtual campuses**, or further develop their blended learning provision to increase collaboration between institutions across borders [437].

Overall, since 2014, Erasmus+ funded around 29 000 projects on themes related to digital (e.g. digital safety, digital skills, digital content), ICT and artificial intelligence. About one third of these projects were funded in the 2021-2023 period. The programme also supports projects dealing with the use of **artificial intelligence in education**. The number of projects specifically addressing themes related to artificial intelligence is close to 900, out of which 15% specifically address the topic 'Artificial intelligence and data usage', while the remaining ones treat this theme in relation to topics such as 'digital skills and competence, 'new learning and teaching methods and approach', 'creating new curricula', as well as in relation to inclusion topics. This number is still limited but the yearly increase (from only 2 projects contracted in Call year 2014 to 266 in 2023) is a clear sign of increasing relevance. For example, looking beyond the

[435] Erasmus+ annual report 2023, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/833629

[436] Case study on Asociația Sprijin+ (ADU, RO) as well as the case study on the European University alliance CHARM-EU, led by the University of Barcelona.

[437] Some Alliances have a particular focus on technology, including digital innovations, while others have placed a focus on the environment, to develop skills but also to transform higher education itself. Examples of these include Unite!, EU GREEN and UNI Green. Uni Green Alliance provides an overview of actions to reduce carbon balance in their activities.

evaluation period, the number of projects contracted under 2024 Call and specifically tackling the topic 'artificial intelligence' has doubled compared to 2023.

Box 12 - Jean Monnet Module on 'Europe Regulates Robotics' and the 'Centre of Excellence on the Regulation of Robotics and Artificial Intelligence' (EURA)

Europe Regulates Robotics (ERR), funded in 2015, focused on the regulation of robotics in Europe, (i) identifying applicable regulation, suggesting reforms where needed; (ii) fostering a multidisciplinary debate on its legal, ethical and economic implications; and (iii) developing 'robolaw' as a new field of EU studies. It reached these goals through teaching activities, academic events, research, and by fostering a dialogue with policy-makers.

The Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence EURA, run from 2018 to 2022, successfully established itself as a focal point of competence in the field of the regulation of robotics and AI and is today widely recognized for its unique expertise and multidisciplinary methodology. EURA underwent research in many domains, leading to scientific publications. At the same time, it directly impacted policy making by drafting in-depth studies upon request of Italian and EU institutions. Many such considerations are today part of the debate as well as of the solutions advanced by the EU policymakers in their proposals for regulating AI (e.g. the AI Act and the directives on civil and product liability associated with the use of AI).

The case study carried on the projects highlights the role of the Erasmus+ funding, received under Jean Monnet activities, to foster studies, teaching and research on topics of EU interest. The interviewed representatives of the Centre of Excellence, researchers and learners highlighted that in the period 2014-2015 the regulation of technology was not a recognised field of study within European studies. Since then, largely because of the Jean Monnet module on ERR and Centre of Excellence EURA, the EU has emerged as a global leader by **introducing legislation in the field of artificial intelligence**, evidenced by the recently approved AI Act, along with other pieces of legislation.

The Centre of Excellence filled in a critical knowledge gap in the field. This positioned the researchers as forerunners in this area of expertise, benefiting both participating students and the overall organisation of teaching within this action. The Centre of Excellence EURA facilitated the formation of a multi-disciplinary research community that did not exist before, and which continues to contribute to and participate in the Centre's activities, helping to advance the field further. According to the interviewees, both projects **significantly elevated understanding of European issues**, particularly within the area of expertise of the Centre of Excellence on the regulation of robotics and AI.

Although it is outside the evaluation period, the programme is preparing to further support the emerging needs linked to the challenges posed by artificial intelligence. For example, in 2025, the Erasmus+ Forward Looking Project Call (KA2) will have a dedicated priority on **generative AI** in education and training, aiming to upscale and promote the innovative, efficient and ethical use of generative AI in education. Similarly, attention is given to digital well-being, one of the priorities of the 2024 Policy experimentation Call (KA3). Furthermore, in 2025, Erasmus+ will fund cooperation with OECD on developing an **Artificial Intelligence Literacy Framework for primary and secondary level of education to address emerging trends and skills needs stemming from the AI disruption**, contributing to Commission's work on AI literacy guidelines.

- ***Relevance to green transition***

In line with the Council recommendation on learning for the green transition and sustainable development adopted in June 2022 [438], Erasmus+ provides opportunities to promote, support and enable formal and non-formal education and training for the green transition and sustainable development, facilitating cooperation and peer learning for the green transition and sustainable development. Learning mobility, cooperation projects, flagship actions, and activities supporting policy cooperation, contribute to this goal. For example, Cedefop report 'Meeting skill needs for the green transition' [439] provides examples of Centres of Vocational

[438] Council recommendation of 16 June 2022 on learning for the green transition and sustainable development, OJ C 243, 27.6.2022, p. 1.
[439] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4220_en.pdf

Excellence projects supporting (i) collaboration of regional and local stakeholder to address green skill gap, (ii) the introduction of new collaboration practices for skills development or (iii) the promotion of systemic reform of education and professional training via innovative approaches in areas of green transition. This is key to ensure that Europe has highly competent professionals to support the green transition [440].

Support to green objectives is also ensured by Erasmus+ through the basic principles included in its quality standards[441] and the requirements that organisations need to meet when applying for the accreditation. For example, the programme requires higher education institutions to adopt environmentally friendly practices, support sustainable means of travel and reduce the negative impact of mobility on the environment. Higher education institutions are encouraged to develop their own sustainability strategies and connect these strategies with mobility activities. In particular, the negative environmental impact of transnational and international learning mobility needs to be considered [442]. To mitigate the impact of plane travels the programme promotes more sustainable means of transport as a norm for travel below 500 km and provides an increased green travel support since 2024 Call [443] (see also section 4.1.1.6). DiscoverEU offers participants a travel pass and travel opportunities predominantly by train. On the other hand, the programme supports hundreds of projects working on improving learning and teaching practices in the area of education for sustainable development and the green transition. A SALTO Resource Centre on sustainable development was launched in 2023 to provide guidance and support to National Agencies and beneficiaries on the implementation of both dimensions of this priority. Nevertheless, the horizontal priority addressing the green transition is considered the least developed in 8 national reports[444], with growing awareness and interest in environmental issues, identified especially in the school, youth and VET sectors [445]. Efforts to promote green travel are ongoing, as some countries consider the programme's incentives for green travel to be insufficient to have a significant impact on travel choices [446].

The digital and green priorities are also connected as shown by references to the 'twin transition'. Around two-thirds of Europeans think that digital technologies are important to combat climate change [447]. There is, however, also a need to better assess the environmental impact of digital technologies [448] as well as balance the relationship between all horizontal priorities of the programme, for example by considering how inclusion may be affected by longer journey durations, when these could negatively impact the participation of educational

[440] See also recital 7 of the Council recommendation on learning for the green transition and sustainable development.

[441] https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/document/erasmus-quality-standards-mobility-projects-vet-adults-schools; https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/fr/document/erasmus-quality-standards-mobility-projects-youth

[442] Shields, R (2019) 'The sustainability of international higher education: Student mobility and global climate change', *Journal of Cleaner Production*, vol. 217, pp. 594-602.

[443] Since 2024 Call, green/low emission travel is considered the norm and non-green travel the exception, whereas in the previous 'top up' system low emission travel was the exception. The Case-study on the Pädagogische Hochschule Freiburg noted how learners have preferred in some cases to take the train (up to 3 days) to avoid the environmental impact of flying.

[444] AT, CY, DE, DK, ES, NL, NO, SE.

[445] AT, CY, DE, DK, ES, NL, SE.

[446] DK, IE, NO.

[447] See Special Eurobarometer 2959. See also the case-study on Oktatasi es Szakerto Bt. (ADU, HU).

[448] See COM(2023) 570 of 27.9.2023. Some Erasmus+ projects are also examining the relationship between digital technologies and the environment. For example, the 'Green-Co' KA2 project aims to provide educational resources to raise awareness on the environmental impact of the use of digital technologies, not only as a global impact by companies and organizations, but even in the mere role of users. Literature also explores clashes between the twin transitions in a range of other fields outside of education - see Muench, S., Stoermer, E., Jensen, K., Asikainen, T., Salvi, M. and Scapolo, F., (2022) Towards a green and digital future, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, JRC129319.

institutions with fewer resources to cover staff absences, and for individuals with caring responsibilities or those living in remote areas, including outermost regions.

- ***Relevance to competitiveness***

In the evolving socio-economic context, and as also stressed by the Letta and Draghi reports mentioned above, new needs emerge emphasizing the **key role of education and skills development** for current and next generations, to support Europe's competitiveness, economic resilience, innovation capacity and prosperity. A recent study by the Institute of German Economics (IW), surveying over 800 German companies, highlights that, in the current process of transformation of the European economy, the types of skills developed by students during learning periods abroad, such as flexibility, resilience or intercultural competences are becoming increasingly important and particularly valued by 'digital', 'innovative' or 'international' companies [449]. The IW study says that, to survive the tough global competition, the economy and state institutions need university graduates with a high degree of independence, problem-solving skills and proactive behaviour. These are exactly the types of skills more likely to be developed by Erasmus+ participants (see 4.1.1.2). In other words, the skills developed during Erasmus+ mobility activities are fundamental for what the economy needs today.

In the same vein, the **Letta Report** on the future of the single market argues that **a fifth freedom,** encompassing research, innovation, knowledge, and education, should be added to the existing four fundamental freedoms of the Single Market. By embedding those at the core of the Single Market, including learning mobility for all, Europe can according to Enrico Letta create an environment suitable for knowledge transfer, acquisition of much needed skills for sustainable growth. **Skills** are also a key pillar of **Mario Draghi's recommendations**, and represent an **essential investment** for building a thriving, competitive, and fair economy.

In this context, it is important to stress that Erasmus+ is instrumental for supporting the implementation of the **European Skills Agenda**[450] aiming to support people to develop the skills needed to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the green and digital transitions. The Skills Agenda covers several building blocks supported by Erasmus+ such as the **Pact for Skills**, supporting **relevant private and public stakeholders to partner up and take action for lifelong skills development**. Since the 2014-2020 programme, the Erasmus+ **Sector Skills Alliances** (2014-2016), then the **Blueprint Alliances for sectoral cooperation on skills** (2017-2020) and in the 2021-2027 programme the Alliances for Innovation – Lot 2 support collaboration between businesses, trade unions, research institutions, education and training with the aim of developing and implementing strategies to address **skills gaps in specific sectors and industrial ecosystems**. Since 2018, Erasmus+ has funded **40 Blueprints alliances**, out of which 27 under the 2021-2027 programme, addressing skill gaps in e.g. automotive sector, maritime technology, aerospace and defence, textile industry, steel industry, construction, cybersecurity, work integration social enterprises, software services[451]. These large-scale projects gather sectoral skills intelligence, design sectoral skills strategies, review and develop occupational profiles and vocational programmes related to these occupations, and set up a long-term action plan for the local and regional roll-out of their results. Thus, **they**

[449] Die Bedeutung studienbezogener Auslandsaufenthalte im Transformationsprozess der deutschen Wirtschaft, DAAD-IW-Studie, 2025 (https://eu.daad.de/medien/eu.daad.de.2016/dokumente/service/medien-und-publikationen/studien-und-auswertungen/unternehmensbefragung_2024_25_daad_iw.pdf).
[450] COM(2020)274.
[451] European Commission (2024), Bridging projects and policy: Blueprints for sectoral cooperation on skills (c27d24c3-e435-43fc-9200-0fb92ab11c88_en).

foster innovation and competitiveness in areas that experience severe skills gaps, promoting greater preparedness and adaptability to changes in the labour market.

Several Blueprints have also formed connections with **Centres of Vocational Excellence** (CoVEs) and **Forward-Looking projects** creating a synergetic path for driving innovation, fulfilling reskilling and upskilling commitments in specific ecosystems and widening their impact. Centres of Vocational Excellence are innovative and comprehensive transnational partnerships to set up skills eco-systems that make VET agile, innovative, attractive, excellent and inclusive. The initiative is strongly linked to the opportunities and needs of regions and local territories and covers a variety of activities such as innovation hubs, applied research, provision of digital skills at all levels, among others.

Box 13 - Skills4CMT

The **KA2 strategic partnership 'Sector-specific skills development in Coastal and Maritime Tourism'** (Skills4CMT), funded in 2020 and coordinated by SAMK university (Finland) in partnership with five organisations, addresses **skills needs for coastal and maritime tourism sector**. Limited awareness of the specific skill needs, existing skill gaps and mismatches currently hamper the competitiveness of this sector, featured for its importance in the European economy as a driver for sustainable growth, jobs and social cohesion.

Thanks to Skills4CMT, new sector-specific curricula and innovative forms of professional teaching were developed to match the supply of skills with the demand of the labour market. The project aimed to make a fundamental change to sector-specific skills development by improving the quality and digitalisation of thematic higher education in coastal and maritime tourism, since investing in people is a condition for its sustainable and competitive growth.

In this context, **European Universities alliances** also play an essential role. The Draghi Report emphasises that "competitiveness today is less about relative labour costs and more about knowledge and skills embodied in the labour force" while "labour shortages will be most pronounced in high-skilled, non-manual occupations – i.e. those requiring high level of education"[452]. In this context, the alliances can effectively support EU competitiveness and attain EU critical mass of talent, offering access to several European higher education institutions rather than just one institution. The European Universities also embody the Letta Report fifth freedom vision and are seen as central for realising the ambition of opening both learning and labour mobility in the European Single Market, necessary to fill skills and labour market gaps and leverage its opportunities. As shown in a recent study on the Outcomes and transformational potential of the European Universities initiative[453], the European Universities initiative is contributing to bridging skills gaps by equipping students with key future-proof skills and competencies, including in key fields for Europe's competitiveness and strategic autonomy such as STEM, AI, clean technologies, energy, health, notably through student-centred and challenge-based joint educational programmes, some leading to joint degrees, flexible learning pathways, micro-credentials, etc. For example, the alliances boost visibility and attractiveness of European education offer in engineering[454], developing and testing a general European engineer profile defining a set of high-level technical and scientific competencies combined with environmental, social, and multicultural skills, integrating EU values[455] and fit for the competitive global market. Alliances also play an important role for

[452] M. Draghi, The future of EU competitiveness, part A, p. 36.

[453] European Commission (2025), Report on the outcomes and transformational potential of the European Universities initiative (https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/db43f6ca-da14-11ef-be2a-01aa75ed71a1/language-en).

[454] Fuchs, L., Cuevas-Garcia, C. and Bombaerts, G., 'The societal role of universities and their alliances: the case of the EuroTeQ Engineering University', Tertiary Education Management, Vol. 29, 2023, pp. 263–277, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11233-023-09126-x. See also the Case study on TU Berlin - ENHANCE Alliance (HED, DE).

[455] Frame, A., and Curyło, B., 'Bringing Erasmus home: the European universities initiative as an example of 'Everyday Europeanhood'', Journal of Contemporary European Studies, 2023, https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2022.2134986 67

lifelong learning, offering opportunities for re-skilling and upskilling, helping to meet the demand for new skills[456] in the labour market, and engaging learners regardless of their previous qualifications or backgrounds. This multiplies opportunities for students, offering them cutting-edge trans- and inter-disciplinary education opportunities with embedded mobility, which contribute to balanced knowledge flows and talent attraction. Their extended network of over 2 200 associated partners all across the EU and beyond allows those students, academics and researchers to further **foster innovation in regions and cities, contributing to job creation and competitive and attractive local economies**, balanced brain and talent mobility, while interconnecting the ecosystems of the partner universities in different countries.

Last but not least, to ensure that the future generations have the right skills to address emerging challenges, it is essential that teachers are well-equipped to handle skill gaps and technological changes. The **Erasmus+ Teacher Academies** (KA2) promote excellence in teacher education in Europe, tackling some of the most relevant issues in the teaching community. For example, the Erasmus+ Teacher Academy 'ContinueUp' aims to support the development of digital competences for teachers based on DigCompEdu and through a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) module; the Teacher Academy 'acaSTEMy' aims to develop a systemic support structure for high-quality, research-based STEM teacher education, providing STEM teachers with skills and competences to prepare students for their future careers; similarly, ICSE Academy supports the EU's endeavours to minimize the amount of low-performing STEM learners investing in a high-quality STEM teacher workforce, becoming an international centre for research and best practice exchange for innovative STEM pedagogy[457].

4.3.3 Relevance to socio-economic needs of individuals and organisations

- ***Individual level needs***

Across both programming periods, Erasmus+ is considered successful in addressing the needs of individuals from the various target groups. National Agencies and EACEA rate Erasmus+ learning mobility and KA2 activities [458] highly relevant for the majority of their target groups' current and emerging needs. For learners, evidence from the NAs/EACEA survey suggests that the needs and challenges faced by learners with fewer opportunities require further attention.

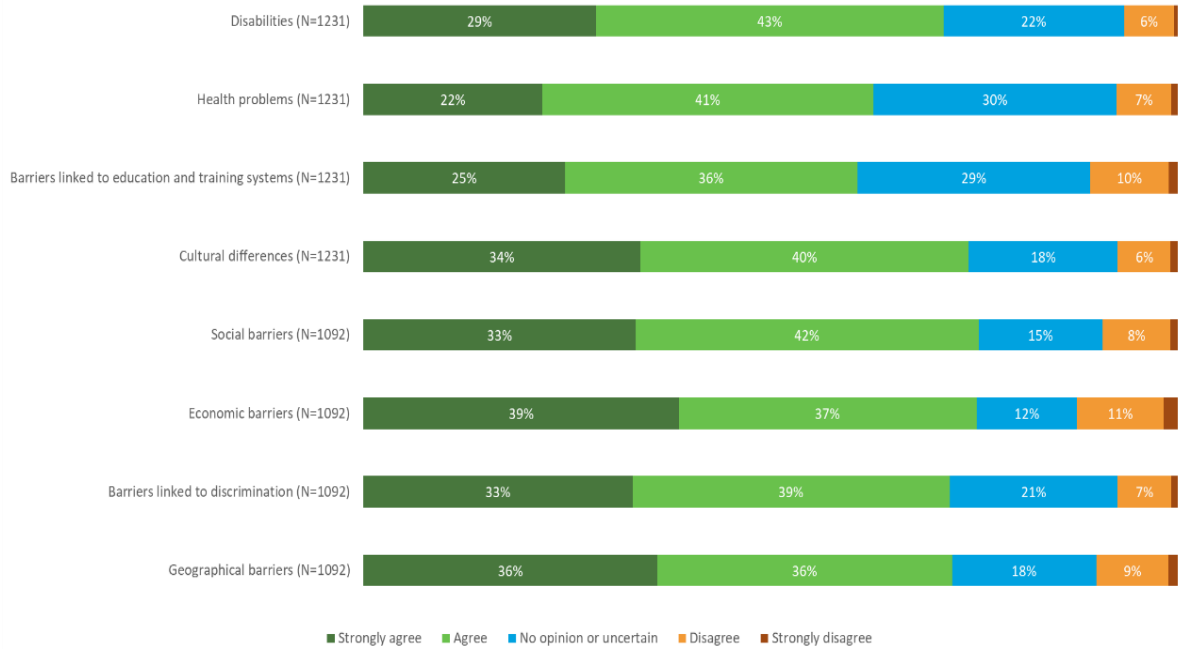
Consulted stakeholders highlighted the relevance of programme actions to the needs of individuals in non-associated third countries through its international dimension. Interviews in EU delegations or programme structures dealing with non-associated third countries (NEOs and regional SALTOs) recognise that Erasmus+ contributes to the employability of young people and graduates as mobility allows them to gain international experience, develop new skills, and broaden their horizons. EU Delegations to Brazil, Bangladesh and Pakistan highlight that Erasmus+ offers significant opportunities for vulnerable groups. There is also consensus among consulted NEOs (Kosovo, Bosnia, Ukraine) and EU Delegations (Asian and African countries) that Erasmus+ projects bring different perspectives to teaching and learning. They report

[456] For example, the European University alliance 'UNA Europa' offers a micro-credential programme in Sustainability which gives a holistic understanding of global sustainability challenges and how to address them (https://www.una-europa.eu/study/microcredential-sustainability).
[457] Case study Pädagogische Hochschule Freiburg (SCH, DE).
[458] NA/EACEA survey, annex III of ICF study. Questions: i) To what extent are Erasmus+ mobility actions (KA1) relevant to the current and emerging needs of the different target groups concerned? ii) To what extent are activities under KA2 relevant to the current and emerging needs of the target groups concerned? iii) Do they address key issues/needs the target groups are facing?' Respondents were requested to evaluate the relevance of KA1 and KA2 to the needs of specific target groups. Depending on their involvement with the various sectors, different groups of respondents received different questions to make sure they only evaluate the actions' relevance for target groups in their sectors of activity.

that in higher education, professors can gain access to resources and exchange with professors working in their fields of knowledge abroad, which directly influences the quality of teaching.

The majority of respondents to the public consultation agreed that Erasmus+ 2021-2027 is successfully facilitating the **participation of people with fewer opportunities** facing various barriers. This is confirmed by the increasing share of participants with fewer opportunities that has risen from around 10% in the 2014-2020 programme to 15% in 2023. The highest level of agreement concerns the success in facilitating the participation of people who face cultural differences, social barriers, and economic barriers. Health problems and barriers linked to the education and training system were considered to be the least positively handled, but still with an overall level of agreement of around 60%. Overall, the views are positive but still pointing to room for further strengthening the inclusivity of the programme.

Barriers faced by people with fewer opportunities[459]



Interviewed stakeholders broadly acknowledged the enhanced focus and efforts to reach people with fewer opportunities. Studies highlight the role of Erasmus+ for involving in learning mobility school pupils with less favourable learning profiles who would otherwise not have the chance of benefitting from such opportunities [460]. The use of blended learning and digital tools is seen as a positive step to increase outreach. At the national level, stakeholders from several countries noted that the 2021-2027 programme made significant efforts to encourage participation among people with fewer opportunities, responding better to the needs of these groups, compared to the previous period.

Financial barriers emerge as a key concern from the various stakeholder consultations as well, further emphasised by the recent high inflation rates across Europe. These observations are also underpinned in the national reports, with insufficient and sometimes ineffective support for inclusion being discussed in 17 reports [461]. In the various consultations, financial barriers

[459] Public consultation report, annex II of ICF study: Question 'To what extent do you agree with the following statements: Erasmus+ is an inclusive programme as it facilitates participation of people with fewer opportunities facing the following barrier(s)' (Respondents: N=1231).

[460] S. Hornberg, M. Becker, N. Sonnenburg, M. Peitz, C. Schreiber (2025). Lernmobilität in Europa (https://erasmusplus.schule/fileadmin/Dateien/Bilder/Dossiers/Politische_Papiere/2025_Hornberg_et_al_Zusammenfassung_Studie_Lernmobilitaeten_Europa.pdf).

[461] AT, BEfr, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PL, SE.

are often mentioned in relation to other barriers, reinforcing the programme's emphasis on the correlations between the various difficulties.

Overall, the definition of people with fewer opportunities as provided in the inclusion and diversity strategy is considered adequate. However, challenges were highlighted by interviewed stakeholders in aligning the criteria for fewer opportunities across diverse contexts, requiring further guidance in the application of the broad EU definition as well as on the implementation and utilisation of the relevant indicators. For example, international key informants stressed that the term 'social inclusion' may be understood differently in third countries participating in the programme.

- ***Organisation level needs***

Public consultation respondents generally expressed positive views about the relevance of the organisational-level specific objectives of the programme[462]. According to NAs/EACEA survey[463], the programme's activities under KA2 and KA3 are the most relevant for education and training, youth and sport organisations and, to a moderate extent, for many other types of organisations, including social partners and civil society organisations. In the sport sector, the need to further strengthened cooperation between grassroots sport organisations was addressed through the new mobility activities available for sport staff since 2023.

The importance of promoting cooperation was further underlined by the socio-economic actors' survey[464]. Across the different organisation types, the primary motivations for participating in the programme included providing new opportunities for learners (80%), an interest in cooperation with other European and third countries (78%), and a desire to establish partnerships with organisations from other countries (75%).

At the same time, interviewees from European level stakeholder organisations perceived the programme as being better oriented towards larger, better-resourced organisations as opposed to smaller ones that would need more support. Limited engagement of smaller organisations, particularly in KA2 projects, was also reported in the national reports from 15 countries[465], due to lack of administrative capacity or limited resources to manage complex project requirements.

The organisations interviewed in third countries not associated to the programme confirmed that learner and institutional needs are addressed via Erasmus+, especially regarding internationalisation, which remains a priority for many universities. In addition, they repeatedly recognised Erasmus+ for its role in supporting institutional capacity-building across various fields. This was particularly noted in African countries as well as in Georgia and Uzbekistan, where the programme has significantly contributed to upgrading and modernising teaching curricula. Policy stakeholders in these countries often use Erasmus+ to enhance their training structures, pedagogical programmes, and mobility schemes.

10 National reports[466] explicitly mention the need to **enhance the programme's flexibility and adaptability to better meet evolving needs and challenges**. For instance, they highlight the need for more flexibility in funding applications, based on the amount of funding requested to

[462] Public consultation report, annex II of ICF study.
[463] NAs/EACEA survey, annex III of ICF study. Question: 'To what extent are activities under KA2 and KA3 relevant to the current and emerging needs of the following organisations? Do they address the key issues these organisations are facing?'.
[464] Socio-economic actors survey, annex V of ICF study. Question: 'What was the main motivation for your organisation to participate in the programme?'.
[465] BE, CY, DE, ES, HR, IE, IT, LT, LV, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, SK.
[466] AT, BEde, BG, CY, DE, EE, ES, FI, HR, PL.

further promote inclusion, adapting the programme's design to better cater to the diverse needs of adult learners, or further exploiting blended intensive programmes (BIPs) as a suitable format to support inclusion.

Furthermore, despite the strong support to programme focus on inclusion expressed in the national reports from 28 countries [467], 23 countries [468] underline that reaching out to people with fewer opportunities is challenging. The identified challenges include the lack of awareness about the programme, complex application procedures, financial barriers, uneven regional participation, limited participation of small organisations in KA2 projects, insufficient, and sometimes ineffective support for inclusion, cultural and linguistic barriers, psychological and mental health concerns. The recommendations put forward in the national reports to address these challenges include simplifying application procedures and reducing administrative burdens, increasing targeted outreach and awareness campaigns, providing additional financial support and resources for inclusion initiatives, developing more comprehensive support systems, including mentoring and guidance and enhancing collaboration with local organisations and stakeholders who are hard to reach.

5. WHAT ARE THE CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED?

5.1 Conclusions

Across both programme generations, Erasmus+ has proven to be successful in delivering a strong European added value, performing well **across key evaluation criteria.** However, the conclusions presented below reflect the limitations in the evidence base, particularly in relation to causality and efficiency, as detailed in Chapter 4. At the same time, **some areas could be improved** for which the external support study made recommendations, focussing on:

- Expanding the reach of the programme, to support greater inclusiveness and broader international scope;
- Enhancing management and implementation: proposed improvements to ease access, simplify management, strengthen monitoring processes, including optimising related tools;
- Increasing sustainability and scalability, through reinforced dissemination and exploitation of results and synergies with other EU programmes;
- Strengthening resilience through increased flexibility.

Erasmus+ 2014-2020

- ***Effectiveness***

Based on available (mainly qualitative) evidence, **Erasmus+ 2014-2020 has effectively delivered on the expected outputs and results**. These have been achieved despite significant disruptions from COVID-19 pandemic that heavily affected the end of the 2014-2020 programming period. The success of the programme lies both in the volume of mobilities, with **some 6.2 million mobility participants supported in the period 2014-2020**, and in the impact generated including improvements in participants' skills, the advancements in organisations' practices and influence on policies.

The 2014-2020 programme aligned well with relevant EU political priorities set for this period, advancing them either directly or indirectly. The priorities addressing jobs and growth

[467] AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK.
[468] AT, BE, BG, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, HR, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SK.

were at the core of the programme implementation, thanks to programme support to learning mobility, the delivery of skills and competences for better employability and support to education systems. The international dimension of the programme contributed to these objectives, in addition to the priorities specifically focusing on strengthening Europe role as a global actor. Priorities related to environmental themes, digital market, civil rights and rule of law were addressed through a sectoral approach and registered increasing importance and number of projects from year to year. Leveraging its role of education programme, Erasmus+ indirectly contributed to the migration policy priority, supporting the integration of newly arriving immigrants. The promotion of fundamental values and multicultural dialogue was further enhanced with the strong alignment to the Paris Declaration since 2016.

The programme activities have demonstrated effectiveness at the different levels of intervention, with strong outcomes delivered through mobility activities and transnational partnerships.

- **At individual level:** the programme yielded significant benefit for individuals, generating positive effects for learners' skills development and supporting ability to learn, critical thinking, resilience. Erasmus+ enhanced academic performance, with programme participants experiencing better results than those who had not taken part in learning mobility. Based on the available evidence, causal link can be identified in few instances in relation to higher education student mobility, on the basis of national data, showing improved graduation results for undergraduate students in STEM fields. Erasmus+ is found effective to foster European identity and deepen knowledge on civic participation, supporting the development of skills important for active citizenship**,** in particular through the activities implemented in the youth field, where positive outcomes were reported across most of its actions. Effects on individual participants appear sustained. For staff, across various sectors, the programme enhanced international networking and fostered transnational partnerships.
- **At organisational level:** the programme managed to effectively support quality improvements in the participating organisations, fostering the creation of new practices and methods. The establishment of organisational networks with the involvement of a large number of different actors from diverse sectors helped create flow of knowledge between educational organisations and business. KA1 staff mobility also contributed to reinforce transnational cooperation, allowing to strengthen ties among organisations. There is evidence of newly created partnerships, and the setup of internationalisation strategies fostered by the programme activities. Outcomes for organisations appear sustained, even though available evidence doesn't allow to establish causal links and quantify impact as well as the extent to which the partnerships formed as an effect of the participation in the programme last over time.
- **At policy/systemic level**: programme objectives at systemic level were linked to Europe 2020 headline targets for education and ET2020 European benchmarks. Although no causal link can be identified, the programme indirectly influenced the achievement of these targets reaching a high number of learners through its activities and improving attractiveness of higher education institutions, including via the piloting of initiatives with high transformational impact, such as the European Universities alliances. Qualitative evidence shows that the programme influenced policy changes with the integration of innovative educational practices into national systems and triggered initiatives pursuing professionalisation and recognition of youth work as an occupational qualification. Although no precise quantification is possible due to the unavailable data, several spillover effects can be observed at the system-level through cross-sectoral action or through the evolution of actions and projects between programme generations. At the same time, while systemic 'spill-over' effects demonstrate the extensive reach of Erasmus+ beyond individual

participants and organizations, challenges persist in upscaling successful project outcomes and translating them into meaningful national changes.

- ***Efficiency***

The 2014-2020 programme funded around 160 000 projects for a total of EUR 17.5 billion. Despite the 40% budget increase compared to its predecessor programmes, **the programme was not able to fully address the high demand** across its different sectors, with low success rates. In particular, the youth sector registered the lowest success rates across the different key actions (32% for KA1, 17% for KA2, 31% for KA3 in 2020). It is estimated that around EUR 8.9 billion would have been necessary to fund more than 44 000 quality projects which were rejected for lack of funds.

The **management structure of Erasmus+ 2014-2020** relying on a combination of direct and indirect management modes has **proven efficient and fit for purpose**, with overall good coordination and communication mechanisms. The distribution of resources, accounting for FTEs and administrative expenditure, appears balanced between both programme management modes, considering the volume of budget and number of projects managed. Overall, the administrative costs for the functioning of the implementing bodies appears reasonable, considering the volume of implemented budget and linked tasks.

National Agencies have confirmed their key role in supporting the implementation of the programme at national level, shaping support activities on the basis on specific needs and national priorities, and providing tailored assistance to participants and beneficiary organisations during the project lifecycle. This role was particularly important during Covid-19 pandemic and widely appreciated by stakeholders. The performance of most of the administrative steps by National Agencies has generally seen improvements from year to year, until the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, which had repercussions also on management aspects. Despite improvements, on average the timely performance of final payments has remained below 60%, requiring further improvements.

The 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme showed cost-effectiveness, although at varying levels throughout its actions. KA1 (mobility) is confirmed to be highly cost-effective, providing high benefits to a large number of learners and staff benefitting from learning mobility in Europe and beyond. The limited availability of other similar interventions underscores its EU added value. When – despite limitations - this comparison is carried out, the cost of the programme appears highly competitive. The cost-effectiveness is further enhanced by the absence of significant areas of inefficiencies, coupled with the use of simplified cost and high demand throughout sectors.

The cost-effectiveness of KA2 (cooperation) and KA3 (policy support) is more difficult to evaluate as a whole, given the variety of outputs, both in terms of types and size, they deliver across sectors. This, together with the predominance of qualitative evidence, limits the possibility of generalising and providing strong conclusions at the level of key actions. Nevertheless, KA2 has provided a strong contribution for the achievement of programme results at organisational level, contributing to fostering international cooperation with third countries in higher education and youth, reinforcing cooperation with business, enhancing internationalisation, and improving learning and teaching methods, and leading to the creation of organisational and professional networks. These benefits, coupled with the high demand, show a good cost-effectiveness, despite the presence of some areas of inefficiencies identified in the funding model and the complex management of one specific action (school exchange partnership - indirect management), both addressed in the succeeding 2021-2027 programme generation.

A comprehensive assessment of KA3 cost-effectiveness is hindered by the highly diversified character of these activities, made of multiple sub-actions with small budgetary envelopes as

well as by the predominance of qualitative evidence. Despite the small funding share they represent (only 3% of the programme contracted grants), the available evidence shows that these activities yielded substantial benefits generating systemic impact, supporting policy objectives and fostering active citizenship. These activities are appreciated for their added value due to their role in supporting EU policy coordination in programme fields, implementation of EU tools, creation of networks, which would not be otherwise possible through national interventions alone. This gives indications of reasonable cost-effectiveness.

The generalised use of unit cost in KA1, representing the biggest share of programme funding, has enhanced the efficiency of the whole programme; however, the use of real cost under part of KA2 and KA3 activities made the management and reporting complex both for beneficiaries and implementing bodies, leading to some inefficiencies. The monitoring system of the programme also showed some limitations due to inadequate coverage of specific areas of the programme intervention, and difficulties to link the measurement of system level indicators to the interventions, underscoring the need for a more refined and comprehensive approach (this led amongst others to the development of a new monitoring and evaluation framework for the 2021-2027 successor programme).

- ***Coherence***

The programme confirms a good internal coherence, thanks to the strong learning dimension informing its activities, functional to improve education, training, youth and sport systems for the benefit of individuals and the creation of more skilled societies. The pilots for the Centres of Vocational Excellence and the European Universities alliances in the last two years of the programming period reinforced the cross-sectoral dimension of the programme, and appear coherent with programme objectives.

The final evaluation also confirms the results of the interim evaluation regarding the high external coherence of the programme. The 2014-2020 programme has been complementary with other policy areas and funding instruments delivering on similar objectives, creating synergies in particular with ESF and Horizon 2020. Compared to the mid-term evaluation, synergies with other funding instruments have slightly increased.

- ***EU added value***

Erasmus+ 2014-2020 delivered **substantial European added value**, surpassing what could have been achieved by individual countries operating at their national level through other schemes. This is due to Erasmus+ **unique framework for mobility, cooperation, and policy development in the fields of education, training, youth and sport across Europe and beyond**. With an average annual budget of EUR 2.6 in the period 2014-2020, and a MFF total envelope of EUR 16.2 billion, including both Heading 1 and 4 budget, Erasmus+ 2014-2020 resulted unmatched in scale, scope, and ability to foster collaboration among diverse beneficiaries, influencing processes in other EU programmes, in Member States and beyond.

The programme yielded added value for individuals and organisations who took part in it, compared with those who did not. For individual participants, it contributed to academic performance, to developing skills and competences, including soft skills, willingness to engage in civic life. For beneficiary organisations, participation in Erasmus+ brought benefits in terms of enhanced opportunities for cooperation across borders, creation of networks, enhanced organisational development, and internationalisation.

In addition, Erasmus+ 2014-2020 was found to play an essential role in raising awareness of shared EU values and EU topics, with stronger results in youth activities. Through Jean Monnet

Activities, the programme supported the development and spreading of knowledge on European integration matters for a better understanding of the functioning of the European Union.

Erasmus+ 2014-2020 conveyed added value through promoting EU policy cooperation and coordination between EU Member States, fostering peer-learning and evidence-based policy development, which would not be achievable through national resources alone. Furthermore, added value was also conveyed through cooperation between Member States and third countries associated to the programme, providing equal participation opportunities and supporting some of these countries in their EU accession preparations. Although only limited to the higher education and youth fields, the cooperation with non-associated third countries facilitated cooperation with organisations across the world, contributed to build capacity and to strengthen the EU's role as global actor on the international scene.

- ***Relevance***

Erasmus+ 2014-2020 showed a good level of relevance with EU priorities and emerging challenges, adapting well over time. The programme reacted well to the migration crisis of those years, putting emphasis on intercultural dialogue and prevention of radicalisation, supporting integration of refugees by leveraging the role of education. The increasing emphasis on the digital transformation in the last years of programme implementation enabled the programme to react more effectively to the challenges posed by Covid-19 pandemic. By remaining increasingly relevant and adapting to the changing world, the programme paved the way for its successor programme supporting measures that have become more and more relevant over years. This was the case for example of the pilots for future flagship actions, for digital tools like Selfie, and of blended mobilities, the latter introduced to face Covid-19 consequences for then becoming an embedded part of the successor programme.

- ***Cross-cutting issues***

    - **Inclusion**

Erasmus+ 2014-2020 performed well to promote equity and inclusion in the youth sector with a high number of projects and support activities. This was possible thanks to the setup of a dedicated strategy, tools and structures allowing to deploy dedicated support to youth participants and organisations and to provide guidance to National Agencies. This comprehensive set of measures proved effective allowing to reach 29% of participants with special needs and fewer opportunities in the youth sector by 2020. The lack of a harmonised definition, approach and strategy at programme level however limited the possibility to enhance the participation of people with special needs and fewer opportunities in the education and training sectors too. The approach remained largely sectoral, with the youth sector being the most equipped to address inclusion challenges.

    - **Response to unforeseen events**

During the 2014-2020 programming period, several unforeseen events influenced its implementation, triggering response and adaptation. The programme showed flexibility to react to 2015 terrorist attacks and the refugee crises that became salient in the same year, incorporating the March 2015 Paris Declaration as a new priority area and reinforcing its focus on the promotion of tolerance, non-discrimination, social inclusion and on the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremisms. During the same period, the uncertainty generated by Brexit determined a significant decrease in the number of both outbound and inbound mobilities from the UK. The withdrawal agreement guaranteed that all projects could continue until their completion and that the UK could continue participating as a fully-fledged programme country until the end of the programming period. This mitigated somehow the

impact on the programme, which only registered a minor decrease in the number of UK organisations. The 2014-2020 programme reacted promptly to the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic adopting swift measures to support participants and organisations, showing flexibility and adaptation, which was judged positively by stakeholders.

Erasmus+ 2021-2027

- ***Effectiveness***

With around 1.6 million participants who completed their mobility in the period 2021-2023, **Erasmus+ 2021-2027 is on track to meet its key outputs, results, and impacts**. Most of the expected outputs and results show good progress to achieve their targets, despite the significant disruptions from Covid-19 pandemic in the initial rollout of the 2021-2027 programme.

At an early stage of implementation, the 2021-2027 programme shows good progress in supporting skills development, fostering EU values and sense of belonging, advancing organisations' practices and influencing policies.

Erasmus+ 2021-2027 aligns well with the 2019-2024 **EU political priorities** and has made an important contribution to advancing them, including at international level. The four horizontal priorities of the 2021-2027 programme have positively influenced systems and norms among participants and organisations. Particularly, the Programme managed to deliver on **inclusion**, with an increasing participation of people with fewer opportunities arising from around 10% in the 2014-2020 programme to 15% in 2023. Additionally, the programme has increased awareness and engagement around inclusion and diversity across participants and organisations. **Digital transformation** efforts have supported participants' digital skill development and promoted the digital evolution of education systems, even if the needs are still high, especially to support digital skills development. The **green transition** priority has increased environmental awareness and encouraged sustainable travel, though results in climate action and carbon footprint reduction remain somewhat limited. Efforts to foster **democratic engagement** have led to greater civic awareness and commitment to democratic values among participants.

KA1 (learning mobility) and KA2 (cooperation among organisations) have demonstrated effectiveness, with strong outcomes in mobility and partnerships, while KA3 (policy support) is seen as somewhat less impactful on individuals and organisations, but valuable in fostering sector-wide benefits. Jean Monnet Actions effectively promote EU knowledge, civic engagement, and cross-national academic dialogue. **The strong continuity of most programme actions between programming periods is assessed as a strength, allowing stability in the management and implementation.** Although at mid-term it is too early to make assumptions on impact, it can be anticipated that the effects of the 2014-2020 programme will carry on with the current programme, likely in a more positive and sustainable manner, particularly on organisations and systems.

- **At individual level:** Erasmus+ yields significant added value for individuals, including participants with fewer opportunities. The programme continues delivering on learners' skills development and supporting learners' ability to learn, critical thinking, resilience. For staff, across various sectors, the programme enhances international networking and fosters transnational partnerships. At this stage, the programme shows very positive results in fostering a sense of European identity and belonging, raising awareness of EU common values and on increasing knowledge for European integration.
- **At organisational level:** Erasmus+ 2021-2027 is progressing well in view of driving improvements for participating organisations, enhancing internationalisation, expanding networks, and supporting increased organisational capacity across Europe and beyond.

Notably, smaller organisations often experience the most substantial benefits, and organisations in the education, training, youth, and sport sectors report durable benefits from their participation.

- **At system level:** The 2021-2027 programme shows progress towards contributing to EU policy development, strategies and cooperation in education and training, youth and sport, providing significant contribution to building the European Education Area, and supporting the Skills Agenda and European Pillar of Social Rights.

- ***Efficiency***

In continuity with the previous programming period, the **Erasmus+ management structure, with its mix of direct and indirect management modes, confirms its efficiency and appreciation by stakeholders.** The performance of National Agencies has seen improvements compared to the previous programming period, despite Covid-19 impact at the start of the programme implementation. The introduction of the **Erasmus Accreditation** in the VET, school education, adult education and youth sectors has reduced costs for the assessment of the KA1 proposals and time required for project selection, as well as for submitting grant requests. Simplified grant forms have reduced administrative burdens and are viewed positively, although further guidance and **simplification of procedures** are needed to enhance efficiency**.** The IT landscape for actions under indirect management experienced issues until the end of 2023, requiring corrective actions, which should be continued.

The interim evaluation highlights the need for additional funding to fully reach the programme's objectives and especially for engaging participants with fewer opportunities. It is estimated that, in the period 2021-2023, EUR 5 billion of additional budget would have been needed to fund around 29 400 quality proposals which were rejected for lack of funds. Flexibility in budget management has been increased in the current programme compared to its predecessor, allowing National Agencies to perform greater transfers among actions under indirect management to ensure optimal absorption. Stakeholders would welcome even greater flexibility in budget allocation.

The 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme demonstrates a **commendable, albeit varying, level of efficiency across its key actions. KA1 shows high cost-effectiveness**, with clear connections between mobility activities and resulting benefits for both learners and staff involved. The key action's evident European added value is coupled with the absence of significant inefficiencies. The cost-effectiveness of mobility activities has improved since the previous programming period, even with COVID-19 mobility restrictions. Demand for mobility surged once activities resumed, raising concerns about whether the programme's budget is sufficient to meet its ambitious objectives and demand for funding across various sectors. The extended accreditation scheme beyond higher education and VET has simplified access to funding and reduced cost and administrative burdens, contributing to increase the cost-effectiveness of KA1. Conversely, the cost-effectiveness of activities under KA2, KA3 and Jean Monnet Actions is more difficult to evaluate given the multi-faceted type of outputs they deliver. Overall, the assessment didn't show areas of inefficiency, suggesting an extension of the lump sum model to further improve cost-effectiveness.

- ***Coherence***

The Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme has significantly improved both its **internal and external coherence** compared to the previous programming period**.**

With its three key actions, and blend of direct and indirect management, the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme has a clear and **well-structured design** that aligns well with its objectives and supports strong cross-sectorial cooperation. The role and place of KA2 show

coherence with the programme intervention logic, but challenges emerge to support the sustainability of its tangible outputs. The collaboration process fostered by KA2 activities is highlighted for its importance to meet programme objectives, as it can lead to the establishment of an extended community of practitioners.

Coherence would still be improved by addressing the separate handling of Jean Monnet Actions, which occasionally leads to confusion among stakeholders.

Erasmus+ has **high external coherence** with other interventions addressing education, training youth and sport at EU, national or international level. Among EU programmes with complementary objectives, ESF+, Horizon Europe and Interreg show the highest potential for synergies with Erasmus+. Although opportunities for synergies have been reinforced under the 2021-2027 programming period, so far they still appear underutilized. The evaluation identifies further opportunities for enhancing external coherence, particularly in relation to the European Solidarity Corps programme, which presents risks of overlaps.

- ***European added value***

Erasmus+ 2021-2027 delivers **substantial and undisputed European added value**, significantly surpassing what could be achieved by individual countries at national or international levels. Erasmus+ stands out from other education and training support schemes due to its **unique and consistent framework for mobility, cooperation, and policy development across Europe and beyond**. The programme is unmatched in scale, scope, and ability to foster collaboration among diverse beneficiaries.

The 2021-2027 programme has enhanced its added value compared to the previous programming period, covering target groups (such as adult learners and sport staff) not otherwise addressed under other types of interventions, effectively addressing emerging needs and expanding its reach. The discontinuation of certain actions between the two programming periods has not diminished the programme's overall value.

Erasmus+ is found to yield significant added value for individuals and organisations who take part in the programme, compared with those who do not. For individual participants, Erasmus+ contributes to skills development, including transversal skills such as intercultural awareness, self-confidence, problem-solving skills, autonomy. For beneficiary organisations, participation in Erasmus+ brings benefits in terms of enhanced opportunities for cooperation across borders, capacity building and quality, organisational development and internationalisation.

In addition, Erasmus+ is found to play an essential role in promoting shared EU values, intercultural understanding and fostering a European sense of belonging. For example, through Jean Monnet Actions, the programme supports the development of knowledge of European integration matters and supports understanding of the functioning of the European Union, beyond the academic environment, reaching schools and the younger generations.

Erasmus+ also conveys added value through promoting cooperation between EU Member States and third countries associated to the programme, providing equal participation opportunities and supporting some of these countries in their EU accession preparations. The cooperation with non-associated third countries has extended compared to the 2014-2020 programme. Although more limited compared to other programme dimensions, the international dimension facilitates cooperation with organisations across the world, contributes to build capacity in many countries and to strengthen the EU’s international relations on a global scale. Erasmus+ contributes to the EU’s public diplomacy and to promoting EU values and views globally.

Discontinuing the Erasmus+ programme would have massive and detrimental consequences. Annually, the programme currently provides in average around EUR 4 billion in funding for

education, training, youth, and sport, supporting activities which would be drastically reduced or - in some countries/sectors - completely non-existent without it. Support for learning mobility, cross border cooperation and internationalisation would be severely limited.

- ***Relevance***

Erasmus+ 2021-2027 is seen as highly **relevant to the socio-economic needs and challenges** in Europe, reflecting both high-level EU priorities and emerging issues from recent crises, doing better than its predecessor in this regard.

The four overarching priorities introduced in the 2021-2027 programme are widely viewed as relevant at both European and national levels and highly contributed to enhancing Erasmus+ alignment with EU priorities; the programme places a strong emphasis on the **digital and green transition**, successfully supporting the development of digital and green skills and the digitalisation and greening of education systems in all sectors. The programme took on board the increasing emphasis on digitalisation, including in response to the consequence of Covid-19 pandemic, which further boosted blended mobility and the uptake of self-reflection tools for assessing digital competences of teachers. However, the evaluation noted that a more balanced approach across all four priorities would increase their impact. Erasmus+ is also found to be highly **responsive** to the diverse **needs of its participants and beneficiary organisations across the various sectors**, although larger, better-resourced organisations often find it easier to navigate the funding and application processes. Further efforts for greater accessibility and inclusiveness are needed.

The programme is also responding to emerging needs related to new challenges posed by technological developments, in particular the emergence of generative artificial intelligence and the provision of skills to support EU competitiveness. The number of projects and initiatives tackling artificial intelligence as well as the themes of digital safety and digital well-being is increasing over years. Similarly, the programme is investing in supporting the development of skills needed to provide the EU single market and industrial sectors with the skills needed to boost EU competitiveness, as highlighted in Draghi and Letta reports. The funding of learning mobility, at the heart of the programme, appears key in this sense and proof of continuous relevance.

Erasmus+ wide recognition and awareness remains higher in higher education; more **targeted communication strategies** are needed to raise awareness on opportunities for all sectors, and to promote access to categories of individuals and organisations with lower participation levels.

- ***Cross-cutting issues***
    - **Inclusion**

The evaluation indicates significant progress in embedding inclusion and diversity in the 2021-2027 programme, across all sectors and actions. Following the adoption of its framework of inclusion measures, the programme put in place mechanisms, including additional funding, to support the inclusion of individuals with fewer opportunities, whose participation has increased during 2021-2023 period compared to the previous programme. The introduction of this framework is assessed positively as it enabled more structured outreach to more participants with fewer opportunities, with benefits in terms of personal development and skills acquisition, in particular for those facing cultural or economic barriers. Challenges persist in reaching specific target groups; recommendations include increasing guidance on inclusion definitions, improving data collection methodologies, sharing best practices, and stepping up funding for actions benefiting underrepresented participants.

- **Response to unforeseen events**

Erasmus+ 2021-2027 has demonstrated resilience and adaptability in responding to significant external challenges. The start of the programming period was heavily affected by **Covid-19 pandemic** with all 2021 mobility being impacted. The response of the programme included mitigating and flexibility measures, continuing from the previous programme, was found effective and appreciated by stakeholders.

Rising inflation also negatively affected the first years of the 2021-2027 programme implementation, while the impact of **Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine** was lower. The programme was able to respond and adapt quickly thanks to flexibility in its implementation and enhanced support mechanisms. It showed resilience and adaptability through digitalisation, online collaboration, and the development of new formats such as blended mobilities; it adjusted the rates of individual support for 2023 call for proposals to cushion inflation, it refocused project activities and opened mobility schemes to incoming participants from Ukraine in all fields of education and training. Only the programme's response to inflationary pressures was considered less effective as stakeholders found that Erasmus+ grants were not sufficiently rapidly adjusted to rising inflation rates.

Future improvements could include more flexible financial planning mechanisms and greater operational flexibility for beneficiary organisations.

- **International Dimension**

Erasmus+ plays a crucial role in fostering cooperation between EU Member States and third countries not associated to the programme, contributing to institutional development and capacity building. While its international dimension has become more significant, with increased opportunities, there is still potential for strengthening this aspect to bolster the EU's global influence amid increasing geopolitical uncertainties. Recommendations include further reinforcing the international dimension of the programme, by supporting international mobility and cooperation with non-associated third countries through programme actions, as well as by pursuing synergies with the relevant EU external action instruments and strategies, such as the Global Gateway or A new Agenda for the Mediterranean.

5.2 Lessons learned

The final and the interim evaluations have identified several topics to inform and support improvements to the programme. These lessons will be at the core of an **action plan** to be approved at senior management board level, once this evaluation is adopted and regularly monitor through set milestones, in line with its internal procedures.

5.2.1. Programme activities

The consistent programme architecture between the 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 periods and the horizontal priorities introduced in the latter programming period have proven effective. This has allowed for continued exposure to similar types of interventions over time, fostering stronger results and impacts and increasing the programme's contribution to broader EU priorities. Both the direct and the indirect management mechanisms are effective in supporting the programme's objectives, contributing as well to its flexibility in addressing unexpected challenges.

Despite the clear progress made in making the programme more **inclusive**, evidence shows some still existing barriers to the participation of people with fewer opportunities. A number of measures and mechanisms have been implemented and brought positive results in the 2021-2027 period. Their regular review and close monitoring by both the Commission and the

National Agencies are recommended by the external support study. Erasmus+ should keep addressing **accessibility** challenges, continuing to expand its reach to participants with fewer opportunities. Further clarifying definitions of people with fewer opportunities and providing clearer guidance on the measures available to support their participation would also enhance inclusivity.

While digital transformation efforts have supported participants' digital skill development and promoted the digital evolution of education systems, the needs are still high. Considerations should thus be given to further enhance the digital dimension and especially digital skills.

The evaluation identified opportunities to **improve coherence with the European Solidarity Corps**. A more in-depth analysis is needed to identify ways to address potential overlaps, improve overall efficiency and increase clarity for stakeholders. More in general, the establishment of clear coordination, cooperation, and communication mechanisms is a key endeavour to enable complementary funding and **strengthen synergies** between Erasmus+ and other EU, national, and regional programmes. Ensuring a wider and systematic dissemination of good practices, both at level of projects and implementation practices, could facilitate synergies among funding instruments and foster projects' upscaling. The evaluation also identified needs for simplifying alternative funding, facilitating transfer of funds between instruments and breaking down barriers between different operational modes and funding rules to build more synergies with other instruments.

There is scope to refine the **focus of some actions**. KA2 has a justified role within Erasmus+, offering funding opportunities producing organisational level impact. However, measures should be considered to enhance impact of produced outputs and their sustainability post-funding, including by re-evaluating the emphasis placed on tangible outputs *versus* the value of the collaborative process that drives innovation.

The evaluation shows the **international added value** of the programme, essential for promoting EU values, intercultural learning, raising awareness of democratic and active participation but also facilitating peer learning and bringing European expertise in the fields of education, training, youth and sport to other regions. As per the recommendation of the external study, Erasmus+ could consider **widening its cooperation with non-EU countries**, enabling more international cooperation with and learning mobility from and to third countries not associated to the programme. It could also significantly contribute to the preparedness and integration of accession countries, with support to capacity building, knowledge-sharing, and management of EU funds, contributing as well to the positive perception of the EU, as highlighted in the evaluation findings. Furthermore, increased mobility experiences and cooperation opportunities between EU Member States and industrialised third countries could strongly contribute to strengthening EU competitiveness.

Erasmus+ is a well-known EU programme. However, further efforts are needed to **increase the visibility** of the opportunities it offers. Outreach could be further improved by sharing and better targeting information about the programme to reach out to new participants and organisations across all sectors. The process of **disseminating and exploiting project results** would require a greater focus to ensure more effective uptake and long-term impact. In the future, the programme should invest in mechanisms that ensure project results are further shared and promoted, enabling future projects to build to a greater extent on existing achievements, rather than duplicating efforts and recreating the same outcomes. Such an approach could not only foster innovation and continuous improvement but also ensure a more efficient and strategic use of EU funds. Improvements are needed as well to extend the reach beyond immediate beneficiaries, thereby contributing to greater visibility, sustainability, and overall impact.

The current programme has undergone significant **simplification**. However, administrative burden remains a barrier to participation and the programme is still perceived as better oriented

towards larger, more-resourced organisations. Improvements should be focused on offering an even more user-friendly and streamlined programme. Simpler reporting procedures, less administrative burden and a streamlined set of rules across the various actions and fields should be assessed to **simplify access for small and newcomer organisations**. Further support is needed through guidance and training on the lump sum system, not fully understood by some beneficiaries.

The rollout of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 introduced an entirely new **IT landscape**. For actions under indirect management, the evaluation highlights important issues which affected the functioning of the IT tools. Building on the efforts made to gradually introduce qualitative improvements, it is crucial that the IT infrastructure remains a key priority for the successful continuation of the current programme and for its successor, ensuring continuity, stability, high performance, and alignment with simplification and user-friendliness objectives.

5.2.2. Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

Several lessons have emerged as well regarding the **regular monitoring, evaluation and data availability**. The adoption of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework in 2023 for Erasmus+ 2021-2027 has been appreciated by stakeholders as it streamlined the measures for its regular monitoring, providing a set of additional indicators on key areas of programme performance. While the interim evaluation of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 highlights notable improvements of the monitoring framework compared to the previous programme, some indicators remain of not easy measurement. The absence of indicators for the Jean Monnet Actions makes it challenging to fully evaluate their performance based on targets. Existing monitoring data are not sufficient to measure the causal link of Erasmus+ activities on its outcome, so that the evaluation of the Erasmus+ activities is difficult to conduct. Both the final and interim evaluations have highlighted these challenges, which need to be addressed in view of the final evaluation of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 and any future evaluation.

National reports on the implementation and impact of Erasmus+ have provided a wealth of data and analyses from national perspectives, representing a great added value for this evaluation. However, the variety of activities and analytical methods at the basis of these reports limit their full comparability and consolidation. The final evaluation of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 would benefit from redefining the role of these reports, emphasizing the need for more comparable and methodologically robust studies. National Authorities could be encouraged to design impact analyses using representative sample sizes and to expand the use of counterfactual methodologies at the country level. This action could be performed with support of the Expert Group on the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes, which would provide the forum for discussing indicators for future evaluations and needs for additional data collections to feed impact indicators. The group could also support the preparation of structured guidance to National Authorities for the preparation of national reports, through harmonised and agreed methods and data collections, ensuring comparability and cross-country analyses.

As part of their tasks, National Agencies carry out a number of studies, survey and reports. However, almost none of these studies could be retained in the final list of papers used for the three meta-analyses carried out for this evaluation. The meta-analyses also highlighted research gaps in areas of great relevance for Erasmus+. The lack of quantitative research papers on the topic of EU values, making use of data directly linked to both the 2014-2020 and the 2021-2027 programming periods, limited the possibility of exploiting the outcomes on this topic for both the final and the interim evaluations. Another major gap highlighted by the meta-analyses concerns the difficult of assessing and quantifying the programme impact on employability, career prospects and labour market outcomes. For higher education student mobility, which represents the biggest portion of Erasmus+ budget, this gap stems from the lack of unique identifiers that would enable linking Erasmus+ applicant data to other administrative sources,

such as employment records, across Member States and associated countries, which are essential for tracking long-term outcomes. In addition, the assessment of the organisational and system level impact of the programme was also limited by lack of quantitative data and studies with contrafactual methodologies on the outcomes generated by these dimensions of the programme. Reflection is needed on how to close these gaps and ensure a sound assessment of programme impact and higher usability of the evidence-base activities carried out by National Agencies for the evaluation of the programme. Monitoring and evaluation activities conducted by National Agencies should be better coordinated, drawing on the existing RAY network in the field of youth. The RIA-AE [469] network, recently established by National Agencies to coordinate evidence base research activities in the adult education sector, represents a good practice to be further expanded across fields. The existing working groups gathering Commission and National Agencies' representatives will tackle this issue as a follow up to this evaluation indicatively as from 2026 to ensure that coordinated analyses can take place across all programme fields, with appropriate methodologies and adequate timing to feed the impact analysis of the final evaluation for the three levels of intervention of the programme. While administrative data connections are essential for tracking long-term outcomes at individual level and cannot be easily replaced by systematic surveys due to limitations in coverage and the high costs involved, in the short term, surveys could still serve as an interim measure until more robust data-linking mechanisms are in place. Therefore, regular survey activities involving both participants and non-participants, facilitated through their respective organisations and coordinated by National Agencies, in cooperation and under supervision from EAC, should also be implemented to enrich the evaluation process, ensure cross-country contrafactual analyses and provide more comprehensive impact analyses.

A more systematic and structured approach to reporting is also needed to ensure easy access to up-to-date data and information, in particular for key action 2 and key action 3 activities. The enhanced reporting should include both quantitative and qualitative data on achievements, outcomes and challenges experienced by funded projects, and complemented by examples of best practices to strengthen accountability and drive policy results. A review of application forms and final reports of programme actions is already on-going. This review aims to facilitate data extraction and to reinforce the monitoring of project results in particular for key action 2 activities, where less data is currently available. This exercise will also support the feeding of the two impact indicators established through Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/2710, with regular quantitative data.

Furthermore, the setup of a **resource centre** will be explored to systematically tackle the monitoring, survey design, data collection for impact evaluation and analysis of the impact of the programme. The resource centre could be operational as from 2028 and work in close cooperation with and under supervision of Commission services, creating the link between the EU level evaluation (Commission) and national level impact analyses (National Agencies and National Authorities), supporting them with guidelines and expertise through a university-based team of researchers. The resource centre could also support the coordination of activities and analyses aiming to feed the final evaluation of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 and coordinate the execution of longitudinal studies based on follow-up surveys addressing participants and non-participants, ideally at 1, 3, and 5 years post-application.

Furthermore, the following additional options as well as options for improving analysis of costs in the final evaluation will be explored in the mid-term to support the preparation of final evaluation of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 and enable further steps for the establishment of a long-term strategy based on comprehensive data strategy, thereby moving away from *ad hoc* data collection

[469] Research-based Impact Analysis of Erasmus+ Adult Education programmes. Founded in 2022, the network counts NAs from 15 Member States and Türkiye at the beginning of 2024.

for each evaluation. The set up of these activities may indicatively kick off in 2026 on the basis of a roadmap included in the action plan that EAC will approve as a follow up to this evaluation:

- **Carrying out counterfactual studies at national level and meta-analyses of Erasmus+ effectiveness, at individual and organisational level:** as outlined above, it is essential to conduct counterfactual analyses to assess the effectiveness of Erasmus+ and the causality of the intervention. To complement and enhance the evidence-based activities carried out by National Agencies, national-level studies could be carried out on a limited but representative sample of institutions by university consortia, based on gaps identified in existing research. Where feasible, cross-country comparisons through meta-analyses could be carried out to enhance the robustness of findings and enable generalisations of findings at transnational/programme level.
- **Feasibility study on data availability and integration, linking education data with data on labour market outcomes**: the study will serve as a basis to identify data sources within the Erasmus+ data platforms for direct and indirect management actions and assess feasibility of linking Erasmus+ participant data with participants' labour market outcomes in Member States and associated countries. The study may also address data availability for tracking costs.
- **Feasibility study on how to collect data not only on Erasmus+ participants but also achieve a representative sample of non-participants** which are in their characteristics close to Erasmus+ participants. Reaching out to non-participants is key for any future impact evaluation. The feasibility study would focus on how the data could be collected to reach representative samples, which incentives could be used, which variables would need to be collected and identify the most feasible data collector.

In the context of the preparation of the post-2027 programming period and the evaluations of a successor programme, reflection is on-going on a set of additional long-term measures, aiming to provide a strategic and more systematic approach to enhance programme data collection, integration, and analysis. These measures could build on a series of targeted options to enable integrated data analysis complementing the current evidence base. The options currently under reflection are:

- **Assess potential changes of the Erasmus+ application and reporting system** to reinforce data collection at individual level, i.e. track all individual applicants for learning mobility activities achieving longitudinal samples, regardless of funding status (i.e. both selected and non-selected mobility participants).
- **Expanding Data Collection from Erasmus+ individual mobility applicants:** depending on the outcomes of the feasibility study explored at mid-term, a modification of the Erasmus+ application process could be implemented in the post-2027 programme to track both selected and non-selected individual mobility applicants for causal impact assessment. Follow-up surveys at 1, 3, and 5 years post-application could be carried out using data directly stored in the programme tools (instead of those stored in organisations' databases).
- **Introducing Unique Identifiers in Erasmus+ Applications (e.g. Social Security Number for individuals, VAT for companies):** this option is a pre-condition to link students/learners outcomes to labour market databases, and quantify Erasmus+ impact on employability based on administrative data. Its potential implementation would be linked to a feasibility study on regulatory and technical aspects of collecting and securely storing unique identifiers at the level of individuals and organisations, and the development of encryption and storage protocols.
- **Policy engagement and roundtables on data sharing in view of linking mobility data to labour market outcomes**: linking data on Erasmus+ learning mobility participants with labour market databases will require close collaboration with Member States and associated

third countries, inter-institutional cooperation, policy and financial support. To this aim, consideration will be given to the organization of technical as well as ministerial-level roundtables to discuss data-sharing frameworks. The Expert Group on Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes could provide an initial forum to test the feasibility of this projects, while raising attention on the challenges and needs, to be carried out with interlocutors at different levels and from different institutions depending on the country. Further established cooperation with Member States and associated third countries, the feasibility of data-sharing should be tested and pilot projects should be conducted**.**

- **Simplifying counterfactual analysis through interoperable data frameworks.** To enhance counterfactual analysis while reducing administrative burden, it could be explored the implementation of interoperable data collection and storage approaches that minimize reporting requirements for Member States. This decentralized approach would align with GDPR compliance, ensuring data privacy while maintaining analytical flexibility. By allowing on-demand access to harmonized data without requiring direct transfers, the system would simplify evaluation processes and reduce duplication of reporting efforts. Technical feasibility, legal frameworks, and implementation challenges should be assessed as a preliminary step.

ANNEX I: PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The interim evaluation of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 and the final evaluation of the predecessor programme (Decide reference: PLAN/2022/281) have been steered by Directorate-General Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC) since May 2022[470] under the scrutiny of an inter-service group (ISG) comprising of representatives of 15 DG (BUDG, SJ, SG, CLIMA, CNECT, EMPL, ENV, INTPA, JRC, JUST, MARE, MOVE, NEAR, RTD and REGIO).

The ISG was consulted at each stage of the evaluation process and reviewed each deliverable produced by the contractor as well as this SWD. Overall, **nine ISG meetings** took place as well as several written consultations on key outputs of the evaluation work, such as: 1) Guidelines for the National reports on the implementation and impact of Erasmus+; 2) text of the publication consultation; 3) factual summary report of the public consultation; 4) Synopsis report; 5) Synthesis of National Reports ('Synthesis report').

The first ISG meeting took place on 31 May 2022 to get a common understanding of what the evaluation should deliver as well as to discuss the evaluation mandate, the distribution of roles and tasks, the evaluation timetable and the draft call for evidence. Following this meeting, the Call for evidence was published on 28 July until 12 September 2022 for seven weeks and received 195 individual replies. The ISG met again on 29 September 2022 to discuss the Technical Specifications (including the intervention logic and the evaluation questions) for the external consultancy study supporting the evaluation work.

In total, six ISG meetings focused on the supporting study and the key deliverables foreseen under the service contract signed with ICF:

1. 23 March 2023: kick-off meeting with ICF
2. 23 May 2023: inception report
3. 13 October 2023: first interim report
4. 15 March 2024: second interim report
5. 1 July 2024: draft final report
6. 9 September 2024: final report

The ISG met last on 8 November 2024 to discuss the draft Commission's evaluation report (SWD) before submission to the Regulatory Scrutiny Board (RSB).

[470] Ares(2022)3394783.

No exception from the usual procedural requirements of the better regulation guidelines was requested for this evaluation.

This evaluation is based on evidence gathered via different channels and an overview is presented in Annexes II and III. The main sources of evidence are internal analyses by the European Commission, reports submitted by the Erasmus+ national authorities on the implementation and impact of Erasmus+ in their territories ('national reports'), analysis and reports by other European Institutions and by the external evaluator who worked on the supporting study, carried out between 2023 and 2024.

CONSULTATION OF THE RSB

A meeting with the RSB took place on 29 January 2024. Following this meeting, the RSB provided a series of comments requiring revision of the draft SWD, with re-submission to the RSB on 16 April 2025. A positive opinion with reservations was issued on 19 May 2025 highlighting some areas of improvements.

The changes introduced in the draft SWD to address RSB observations are described in the table below.

What to improve (RSB comments)	How and where comments have been addressed
(1) The overall conclusions remain overly far reaching and positive, given the acknowledged evidence gaps. The conclusions should fully reflect (un)available evidence base regarding effectiveness (limited demonstration and causal attribution of benefits) and efficiency (no monetisation of benefits, incomplete account of costs) of the programme.	A statement has been added at the beginning of section 5.1, while conclusions have been revised to take further account of the caveats stated in section 1.1.4.
(2) The report should be clear about the robustness of evidence used and related limitations. It should distinguish those statements and conclusions which build solely or primarily on opinion stakeholder data, self-assessment survey data and those which are underpinned by counterfactual methodology based on observational data, and on limitations linked to the methodology such as limited external validity.	The caveats described in section 1.1.4 have been recalled where relevant in the analysis of both the effectiveness and efficiency criteria. The type of sources supporting the evidence base (e.g. studies, surveys, case studies, interviews, programme data) is stated at each occurrence either in the text or in the footnotes. Additional clarifications either in the text or in footnotes have been added, where relevant, on findings that are only based on qualitative evidence, stakeholder perceptions or surveys with non-contrafactual methodology (see e.g. section 4.1.1, 4.1.1.2, 4.1.1.3, 4.1.1.4…).
(3) The benefits at the organisational and systemic/policy levels should be systematically critically analysed beyond selective evidence from several case studies. The results and impacts should be better operationalised to reflect organisational learning (improving quality, changes of methodologies, pedagogies, practice and content) and policy-level improvements based on supported activities such as policy experimentation and evidence-based	Operational definitions of organisational and system level impact have been added at the beginning of sections 4.1.1.3 and 4.1.1.4 to further clarify what should be expected in terms of analysis and outcomes. The evidence collected in the support study from the external evaluator on these dimensions, in great part qualitative and opinion based, was further complemented with programme data and a more in-depth literature review, covering additional

What to improve (RSB comments)	How and where comments have been addressed
approaches. The methodology of the evaluation should allow to assess the identified causal links between activities, results, impacts and progress on the objectives including of sustainability of benefits at least in quantitative terms.	studies and policy documents on top of those exploited by the Contractor. However, given the lack of administrative data on these dimensions of the programme, at this stage it is not possible to collect further data and produce additional analyses.
(4) The cost-effectiveness analysis fails to move beyond a qualitative, perception-based narrative. The report should be transparent that the absence of quantitative efficiency analysis does not allow efficiency and value for money to be demonstrated.	The limitations have been stated in section 4.1.2.4.
(5) The analysis of relevance should better capture the evolving needs regarding skills, in particular regarding competitiveness, AI and technology developments, and what it means for the objectives and design of the programme.	Additional analytical elements on the relevance of programme objectives and its design to competitiveness and technological change have been integrated in section 4.3.1 to complement the analysis provided in section 4.2.3.
(6) A clear implementation roadmap for outlined monitoring and evaluation framework improvements should be included in view of the upcoming 2021-2027 final evolution. The lessons learned on evaluation and monitoring should be developed in relation to data and methods to allow for assessing effectiveness of staff mobility, and interventions at organisational and systemic/policy levels. The lessons regarding collection of data on costs to beneficiary organisations should be added.	Sections 5.2 and 5.2.2 have been revised as follows: - The action plan foreseen in line with EAC internal procedures as follow up to the recommendations stemming from this evaluation has been mentioned in the introductory paragraph of section 5.2 and re-stated in relation to the additional monitoring measures (section 5.2.2). This action plan will include precise milestones and will be set up once the Erasmus+ evaluation is adopted. - Where possible, indicative time references have been added (section 5.2.2). - Clarifications have been added on the activities aiming to address the organisational and system level impact.
(7) While the report acknowledges the 2023 Delegated Regulation and recognises its potential, it still fails to explain how the new indicators will be operationalised. The report should include a clear explanation of how the new indicators will be integrated in practice and how they correspond to proposed improvements.	The indicators adopted in 2023 through the Delegated Act on the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework are all operationalised and their achievements were included in this SWD (see table C of annex VII). In addition: - More explicit references to the 2023 DA have been added at each occurrence throughout the text. - In section 4.1.2.5 on Monitoring mechanism, a footnote has been added, explaining how they are operationalised. - Section 5.2.2 includes additional clarifications on how the activities aiming to reinforce the monitoring and evaluation system of the programme apply also to the impact indicators introduced through the 2023 DA.
(8) The distinction between the two programme periods in terms of structure should be also done for all quantitative data.	All quantitative data based on programme data are fully split between the period 2014-2020 and 2021-2023. It is not possible to further split certain survey data due

What to improve (RSB comments)	How and where comments have been addressed
	to the design of the questionnaires, which do not allow a clear distinction between programming periods.
(9) With 148 pages the report is too long, even taking account of the fact that it covers both a final and an interim evaluation. With a view to ensuring readability it should be significantly shortened, including by taking out redundancies and repetitions throughout the document.	The text has been slightly reduced, removing repetitions.

ANNEX II. METHODOLOGY AND ANALYTICAL MODELS USED

The final evaluation of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 and the interim evaluation of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 was coordinated by the Erasmus+ Coordination unit, in cooperation with the unit Evidence-Based Policy and Evaluation, of the Commission's Directorate-General Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC), with the support of: (i) a technical working group, gathering together representatives of 13 DG EAC units involved in the implementation of Erasmus+ as well as the Executive Agency EACEA; (ii) and an interservice group comprising 15 Commission DGs and chaired by DG EAC. The evaluation process started in 2022 and was guided by the Terms of Reference drawn up for contracting the external evaluator, consulted with the ISG and approved by EAC board of directors.

The evaluation builds on: (i) a large amount of quantitative and qualitative evidence collected through a variety of methods described below; and (ii) a thorough evaluation analysis, applying triangulation of evidence from different sources, ensuring an objective and robust assessment.

Main data sources

The study of the external evaluator was organised around a set of evaluation questions (EQs) under each evaluation criterion. A total of 63 evaluation questions were set in the terms of reference, which were grouped into 27 themes or 'macro-questions': seven under the effectiveness criterion and five each under the efficiency, relevance, coherence and European added value criteria. An evaluation framework was developed by the external evaluator in the inception phase of the study to link the evaluation questions with relevant data sources, indicators and judgment criteria.

To answer the evaluation questions, a broad set of data collection and analytical techniques were used, building on the lessons learnt from the previous combined evaluation of Erasmus+ (mid-term evaluation of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 and final evaluation of its predecessor programmes), and introducing new methods reflecting evolving evaluation requirements and techniques.

The data collection and analysis activities carried out to perform the evaluation have drawn on both **primary and secondary data**, as follows.

1) Secondary data (pre-existing or collected/produced independently from the support study):

- **Programme data**, collected by the Commission in the programme's internal dashboards and tools managed by DG EAC and in publicly available platforms and data collection activities managed by DG EAC – in particular:

Non-public available data - DG EAC dashboards	
Programmes' Results dashboard	Data of Erasmus+ of all Erasmus+ **contracted** projects under **direct and indirect management** of both 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 programming periods

Erasmus+ reporting (MFF 2014-2020)	Operational Dashboard collecting data of Erasmus+ actions under **indirect management**, at all stages of the selection process, for the 2014-2020 period
Erasmus+ and ESC (MFF 2021-2027)	Operational Dashboard collecting data of Erasmus+ actions under **indirect management**, at all stages of the selection process, for the 2021-2027 period
Erasmus+ 'Participant's Survey Indicators' Dashboard	Dashboard displaying monitoring data from Participants surveys 2014-2023 (i.e. survey submitted by programme participants at completion of their mobility experience)
Erasmus+ 'Country Factsheet' Dashboard	Dashboard providing data at country level of **contracted projects** under **direct and indirect management** of both 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 programming periods.
Publicly available data sources	
Statistical annexes of the Erasmus+ annual reports[471],	Review of key programme data published since 2014 as part of the Erasmus+ annual report
Project data from the Erasmus+ Project Results Platform[472]	Public platform displaying information and results of Erasmus+ projects, since 2014, for actions under direct and indirect management

- The non-publicly available data was extracted by the external evaluator from DG EAC dashboards on the basis of an extraction protocol approved by DG EAC. The dashboards were 'frozen' on 5 January 2024 to reflect the state of play of the period under evaluation (2021-2023) and ensure that data would not be updated while the extraction process was ongoing and could be replicated in any moment. In parallel, the main programme dataset extracted in January 2024 has been in certain cases complemented by *ad hoc* extractions performed by EAC and EACEA at a later stage to complement and provide a more accurate picture, in particular for those indicators where changes in the calculation or adaptations in the tools were implemented during the evaluation period. Data extracted from the **2024 Programme Performance Statement** have been also taken into account following the publication of the latter in June 2024. The sources and parameters for data extraction, including the time of extraction, have been made clear at any step to ensure transparency and clarity. Differences among programming periods have been clarified and stated, when applicable.
- The evaluation used the wealth of the programme data available as regards **inputs** (funding), **outputs** (numbers of projects, numbers of beneficiaries, etc.), **results** (satisfaction rate, specific benefits for programme participants), **impacts** (benefits for programme participants).

[471] https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/ro/resources-and-tools/statistics-and-factsheets
[472] https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects

- The monitoring surveys of beneficiaries carried out by DG EAC concern all learners and staff who take part in mobility activities under KA1 over the period 2014-2023. The reliability of the data is strong for the 2014-2020 period and good for the current period. Given the sample sizes (first two years of the programme) the data is considered to be reliable even though 2023 data is still partial.
- Where applicable, the data and extraction methodology reflected the parameters of the Programme Performance Statement. For the 2021-2027 programme, the analysis reflected the full set of indicators covered in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, with exception of two legal basis indicators[473], for which a critical mass of data was not available yet.
- The continuity between the two programming periods of most actions made possible to ensure comparability to a quite large extent.
- The main limitation of this analysis consists in the **incompleteness of 2023 data**, which applies in particular to the most recent actions (e.g. Staff mobility in the sport sector). Nevertheless, the replicability and constant verification of data make the reliability of the underlying analysis sufficiently strong.
- **A network analysis** was carried out by the external evaluator using publicly available data sources as well as programme monitoring data to identify participation patterns in the programme, understand the degree of cross-sectoral cooperation and interconnectedness of country and organisational networks, and compare network characteristics across actions, fields and time.

Other desk research activities:

  - **Literature review**, i.e. structured analysis of literature relevant to the evaluation, including the following types of documents i) key programme documentation (Regulation, guides, Annual work programmes, Erasmus+ annual reports, National Agencies' yearly reports, National Authorities' annual reporting ('October reports')); ii) documentation on programme management, monitoring tools, audit reports, dissemination tools; iii) documentation on other related EU funding instruments and relevant policy agenda developments; iv) documentation on similar national and international policy instruments; v) studies, evaluations, research reports on Erasmus+ carried out both at EU and national level, mainly by National Agencies throughout both programming periods. In total, over 1 500 sources were identified and analysed by the external evaluator using natural language-processing techniques and automated extraction. Additional studies were reviewed for the meta-analyses performed as part of the evaluation (see later).
  - **Project sample analysis**, i.e. review of the outputs and outcomes of a sample of 180 finalised projects (162 under Erasmus+ 2014-2020 and 18 under Erasmus+ 2021-2027) to provide a statistical overview of: the thematic coverage of Erasmus+ projects, the relevance of those topics to key challenges in education, training, youth and sport and the programme's four horizontal priorities; the types of project outputs produced (beyond the basic classification available in the programme database); the availability of project outputs in the public domain; and the level of citation or references to project outputs. The sample was selected randomly based on statistical criteria with

[473] "The share of organisations and institutions that consider they have developed high-quality practices as a result of their participation in KA2" and "the share of organisations and institutions that consider that the procedures for taking part in the Programme are proportionate and simple". Data is collected through final reports of funded projects, therefore there was no critical mass of data available at the time of the evaluation; moreover, data related to these indicators has been processed and displayed in the relevant dashboard as from February 2024 only.

some manual adjustments to ensure a more appropriate coverage of a variety of actions. The analysis was carried out through desk research on public available sources. The analysis, initially intended to identifying system-level effects from the projects examined or systemic-effects linked to the horizontal priorities of the programme, encountered some implementation challenges, which limited its scope and its use for data triangulation.

2) National Reports: In accordance with Article 24(3) of the Erasmus+ Regulation, Member States and third countries associated to the programme have submitted reports on the implementation and impact of Erasmus+ in their respective territories. Their findings are summarised in the so-called '**Synthesis report**[474]' drawn by the external evaluator. The reports were prepared by National Authorities on the basis of a guidance note sent by the Commission in January 2023, including a list of evaluation questions, grouped under the five evaluation criteria. It was not mandatory for National Authorities to answer all questions, nor were they limited to answering those questions. The national reports mainly cover the actions which are being implemented under indirect management by the National Agencies. At the same time, National Authorities were invited to comment, when relevant, on implementation of actions under direct management in the country, though this was not compulsory. The preparation of national reports on the implementation and impact of Erasmus+ involved a range of data collection activities and analytical methods in participating countries. Those used most often included:

- interviews (individual or group, used by 29 out of 32 countries),
- surveys (26 countries),
- focus groups (15 countries)
- workshops (12)
- qualitative literature/document reviews (18 countries),
- quantitative analysis of programme data (15 countries)

Source	Scope	Volume
National reports on the implementation and impact of Erasmus+ ('Synthesis report' drawn up by ICF)	National evaluations on the implementation and impact of Erasmus+, submitted between end of February and early June 2024, as per Article 24(3) of the Erasmus+ Regulation, addressing mainly actions under indirect management, covering all sectors and all evaluation criteria.	**34 reports from 32 participating countries** NB: Belgium submitted 3 distinct reports representing the Flemish, French and German-speaking communities. North Macedonia did not submit any report.

3) Primary data, collected for the support study through stakeholder consultations and including[475]:

[474] Stand-alone report [not published yet]
[475] Consultation activities are summarized in the synopsis report.

- **Public Consultation and Call for Evidence:**
  - **A public consultation** was conducted to gather opinions, including forward-looking perspectives, from citizens and stakeholders on the programme's performance across all evaluation criteria as well as on programme response to recent unforeseen events. Different (closed and open-ended) questions were asked depending on the level and scope of knowledge of the programme declared by each respondent. Most respondents were either organisations or practitioners, who declared to be familiar with Erasmus+. All programme sectors were represented, although with quite different levels of participation. Consultation findings are not considered representative due to the selection bias inherent to any open recruitment, but they can be triangulated with other sources to inform the evaluation.
  - The feedback collected through the **call for evidence,** conducted by the Commission in 2022 was also analysed and retained as part of the evidence base.

Source	Scope	Volume
Public consultation (Annex II of ICF study report and synopsis report)	To gather the opinions and perspectives of citizens and other stakeholders, the public consultation was available in all official EU languages on the dedicated European Commission website from 15 September to 8 December 2023.	**1243 contributions** from all participating countries**,** sent either by individuals replying in their personal capacity (40%) or on behalf of their organisations (60%), and representing all programme fields. **64 position papers,** analysed in annex II of ICF study report
Call for evidence (Annex X of ICF study report – not published – and Synopsis report)	To collect stakeholder views on the programme performance and help define the scope of the evaluation. Conducted by the Commission from July to September 2022.	**195 submissions**

- **Targeted consultations**, focusing on target groups of programme beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries as well as on different types of stakeholders:
  - **Surveys of beneficiaries and control groups**: To analyse the effects of participation in the programme, the external evaluator conducted a set of surveys addressing beneficiary learners (higher education students, VET learners, school pupils, adult learners, youth outside of formal education/ training) and staff (in higher education, VET, schools, VET, adult education, youth and sport organisations). A total of 11 surveys were conducted among all categories of individuals who participated in an Erasmus+ projects from 2014 (post-mobility in the case of participation in mobility activities). In the case of staff, the survey touched upon also KA2. A corresponding survey was carried out among non-participants in all target groups to evaluate and analyse the effects of taking part in the programme in terms of outcomes, experiences, and attitudes (counterfactual analysis). The Erasmus+ monitoring survey ('participants report) shows a subjective evaluation by beneficiaries

themselves of their experience, whereas these set of surveys was run through factual questions whether learners or staff demonstrate different attitudes, competences or beliefs compared to a control group, which was asked the same questions.
The surveys were disseminated to contactable beneficiaries of the current and previous programme. However, findings cannot be always generalised to the whole programme with sufficient confidence because of the varying size of the samples of the target groups and related control group, which in some cases were not large enough to make judgements.
Control groups of non-beneficiaries with similar profiles were set up to compare their responses with those Erasmus+ participants. This has been achieved in matching respondents in the treatment group (i.e. Erasmus+ beneficiaries) with 'similar' individuals in the control group, to come up with a 'matched sample' where subjects are alike in some background characteristics, called covariates, such as gender, age, etc. Regression analysis was used to compare the outcomes for the two groups while controlling for compositional differences in terms of the demographics/characteristics considered, making it possible to statistically measure the existing correlation with participating in Erasmus+ (i.e., whether participation in the programme contributed to improving outcomes for programme participants).

- A **pre/post-mobility survey targeting school pupils and young people** outside of formal education/training was also carried out to obtain a finer measurement of short-term effects of programme participation on the youngest target groups taking part in mobility activities. For young people outside formal education/training, the 'pre-mobility' component of the survey did not gather a sufficient number of replies to ensure the implementation of the 'post-mobility' component. Hence, the post-mobility survey was only carried out for school pupils.
- The surveys of learners and staff were complemented with **a survey of socio-economic actors,** i.e. organisations taking part in the programme: companies, public authorities, civic organisations, sectoral bodies, etc. in addition to the traditional target group organisations.

Source	Scope	Volume
Beneficiary surveys of learners and staff (Annexes XV and XVI of ICF study report, both not published, and synopsis report)	Individual beneficiaries of mobility actions (learners and practitioners) and cooperation actions (practitioners) as well as control groups (non-beneficiaries)	Learners' survey: 25 413 Erasmus+ participants (test group) and 2,094 non-participants (control group) Staff survey: 26 332 participants (test group) and 2 894 non-participants (control group).
Pre-post mobility survey of school pupils (Annex XVII of ICF study report, not published, and synopsis report)	Pupils before and after their mobility as well control group in the same school/class	366 pupils took part inf the survey (261 in the 'pre-mobility' component and 105 in the 'post-mobility' component), as well as 149 non-participants (123 in the 'pre-mobility' component and 26 in the 'post-mobility' one)
Survey of socio-economic actors	Organisations (companies, public authorities, civil society organisations, NGOs) taking part	1 550 valid replies

(Annex V of ICF study report and synopsis report)	in the programme in addition to those representing the primary target group across all sectors and action types.	

- **Surveys of staff involved in the programme implementation,** including:
  - **Erasmus+ National Agencies and EACEA**. The survey covered extensively all evaluation criteria and types of actions, from the specialised perspective of the key managing bodies.
  - **Erasmus+ expert assessors** of project proposals and final reports for actions under direct and indirect management. The survey was used to complement data on projects, in particular about the quality of applications, including the new accreditation scheme, final reports as well as the efficiency of the selection process.

Source	Scope	Volume
Survey of National Agencies and EACEA (Annex III of ICF study report and synopsis report)	Agencies' staff in charge of programme implementation (55 National Agencies and the Executive Agency EACEA). One response per sector designated by each agency	164 valid responses (156 from National Agencies and 8 from EACEA respondents)
Survey of Expert assessors (Annex IV of ICF study report and synopsis report)	Assessors supporting project selection and those supporting evaluation of final reports across both programming periods (actions under direct and indirect management)	1 842 valid replies (70% of the respondents dealing with indirect management, 20% with direct management actions, 10% with both)

- **Qualitative data collection through interviews to key informant and case studies**
  - **Key informant interviews** aimed at collecting information from key informants at international, European and national levels, targeting respectively i) EU delegations and stakeholder organisations in third countries not associated to the programme, ii) Commission's and EU agencies officials as well as EU key stakeholder organisation representative, and iii) national policy officers and stakeholder organisations in 25 countries. The interviews focused on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and coherence evaluation criteria.
  - **Case studies** served to complement insights gained from key informant interviews and surveys, in particular about how the programme generates organisational and system level changes including spill over effects from individuals participating in mobility to other individuals and to organisations. Case studies focused on projects and organisations, randomly selected based on a combination of pre-determined criteria (e.g. variety of countries, experienced and newcomer organisations, balanced coverage of programme actions). The 44 case studies covered

all five evaluation criteria collecting experiences from interviewees and the main changes they noted following the participation in Erasmus+ on themselves as individuals, on their organisations and on systems.

Source	Scope	Volume
Interviews of key informants (Annex XIV of ICF study report, not published, and synopsis report)	Semi-guided interviews at international, EU and national level involving stakeholders from 38 countries (21 Member States, 4 associated third countries; 13 non associated third countries) across all programme sectors	**267 interviews**: 42 with international level interviewees, 60 with European-level interviewees, and 165 with national-level interviewees.
Case studies (Annex VIII of ICF study report, not published, and synopsis report)	Case studies mainly at organisation and system level to assess spillover effects and changes at organisation and system levels and to analyse different perspectives (staff, learners, organisation, project and system)	**44 case studies**, of which 29 at organisational level in all programme fields, 8 on Jean Monnet Actions (JMA), 7 'system-level'. 186 stakeholders were interviewed

- **Social media analysis:** it was used to understand and measure awareness about the programme and its actions among different audiences on various social media platforms, track and analyse audience reaction to programme communications, campaigns or events, capture engagement metrics, as well as collect and analyse insights around sentiment and themes relevant to the programme and its actions. In addition, data from relevant social media accounts managed by DG EAC was also analysed.

Source	Scope	Volume
Social media analysis (Annex XII of ICF study report – not published)	X/Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok were analysed over the period going from August 2021 to January 2024. The privacy settings in Instagram, Facebook reduced a lot the input from these social media. As a result, 97% of the traffic taken into account was from X (Twitter). The user profiles were impacted too, resulting in a lower number of posts that could be collected from the target groups making larger use of Instagram or Facebook.	Over 150 000 social media posts were collected for the analysis, mentioning one or more programme-related keywords; some sectoral keywords were used too.

In addition to these 'traditional' data collection and analysis activities, more advanced and innovative methods were also used to complement the evidence base:

- **Three Meta-analyses were carried out** to summarise in a structured way the conclusions of several scientific studies looking at individual level impacts linked to the programme's participation and focusing on three topics: skills development, employability and European values. The meta-analyses carried out provide insights into the effectiveness and EU-added value evaluation criteria, specifically concerning the individual-level effects of the programme. They also helped test the causal links between the participation in the programme and the effects observed at the individual level. The application of this method in the context of the Erasmus+ programme presented several challenges due to lack of high-quality primary studies meeting all the methodological requirements and enabling three full meta-analyses on three distinct Erasmus+ related topics. By applying a range of remedies (e.g. a careful selection and definition of the topics, inclusion of studies in other languages, consideration also of 'grey literature', etc.), it was possible to reach – and for two topics to even to exceed – the minimum threshold of ten papers for the three research questions looking into higher education student mobilities. Still, in none of the three cases did the pool of studies include a minimum of 10 papers with a directly comparable outcome measure. Therefore, a sign and significance meta-analysis was carried out instead of a traditional effect- size analysis. Regarding mobilities outside higher-education student mobility, the systematic literature review and the following selection process identified no more than one paper each.
- **Behavioural analysis**, conducted as an information provision experiment to evaluate the effectiveness of providing key information to individuals who had never participated in Erasmus+ in view of encouraging them to participate in Erasmus+. The experiment was run through an online survey on a panel of over 10 000 non-participants, using rigorous methods from behavioural and experimental economics. The experiment also aimed to shed light on the factors that hinder participation with a counterfactual approach.

Source	Scope	Volume
Meta-analysis Annex VI of ICF study report	Individual level effects mainly of higher education student mobility around three topics: i) skills development, ii) employability and iii) European values	Final retained papers after application of inclusion and exclusion criteria were 19 papers for the topic 'skills development', 11 for the topic 'employability' and 10 for the topic 'European values'
Behavioural experiment Annex VII of ICF study report, synopsis report	Analysing factors for non-participation in Erasmus+ targeting higher education students, VET learners and young people through an information provision experiment	10 985 non-participants, aged between 18 and 30 years old in 10 countries

Main methods used

The evidence collected through these various data collection and activities was then analysed using the approach of systematic synthesis and triangulation to review, systemise and confirm findings and to provide robust answers to the evaluation questions. To this end, various methods were used to analyse and synthetise the collected data, including the following:

- **Textual analytics** using natural language processing to automatically pre-process large amounts of structured or unstructured text data, extract information relevant for the evaluation, and quantify text data where relevant. These techniques were used across several activities of the support study, including in particular the literature review, the analysis of answers to open questions in the various consultation activities, and the analysis of position papers submitted by respondents to the public consultation, as well as to extract and process information from the national reports on the implementation and impacts of the programme, to support the production of the report summarising the national reports ('synthesis report').
- **Qualitative comparative analysis** to analyse patterns in qualitative data. This was in particular used to analyse the write-ups of key informant interviews and the national reports to retrieve relevant information and produce usable summaries.
- **Benchmarking analysis**, using the data collected on comparator programmes to address evaluation questions on the efficiency of grants and participant volumes of Erasmus+ with respect to other programmes; coherence and complementarity of Erasmus+ with other national and international programmes; and assessing the added value of Erasmus+. In each case, only the programmes and metrics relevant for the specific question were used. To enhance the analysis, insights from public consultations and key informant interviews were incorporated to compare Erasmus+ with other programmes or to assess its synergies, and complementarities with. The activity determined a shortlist of 32 programmes, including both bilateral (two-way) and multilateral (multi-way) cooperation or exchange programmes. The data collected by the external evaluator on comparator programmes is largely based on desk research and publicly available information. The granularity of this data is therefore variable and limited for most comparator programmes. As a result, the depth of the benchmarking exercise resulted limited. Actions were put in place to ensure the best-match possible with the characteristics of the Erasmus+ programme under analysis in the relevant evaluation questions and the best 'like-for-like' comparison possible. However, the quality and granularity of the data available made necessary a trade-off between the number of comparator programmes retained for the analysis and the depth of the analysis itself. Consequently, data at different levels was applied to each of the evaluation questions tackled for this analysis to ensure accuracy and alignment with the objectives of the relevant question.
- **Cost-effectiveness analysis:** The cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA) performed for the previous combined evaluation of Erasmus+ has shown that a 'one size fits all' CEA approach is not appropriate given the diversity and specific characteristics of actions supported under Erasmus+ over two programming periods, meaning that different approaches need to be applied to different actions/clusters of actions. A classic CEA calculation of cost per unit (output or result achieved) is not meaningful across the programme. As a result:

- The depth and breadth of analysis undertaken for each action/cluster of actions is proportionate to their budget allocation, resulting in a primary focus on learning mobility activities (KA1). For learning mobility, a full CEA was undertaken, incorporating internal benchmarking for more granularity (analysis at the level of sectors/fields, distinguishing between short-term and long-term actions).
- Cooperation activities (under KA2) and policy support activities (under KA3) generate a multiplicity of effects that cannot always be aggregated and compared, and it is not possible to identify and isolate the costs of the specific effects generated by an action. These projects generate a diversity of effects that are often of a 'soft' or intangible nature and are therefore neither measurable nor comparable across projects. This called for a 'lighter' CEA approach offering a more limited level of granularity and relying more on qualitative evidence and evaluators' judgement, as well as on case studies.

The application of both approaches was carried out through a multi-step approach requiring i) the identification of inputs, ii) the gathering of evidence relating to the effectiveness and the added value of the cluster of actions, iii) determining whether the volume of expenditure appears reasonable and cost-effective also in comparison with comparator programmes, where applicable, iv) identifying any evident inefficiencies and identifying the potential to improve the efficiency. For KA2, KA3 and JMA, the difficulty of identifying comparable programmes did not make it possible to apply all the steps above, limiting the analysis to a qualitative assessment.

The process of **data triangulation** was applied throughout the support study carried out by the external evaluator, by systematically analysing and reviewing the findings from different sources of evidence as they came in. Both methodological and data triangulation were used, to build on the outputs of the different quantitative and qualitative research methods used, and to compare and consolidate data from various sources, with a view to provide a complete and reliable picture and enhance the validity of the findings.

This process made it possible to cross-check evidence as well as to identify and examine possible bias and inconsistencies, thus making it possible to differentiate the evidence arising from single sources from the one corroborated by several sources and thus underpin the evaluation findings. It also helped identify remaining gaps in the evidence base, allowing appropriate action to be taken to fill them.

In addition, **five stakeholder workshops** were organised at various stages of the evaluation process, which were used to review, fine-tune and confirm the study findings at various stages of their elaboration, as well as to capture additional expert input to support their further development.

ANNEX III. EVALUATION MATRIX AND, WHERE RELEVANT, DETAILS ON ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS (BY CRITERION)

EFFECTIVENESS

Main evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgement criteria and indicators of success	Data collection methods	Section of the SWD
EQ 1 Degree of the achievement of the programme intervention logic	1.1 To what extent have the expected outputs, results and impacts been achieved in both evaluation periods? Is there a need to streamline the programme's objectives? Are there any objectives missing from the Erasmus+? *[applicability: both programming periods]*	▪ The programme is on track (or shows progress) in achieving its targets in both evaluation periods ▪ The programme has been effective in achieving its objectives ▪ There are no gaps in the programme's objectives	▪ Programme data analysis ▪ Beneficiaries surveys; targeted consultations to NAs/EACEA and socio-economic actors. ▪ Scoping interviews ▪ Case studies ▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Analysis of public consultation results ▪ Analysis of behavioural experiment ▪ Analysis of national reports ▪ Network analysis ▪ Meta-analyses ▪ Literature review	4.1.1.1
	1.2 Identify, describe and quantify (if possible) the spill-over effects between various actions (clusters of actions) of Erasmus+ 2021-2027, as described in the intervention logic. *[applicability: 2021-2027]*	▪ Spill-over effects are identified, or are recognised by stakeholders, at various intervention level. ▪	▪ Surveys ▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Network analysis ▪ Case studies ▪ Review of studies/evaluations ▪ Meta-analyses	4.1.1.3 4.1.1.4
	1.3 To what extent has Erasmus+ 2021-2027 had a transformative effect on systems, values and norms, particularly with respect to the four horizontal priorities of the programme? 1.4 To what extent do the actions/activities/projects supported by Erasmus+ 2021-2027 contribute to mainstreaming climate actions and achieving climate objectives? To what degree are they designed in an eco-friendly manner and incorporate green practices? *[applicability: 2021-2027]*	▪ The programme demonstrates positive impact in promoting its four horizontal priorities ▪ Participants show increased knowledge and behavioural change related to the four priorities ▪ Stakeholders recognise the transformative effect of the programme on the four horizontal priorities	▪ Programme data analysis ▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Analysis of public consultation results ▪ Targeted consultations: NA/EACEA survey, socio-economic actors' survey	4.1.1.6.

Main evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgement criteria and indicators of success	Data collection methods	Section of the SWD
	1.5 How effective are the forms of cooperation and the types of action under Erasmus+ 2021-2027 and Erasmus+ 2014-2020 for the purpose of supporting the political priorities, including its international dimension? Could the international dimension of Erasmus+ be strengthened? *[Applicability: both programming periods]*	• The thematic coverage of the programme and its actions supports the political priorities • Outputs, results and impact are thematically aligned with political priorities • The international dimension of Erasmus+ responds to region-specific priorities and strategies and contributes to political priorities	• Programme data analysis • Key informant interviews • Review of programme documentation	4.1.1.4. 4.2.5
	1.6 Which fields and actions of the programmes are the most effective considering the needs? *[Applicability: both programming periods]*	• The programme actions/fields address needs and challenges of their target groups • There is clear link between programme actions and the resulting outcomes and impact for participants and organisations	• Targeted consultations: NA/EACEA survey • Case studies	4.1.1.
	1.7 Can conclusions be drawn on the effectiveness of actions that have been continued and those that were discontinued between the two periods? 1.8 What conclusions can be drawn on the likely impact of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 given that significant parts of its actions are a continuation of Erasmus+ 2014-2020? *[Applicability: both programming periods]*	• There is evidence of impact for those actions of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 which continued in Erasmus+ 2021-2027; • Discontinued actions did not create important gaps in Erasmus+ 2021-2027 effectiveness; • Erasmus+ 2021-2027 covers all activities that are associated with strong positive effects • There is evidence of continued effectiveness and future impact of actions continued from Erasmus+ 2014-2020 • Comparison between the reported outcomes for discontinued and continued actions;	• Key informant views at national level • Analysis of national reports • Case studies • Programme data analysis	Not covered in SWD

Main evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgement criteria and indicators of success	Data collection methods	Section of the SWD
		• Comparison of scale of actions discontinued and continued: numbers of participants; numbers of applications		
	1.9: Jean Monnet in schools: how well is the action known? What added value does it bring and what re the first results? *[applicability: 2021-2027]*	▪ The action is well known ▪ The action has been delivering effective results ▪ Stakeholders recognise effective results of activities performed under the actions	▪ Case studies	Not covered in SWD.
EQ2 Programme implementation and architecture	2.1: How effective are the measures that contribute to the high-quality and inclusive implementation of the programme, including support for activities and bodies in enhancing the strategic implementation of Erasmus+? What additional measures or changes to the existing support actions may contribute to further supporting the high-quality implementation of the programme? *[applicability: 2021-2027]*	▪ Extent, scale of action, reach and impact of support activities and bodies ▪ Stakeholders recognise relevance and usefulness of support activities and bodies	▪ Programme data on support activities and bodies ▪ Analysis of programme documentation ▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Targeted consultation: NA/EACEA survey ▪ Analysis of public consultation results	Not covered in SWD
	2.2: To what extent are programme results adequately disseminated and exploited? *[applicability: 2021-2027]*	▪ Type, extent and take-up of dissemination activities of programme results ▪ Stakeholders consider EU and national dissemination efforts useful and adequate ▪ The project results are available and used ▪ Volume and relevance of references to the programme in social media ▪ Number of visitors and visits to the EPRP	▪ Mapping and analysis of dissemination tools and actions ▪ Analysis of programme documentation ▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Surveys of participants ▪ Analysis of Public Consultation results ▪ Review of projects sample ▪ Social media analysis ▪ Analysis of national reports	4.1.1.7.
	2.3 How has the perception and reputation of the programme changed among stakeholders since the mid-term evaluation of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 and what were the key factors in that change?	• Stakeholders show overall positive perception of the programme • There is evidence of positive evolution of the programme reputation and	▪ Targeted consultations ▪ Social media analysis ▪ Scoping interviews ▪ Key informant interviews	4.1.1.7.

Main evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgement criteria and indicators of success	Data collection methods	Section of the SWD
	[applicability: both programming periods]	perception between programming periods • Social media channel show evidence of positive sentiment on the programme	▪ Workshop with National Agencies ▪ Case studies	
EQ3 Influencing factors (external environment)	3.1. What negative and positive factors (internal and external) seem to influence outputs, results and impacts? 3.2. How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact the implementation of the two generations of the programme, and what was the effect of the measures taken in response to the pandemic? 3.3. What was the effect of the measures taken in the frame of the programme implementation in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine? *[applicability: 2014-2020 for 3.2, 2021-2027 for the whole EQ]*	• Evidence of factors with a positive influence on the level of outputs, results and impacts • Evidence of factors with a negative influence on the level of outputs, results and impacts • The programme is successful in addressing areas where negative factors have been identified • Stakeholders' perceptions of the most significant external influencing factors ▪ The programme has adapted well to external factors with limited repercussions on its implementation; ▪ Stakeholders consider good the flexibility and resilience of the programme to external factors ▪ The measures taken in response to the pandemic have been effective; ▪ The measures taken in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine have been effective; ▪ Evidence shows the positive impact of measures undertaken by the programme	• Scoping interviews and literature review • Analysis of programme data • Case studies • Key informant interviews • Analysis of national reports • Analysis of public consultation results • Targeted consultation: socio-economic actors survey, beneficiaries' surveys • Literature review and review of programme documentation	The SWD only covers external influencing factor in section 4.1.1.8. The remaining elements are covered in the study from the external evaluator
EQ4 Unintended effects	4.1. What, if any, have been the unintended effects (and their magnitude) on Erasmus+ 2021-2027 and Erasmus+ 2014-2020? *[applicability: both programming periods]*	▪ Unintended effects that have occurred are positive ▪ No negative unintended effects have been identified	▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Analysis of national reports	4.1.
EQ5 Impacts on people with	5.1. What are the differences in the impact of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 actions on people with fewer opportunities (including people living in remote	▪ Participants with fewer opportunities report benefits from their participation in the programme	▪ Beneficiaries' surveys ▪ Behavioural experiment ▪ Analysis of National reports	4.1.1.2.

Main evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgement criteria and indicators of success	Data collection methods	Section of the SWD
fewer opportunities	regions such as the EU outermost regions and overseas countries or territories) who traditionally do not engage in transnational or international activities? *[applicability: 2021-2027]*	▪ Participants with fewer opportunities show higher or lower impacts than others participants ▪ Share of people with fewer opportunities participating in the programme	▪ Meta-analyses ▪ Analysis of programme monitoring data ▪ Analysis of public consultation results ▪ Case studies ▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Targeted consultations: NA/EACEA survey	
EQ6 Sustainability	6.1. To what extent are the effects likely to last after the intervention ends, both cumulatively and the level of each implemented grant? *[applicability: 2021-2027]*	▪ The effects of participation (of individuals and organisations) in the programme are likely to last in the long-term ▪ The programme generates tangible and long-lasting impact	▪ Targeted consultations: beneficiaries' surveys; NA/EACEA survey ▪ Case studies ▪ Analysis of public consultation results ▪ Meta-analyses ▪ Project sample analysis	4.1.1.1. 4.1.1.2. 4.1.1.3.
EQ7 Counterfactual	7.1. What if the Erasmus+ programme had not existed? Would the relevant sectors (higher education, school education, adult education, VET, youth and sport) be supported to a comparable extent? *[applicability: both programming periods]*	▪ Without Erasmus+ the activities funded by the programme in the relevant sector would not be supported/would be supported at a lower extent ▪ Comparison of the outcomes for learners and staff participating in the programme versus those not participating	▪ Review of programme documentation ▪ Programme monitoring data ▪ Targeted consultations: Surveys to NAs/EACEA, Survey of socio-economic actors ▪ Beneficiaries' surveys (learners/staff) ▪ Analysis of public consultation results	4.1.1.2.

EFFICIENCY

Main evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgement criteria and indicators of success	Data collection methods	Section of the SWD
EQ8 Cost-effectiveness of different actions	8.1 What is the cost-effectiveness of various actions of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 and Erasmus+ 2014-2020? How do the relative costs and outcomes (effects) of various programme actions compare within and across the programme fields?	▪ Activities funded under Erasmus+ generate reasonable changes or effects in relation to their costs; ▪ The volume of expenditure appears reasonable and cost-effective in light of the performance and EU added value delivered	▪ Programme data analysis ▪ Programme documentation analysis ▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Case studies ▪ Survey to NAs/EACEA	▪ 4.1.2.4.

Main evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgement criteria and indicators of success	Data collection methods	Section of the SWD
	[applicability: both programming periods]	▪ Evidence of EU added value	▪ Analysis of national reports ▪ Analysis of public consultation results	
EQ9 Size of programme budget	9.1 To what extent is/was the size of the budget appropriate and proportionate to what Erasmus+ 2021-2027 and Erasmus+ 2014-2020 set out to achieve? 9.2 To what extent is/was the distribution of funds across the programme fields and key actions appropriate in relation to their level of effectiveness and utility? 9.3. What are the budget absorption rates and capacity per sector and key action, and how do they affect the quality of proposals? *[applicability: both programming periods]*	▪ The resources allocated to the different fields/actions is appropriate and justified on the basis of cost-effectiveness and achievement of intended outputs, outcomes and results ▪ Stakeholders consider budget adequate at action/field/project level ▪ Extent to which a different mix or lower funding would have reduced the scale of benefits achieved (projects scaled back or implemented over a longer timeframe with lower levels of funding) or would have compromised the quality of results	▪ Programme data analysis ▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Targeted consultations: beneficiaries, NA/EACEA surveys, Expert assessors surveys ▪ Case studies ▪ Analysis of public consultation results	▪ 4.1.2.1.
EQ10 Alternatives	10.1. What is the prospect of other policy instruments or mechanisms providing a better cost-effectiveness ratio? *[applicability: 2021-2027]*	▪ The volume of programme expenditure appears reasonable and cost-effective compared to other policy instruments ▪ There is evidence of other policy instruments that could fund similar types of actions/activities and achieve similar or better results at lower costs	▪ Programme data analysis ▪ Analysis of programme documentation ▪ Targeted consultations: NA/EACEA surveys ▪ Key informant interviews ▪	Not covered in SWD
EQ11 Efficiency of management architecture	11.1 To what extent is the implementation and management structure of actions implemented under direct and indirect management appropriate, efficient, and well-functioning? Are there differences in efficiency of programme management and implementation between the bodies in charge of indirect and direct management or between different programming periods? If so, what	• The programme implementation and management structures have proven to be appropriate, efficient, non-burdensome and cost-effective, both under direct and indirect management • The differences, if any, in the costs of programme management and implementation between national agencies and EACEA are justified	• Programme data analysis • Key informant interviews, • Targeted consultations: Beneficiaries' surveys; NA/EACEA survey • Programme documentation analysis • Analysis of national reports	4.1.2.2

Main evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgement criteria and indicators of success	Data collection methods	Section of the SWD
	are the differences and what are the underlying reasons? *[applicability: both programming periods]*	• Comparison of the programme management and implementation structure, the roles and responsibilities among the two programming periods shows evidence of: - Clearly defined roles and responsibilities - No overlaps/duplications - Effective and efficient cooperation between management bodies • Analysis of key administrative steps as indicator of programme management efficiency		
	11.2 How efficient is the cooperation between the different actors and entities involved in implementation and supervision of the programme, and to what extent does the Commission fulfil its guiding role in the process? How has this changed between the two programming periods? What are the reasons for potential changes? What are the areas for improvement? *[applicability: both programming periods]*	▪ Supervision and implementation roles and responsibilities of the various actors are clearly defined and understood by stakeholders ▪ Division of functions is logical, with no overlaps/duplication observed ▪ Distribution of programme supervision functions is well understood by the different management bodies ▪ The cooperation between the different management bodies is efficient ▪ Most stakeholders are satisfied with current management structure ▪ EACEA, national agencies, Erasmus+ Committee satisfied with the Commission's guiding role ▪ The current management structure represents an improvement on the previous programming period ▪ There is little or no evidence of inefficiencies in management structure	▪ Programme data analysis ▪ Analysis of programme documentation/reporting ▪ Targeted consultations: NAs/EACEA survey, socio-economic survey	4.1.2.2.
	11.3. To what extent is the information flow and communication efficient, fast and well-organised between different actors?	▪ Information and communication roles and responsibilities of the various actors are	▪ Programme data analysis ▪ Key informant interviews	4.1.2.2.

Main evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgement criteria and indicators of success	Data collection methods	Section of the SWD
	What are the obstacles or challenges (if any) in the good flow of information and how can it be improved? *[applicability: 2021-2027]*	clearly defined, and there are no overlaps/ duplication in their functions ▪ Distribution of information and communication functions is well understood by the different stakeholders (particularly applicants and beneficiaries) ▪ The flow of information and communication between the different actors is effective and efficient ▪ Most stakeholders are satisfied with communication structure ▪ The current information and communication flow represent an improvement on the previous programming period ▪ There is little or no evidence of inefficiencies in information and communication flows	▪ Surveys: NA/EACEA survey, expert assessors survey	
	11.4. To what extent has **the system of simplified grants** resulted in a reduction of the administrative burden for national agencies, the EACEA and programme beneficiaries and participants? Are there differences across actions or fields? What elements of the programme could be changed to further **reduce the administrative burden and simplify** the programme's implementation, without unduly compromising its results and impact? *[applicability: 2021-2027]*	▪ There is evidence that simplified grants have reduced administrative burden for national agencies, EACEA and programme beneficiaries and participants ▪ Stakeholders are positive about the used of simplified grants	▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Workshops with NAs and stakeholders ▪ Targeted consultations: NAs/EACEA survey, socio-economic actors survey ▪ Desk research ▪ Literature review ▪ Programme monitoring data ▪ Analysis of national reports	4.1.2.3.
	11.5. To what extent are the **management support tools** adequate and sufficient to support sound management of the programme? *[applicability: both programming periods]*	▪ There is evidence that management support tools (including IT landscape of both direct and indirect management, the complete set of programme and guidance documents) are adequate and sufficient ▪ Stakeholders' perception of management support tools is positive	• Overview of existing management tools • Key informant Interviews • Targeted consultations: NA/EACEA survey, expert assessors' survey • Workshops with NAs and programme stakeholders	4.1.2.2

Main evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgement criteria and indicators of success	Data collection methods	Section of the SWD
			• Analysis of national reports	
	11.6. To what extent have **the antifraud measures** allowed for the prevention and timely detection of fraud? *[applicability: both programming periods]*	▪ The anti-fraud measures in place are appropriate and robust ▪ Stakeholders' perceptions of decreasing prevalence and nature of fraud ▪ The number and scale of fraud incidents reduced over time	▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Secondary data review Annual Activity Reports; Anti-Fraud strategy; Supervision Strategy ▪ Analysis of national reports ▪ Targeted consultation: NAs/EACEA survey	4.1.2.6.
EQ12 Efficiency of monitoring	12.1. Efficiency of monitoring mechanisms: a. To what extent are the monitoring mechanisms applied by the Commission, the EACEA, and the national agencies efficient/cost effective, and have they been simplified in the programming period 2021-2027? b. To what extent are the monitoring mechanisms of the beneficiaries and participants by national agencies and the EACEA effective and proportionate? c. To what extent are internal monitoring mechanisms of activities of the national agencies and the implementation of the programme at nationl effective and proportionate? What are the areas for improvement, considering the need for smooth and effective implementation of the programme? Is there scope for further simplification in all programme dimensions or actions? **12.2. Efficiency of indicators** To what extent do the indicators identified for the programme in the legal base correspond to the monitoring purposes? How could the overall management and monitoring system be improved? *[applicability: both programming periods]*	▪ Monitoring mechanisms are relevant and useful for managing the programme and making policy decisions ▪ Stakeholders' perception of the available monitoring tools and outputs is positive ▪ Participants/beneficiaries do not regard the reporting requirements as onerous and satisfied with format and frequency of reporting ▪ Monitoring tools are fit for purpose ▪ Monitoring at programme and project level is efficient ▪ Monitoring systems are sensible and proportionate ▪ Indicators have a clear purpose and are related to the priorities/objectives/activities of the programme ▪ Indicators chosen for monitoring purposes are proportionate and meaningful	▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Targeted consultations: NA/EACEA surveys, socio-economic actors survey ▪ Analysis of national reports ▪ Secondary data review of mechanisms and tools for project-level monitoring; mechanisms and tools for programme-level monitoring ▪ Analysis of programme documentation/reporting ▪ Secondary data review of monitoring indicators and reports, the legal base ▪ Key informant interviews	4.1.1.5.

COHERENCE

Main evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgement criteria and indicators of success	Data collection methods	Section of the SWD
EQ18 Internal coherence	18.1. To what extent are the objectives of different programme fields within Erasmus+ consistent and mutually supportive? What evidence exists of synergies between the different programme fields and actions? How well do different actions work together? To what extent are there duplications, overlaps, or other clashes between the programme fields and how are they dealt with? 18.2. To what extent are the actions implemented under direct and indirect management coherent? How do they interact/complement each other? 18.3. Key Action 2: How appropriate is the structure of KA2? How complementary are the Actions and what contributions do these make in reaching the Erasmus+ objectives? *[applicability: both programming periods]*	▪ There are logical linkages between the programme fields and actions ▪ Stakeholders confirm the existence of synergies between different programme fields and actions ▪ There are no duplications or overlaps between programme actions or fields ▪ Stakeholders appreciate the coherence and complementarity of the different actions ▪ Actions complement each other. • KA2 is coherent with the rest of the programme/actions and contributes delivering on programme's objectives	▪ Programme data analysis ▪ Scoping interviews ▪ Workshops with NAs and stakeholders ▪ Targeted consultations: NAs/EACEA survey, beneficiaries' survey ▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Case studies ▪ Analysis of public consultation results ▪ Analysis of national reports	4.1.3. 4.1.3.1.
EQ19 External coherence – EU level	19.1 To what extent is Erasmus+ 2021-2027 coherent with relevant EU policies and programmes with similar objectives, such as Creative Europe, European Solidarity Corps, Horizon Europe (in particular EIT, MSCA and 'Widening participation and strengthening the ERA' parts), ALMA, 2021-2027 Cohesion Policy programmes funded under European Social Fund (ESF)+ and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) (including mainstream and ETC programmes) 19.2 To what extent is Erasmus+ coherent with other EU funding programmes, such as InvestEU, Recovery and Resilience Facility, Citizens,	▪ Programme objectives are complementary with objectives of other EU funding instruments ▪ There is no evidence of overlap in actions funded in the programme and other EU funding instruments ▪ EU-level stakeholders' perception on complementarity across EU funding instruments is positive ▪ The Programme is coherent with relevant EU policies ▪ The Programme's design and mechanisms feed into EU policies and vice-versa	▪ Literature review and desk analysis of other EU funding programmes and EU policy agenda documents ▪ Secondary data on programme actions funded and actions funded by other EU funding instruments ▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Targeted consultations: NAs/EACEA survey, socio-economic actors survey ▪ Analysis of national reports ▪ Analysis of public consultation results	4.1.3.2.

Main evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgement criteria and indicators of success	Data collection methods	Section of the SWD
	Equality, Rights and Values (CERV), EU4Health, Digital Europe, Life 19.3 To what extent is Erasmus+ coherent with external financing instruments, such as the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) – Global Europe, Instrument for PreAccession (IPA III)? 19.4. To what extent has Erasmus+ 2021-2027 proved complementary to other EU interventions/initiatives in the fields of education and training, youth and sport? To what extent is it building effective synergies or interactions with other EU funding programmes or financing instruments? 19.5. To what extent does the design of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 (including needs, objectives, activities, outputs and effects) provide appropriate links and support to **the EU policy agendas, both internal and external**? *[applicability: 2021-2027]*	▪ EU-level stakeholders' perception on coherence at the EU policy level is positive ▪ There is evidence of synergies between the programme and other EU funding programme or financing instruments		
EQ20 External coherence – national level	20.1. To what extent is Erasmus+ 2021-2027 coherent with various interventions pursued at national level which have similar objectives? To what extent has it proved complementary to countries' interventions/initiatives in the fields of education and training, youth and sport? *[applicability: 2021-2027]*	▪ Collected evidence shows that the objectives and nature of actions under Erasmus+ are coherent with other national interventions ▪ Stakeholders' perception on complementarity between national programmes/initiatives and Erasmus+ is positive	▪ Literature review ▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Targeted consultations: NAs/EACEA survey ▪ Analysis of public consultation results ▪ Analysis of national reports	4.1.3.2.
EQ21 External coherence –	21.1. To what extent is Erasmus+ 2021-2027 coherent with various international-level interventions with similar objectives?	▪ Collected evidence shows that the objectives and nature of actions under Erasmus+ are coherent with other international programmes	▪ Literature review ▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Analysis of public consultation results	4.1.3.2.

Main evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgement criteria and indicators of success	Data collection methods	Section of the SWD
international level	*[applicability: 2021-2027]*	▪ Stakeholders identify synergies between Erasmus+ and other international-level programmes/initiatives	▪ Targeted consultations: NAs/EACEA survey ▪ Analysis of national reports	
EQ22 Evolution of coherence (internal and external)	22.1. What is the coherence of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 compared to the coherence of Erasmus+ 2014-2020? Has it improved in the new programme generation? *[applicability: both programming periods]*	▪ There is evidence of increased programme coherence between the two programming periods, as measured through aspects of internal and external coherence ▪ Stakeholders recognise the increase in coherence and its key contributing factors	▪ Literature review ▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Analysis of Public Consultation results ▪ Targeted consultations: NAs/EACEA survey ▪ Analysis of national reports	4.1.3.2.

EU ADDED VALUE

Main evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgement criteria and indicators of success	Data collection methods	Section of the SWD
EQ23 Overall added value	23.1. What is the additional value and benefit from EU activities, compared to what could be achieved by Member States and other countries at regional and/or national and/or international level? 23.2 What does Erasmus+ 2021-2027 offer in addition to other education and training support schemes available at both national and international level? 23.3 What would be the most likely consequences of stopping the Erasmus+ programme? *[applicability: 2021-2027]*	▪ Evidence on volume, scope and benefits of the programme confirm its overall added value ▪ The analysis of size, target group coverage and geographical coverage of similar national/international programmes show Erasmus+ offers the biggest added value ▪ Stakeholders' perception of the programme added value against other comparable national/international schemes is positive ▪ Stakeholders consider that similar activities could not be undertaken (or would be undertaken in smaller scale) without Erasmus+	▪ Programme data analysis ▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Analysis of public consultation results ▪ Analysis of national reports ▪ Case studies ▪ Targeted consultations: NAs/EACEA survey, beneficiaries' surveys ▪ Workshops with NAs and stakeholders	4.2.1. 4.2.3.

Main evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgement criteria and indicators of success	Data collection methods	Section of the SWD
EQ24 Contribution to Europeanness	24.1 To what extent does the Erasmus+ programme contribute to developing knowledge of European integration matters, raising awareness of EU common values, and fostering a European sense of belonging? 24.2 What is the benefit of direct support to designated institutions named in the Erasmus+ Regulation? *[applicability: 2021-2027]*	▪ The programme contributes to develop knowledge of European integration, to raise awareness of EU common values and to foster a European sense of belonging ▪ There is evidence of increased European sense of belonging among participants Evidence shows that direct support (operating grants) to designated institutions allows activities focused on the EU with a scale and impact which would not have been possible otherwise.	▪ Programme data analysis ▪ Literature review ▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Analysis of public consultation results ▪ Analysis of national reports ▪ Targeted consultations: NAs/EACEA survey, beneficiaries' surveys ▪ Analysis of national reports ▪ Case studies	4.2.4.
EQ25 Benefits of participation	25.1 What is the benefit and added value of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 for individuals or organisations participating in the programme, compared to non-participants? 25.2. To what extent are the results of Erasmus+ sustainable beyond the projects' duration? *[applicability: 2021-2027]*	▪ Participating in the programme produces significant benefits for individuals and organisations compared to non-participation ▪ The programme generates tangible results and long-lasting impact	▪ Programme data analysis ▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Analysis of public consultation results ▪ Analysis of national reports ▪ Meta-analysis ▪ Targeted consultations: beneficiaries' surveys ▪ Case studies	4.2.1.
EQ26 International added value	26.1 To what extent does Erasmus+ 2021-2027 promote cooperation between Member States and third countries associated with the programme? 26.2 To what extent does Erasmus+ 2021-2027 promote cooperation between these countries and third countries not associated with the programme? 26.3 How has the EU leveraged the Erasmus+ programme in its international relations? *[applicability: 2021-2027]*	▪ Extent to which the programme provides equal opportunities (access to mobility and cooperation opportunities) to associated third countries as to Member States. ▪ The extent to which the programme provides opportunities to third countries not associated to the programme ▪ Extent to which the participation patterns of third countries (associated and not associated) evolved during the evaluation period. ▪ Stakeholders recognise the programme leverage in EU's international relations	▪ Programme data analysis ▪ Analysis of public consultation results ▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Analysis of national reports ▪ Case studies	4.2.5.

Main evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgement criteria and indicators of success	Data collection methods	Section of the SWD
EQ27 Evolution of EU added value	27.1 What is the benefit and added value of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 compared to the benefit of Erasmus+ 2014-2020? What is the added value of repetitive actions/activities in the two programmes? 27.2 Was any EU added value lost as a consequence of the discontinuation of some actions from Erasmus+ 2014-2020? *[applicability: both programming periods]*	▪ Extent to which the programme added value increased between the two evaluation periods, measured through volume, scale, scope and process effects, participation aspects, as well as international and Europeanness ▪ Extent to which key informants and stakeholders agree on the increase in EU added value and key contributing factors compared to the baseline situation	▪ Findings of EU added value analysis ▪ Key informant interviews	4.2.2.

RELEVANCE

Main evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgement criteria and indicators of success	Data collection methods	Section of the SWD
EQ13 Programme relevance to the socio-economic needs and challenges	13.1. To what extent are current and emerging **key socio-economic needs and challenges** that Europe is facing internally and globally reflected in the policy priorities, objectives and actions/activities of Erasmus+? *[applicability: both programming periods]*	▪ The programme design supports the reflection on current and emerging key socio-economic needs and challenges that Europe is facing ▪ Share of stakeholders considering that the programme is relevant to the key socio-economic needs and challenges ▪ Share of funding allocated to projects in those areas that correspond to key strategic priorities	▪ Programme data analysis ▪ Review of key EU strategic documents and programme documentation ▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Targeted consultations: NAs/EACEA survey, expert assessors' survey ▪ Analysis of public consultation results ▪ Analysis of national reports ▪ Case studies	• 4.3. • 4.3.1. • 4.3.2.
EQ14 Relevance to addressing green and digital transitions	14.1. To what extent are the needs and challenges linked to Europe's **green and digital transitions** reflected in the actions/activities of Erasmus+ 2021-2027? *[applicability: 2021-2027]*	▪ The programme design supports the green and digital transitions ▪ Stakeholders consider that the programme is appropriately addressing green and digital transitions	▪ Programme data analysis ▪ Review of key EU strategic documents and programme documentation ▪ Key informant interviews	4.3.2. (the section's coverage is larger than the evaluation question,

Main evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgement criteria and indicators of success	Data collection methods	Section of the SWD
		▪ The share of funding/projects in areas that address green and digital transitions	▪ Targeted consultations: NAs/EACEA survey, socio-economic actors' survey, expert assessors' survey, beneficiaries' surveys ▪ Analysis of Public Consultation results ▪ Analysis of national reports ▪ Case studies	referring also to emerging needs for skills and growth)
EQ15 Relevance to stakeholder needs	15.1. To what extent are **needs of different stakeholders and sectors** addressed by Erasmus+ 2021-2027 objectives? 15.2. How successful is the programme in attracting and reaching target audiences and groups within different fields of the programme's scope? 15.3. How well is the Erasmus+ programme known to the education and training, youth and sport communities? 15.4. In case some target groups are not sufficiently reached, what factors are limiting their access and what actions could be taken to remedy this? What are the reasons of non-participation of certain target groups, are there groups who chose not to participate or are there always external factors preventing them? *[applicability: 2021-2027]*	▪ The extent to which the topics covered by funded projects correspond to policy priorities in the different sectors ▪ Stakeholders across sectors agree that the programme addresses and contributes to their needs ▪ Practitioners agree that the programme contributes to their professional needs; stakeholders and policy makers agree that the programme responds to the main policy needs ▪ There is high volume of discussion about the programme on social media ▪ The programme is talked about on social media in the context of all fields of action and by varied target groups	▪ Programme data analysis ▪ Social media analysis ▪ Targeted consultations: NAs/EACEA survey, socio-economic actors' survey, expert assessors' survey ▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Analysis of Public Consultation results ▪ Analysis of national reports ▪ Behavioural experiment	4.3.3.
EQ16 Relevance to people with fewer opportunities	16.1. To what extent is the design of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 oriented and adapted towards the hard-to-reach groups, people with fewer opportunities (including inter alia people living in remote regions such as the EU outermost regions and overseas countries or territories) or specific disadvantaged groups of the population who traditionally do not engage in	▪ The programme design facilitates the involvement of participants with fewer opportunities facing various barriers	▪ Programme data analysis ▪ Network analysis ▪ Social media analysis ▪ Targeted consultation: beneficiaries' surveys, NAs/EACEA survey ▪ Key informant interviews	4.3.3.

Main evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgement criteria and indicators of success	Data collection methods	Section of the SWD
	transnational or international activities as compared to other groups that benefit from the programme? *[applicability: 2021-2027]*		▪ Behavioural experiment ▪ Analysis of Public Consultation results ▪ Analysis of national reports ▪ Literature review	
EQ17 Evolution of relevance between the two periods	17.1. What is the relevance of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 compared to the relevance of Erasmus+ 2014-2020? Has it been improved in the new programme generation? *[applicability: both programming periods]*	▪ There is evidence of an increased relevance in the Programme between the two evaluation periods measured through the aspects of responding to key socio-economic needs, stakeholder needs and participation, compared to the baseline situation ▪ Share of stakeholders considering that relevance of the programme across the various fields improved since the previous programming period	▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Targeted consultation: NAs/EACEA survey, expert assessors survey ▪ Analysis of findings per each evaluation period	4.3.

ANNEX IV. OVERVIEW OF BENEFITS AND COSTS AND TABLE ON SIMPLIFICATION AND BURDEN REDUCTION

Table 1. Overview of costs and benefits identified in the evaluation (Erasmus+ 2014-2020)

		Citizens/EU society		EU Public Administration & Implementing bodies		Erasmus+ beneficiaries		Erasmus+ participants	
		Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment
I.**COSTS**									
Erasmus+ budget	Type: One-off and recurrent			Financial envelope for the programming period 2014-2020: 18.5 billion[476] Spending[477]: Under indirect management: EUR 14 548 653 167 Under direct management: EUR 4 120 424 157 National co-funding for actions under indirect management (grant support): EUR 174 458 718					

[476] Heading 1: EUR 16.9 billion (all credits included), Heading 4: EUR 1.6 billion (all credits included).
[477] The figures cover executed commitments at the end of the programming period, Heading 1 and 4 included.

Administrative costs of implementing Erasmus+	Type: recurrent		Costs of administrating Erasmus+ are incurred by the public sector at European level but are ultimately a cost to the EU society	Administrative line (executed commitments 2014-2020): EAC: EUR 91 865 156 EACEA: EUR 188 234 759 NAs Management fees[478]: EUR 612 287 871 (2014-2020) Budget Heading 1 (and Heading 4 as from 2019) and the relevant national co-financing in line with the programme regulation	EACEA FTEs: 272 (in 2020) NAs FTEs: 2 363 (in 2020)[479]			
Costs for Erasmus+ applicants and beneficiaries	Type: recurrent	Not possible to quantify	Administrative costs linked to the application process and meeting the eligibility requirements.			Not possible to quantify 89% of surveyed beneficiaries consider the net costs of project activities borne by the	Administrative costs related to the application, implementation and reporting requirements.		

[478] NAs management fees are retrieved in this line (administrative costs of implementing Erasmus+) to provide the full picture of the running costs of the programme, including both management modes, however, in the programme budget structure, they are part of the operational budget.

[479] Out the total of FTEs working in NAs in 2020 (2 617, covering both FTEs allocated to Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps in agencies responsible for youth). The figure has been calculated proportionally, based on the management fees in the two programmes, to exclude staff allocated to the European Solidarity Corps.

						organisation "fully proportionate" or "somewhat proportionate" compared to the benefits obtained by the organisation. [*Source: socio-economic actors survey*] Co-financing ranges between 5% and 20% of the project budget, depending on the action.	Projects beneficiaries must complement the project budget with sources of co-financing other than the EU grant, which vary depending on the action.		
II.**BENEFITS**									
Direct benefits	Type: recurrent	Contribution to Europe 2020 Smart Growth (innovation, education, digital society) and Inclusive Growth	Contribution to policy priorities set under ET2020[480] and Europe 2020 strategy[481], including the headline education target			Number of distinct organisations supported in funded projects: 131 000	Increased capacity of organisations: common benefits include enhanced internationalisation, experience in transnational and international cooperation,	6.2 million actual participants 94% of participants in youth mobility activities declared	Improved skills and competences; personal growth and soft skills; increased sense of European belonging; language

[480] *Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training*
[481] Europe 2020: the European Union strategy for growth and employment | EUR-Lex

		(employment and skills, fighting poverty) priorities: EUR 2 665 million *[source: PPS 2019]* Contribution to mainstreaming of climate action: over 12 000 projects addressing environment and climate change Gender equality: women represent 58% of learners over the period 2014-2020 [*source: Erasmus+ Annual Report 2020]* 38 000 projects (EUR 2.3 billion grant) tackling	Contribution to Commission's priorities Contribution to large scale policy progresses at EU and national levels, supporting the sectors' needs and supporting more cohesive policy approaches across Member States Contribution to building a sense			Number of funded projects: 161 000 More than 80% of academics report that their Erasmus+ experience abroad has led to the development of more innovative teaching practices and curricula in their faculties [*source: E+ higher education impact study*]	strengthen their capacities, produce innovative approaches, exchange good practices, expanded networks, etc.	having increased skills under the 2014-2020 programme [*source: Programme Performance Statement*] 80% of Erasmus+ students were employed within three months of graduation [*source: E+ higher education impact study*]	proficiency, cultural awareness and enhanced intercultural competence

		the priority of participation, common EU values and civic engagement Contribution to SDGs 1-3-4-5-8-10-16 [*source: Programme Performance Statement*]	of European identity and awareness of EU values across participating countries Contribution to SDGs						
Indirect benefits	Type: recurrent	Not possible to quantify	Multiplier effect: participating organisations raise capacity in other organisations (through network-building, knowledge exchange, training and curriculum development).						

Table 2. Overview of costs and benefits identified in the evaluation (**ERASMUS+ 2021-2027)**									
		Citizens/EU society		EU Public Administration & Implementing bodies		Erasmus+ beneficiaries		Erasmus+ participants	
		Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment
II.**COSTS**									
Erasmus+ budget	Type: One-off and recurrent			Financial envelope for the programming period 2021-2027: EUR 26.2 billion Spending as of 31 December 2023: Under indirect management: EUR 8 770 880 435 Under direct management: EUR 2 389 576 576 National co-funding for actions under indirect management (grant support): EUR 140 839 478					
Administrative costs of implementing Erasmus+	Type: recurrent		Costs of administrating Erasmus+ are incurred by the	Administrative line (executed commitments 2021-2023):					

			public sector at European level but are ultimately a cost to the EU society	EAC: EUR 71 919 437 EACEA: EUR 77 096 690 NAs Management fees[482]: EUR 406 666 193 (2021-2023) Budget Headings 2 and 6 Relevant national co-financing to National Agencies' management costs, in line with the programme regulation: EUR 198 920 995	EACEA FTEs: 296.6[483] NAs FTEs: 2 430 [*source: NAs multiannual work programme 2022*]				
Costs for Erasmus+ applicants and beneficiaries	Type: recurrent	Not possible to quantify	Administrative costs linked to the application process and meeting the eligibility requirements			Not possible to quantify 89% of surveyed beneficiaries consider the net costs of project activities borne by the organisation	Administrative costs related to the application, implementation and reporting requirements.		

[482] NAs management fees are retrieved in this line (administrative costs of implementing Erasmus+) to provide the full picture of the running costs of the programme, including both management modes, however, in the programme budget structure, they are part of the operational budget.
[483] Average for the period 2021-2023

						"fully proportionate" or "somewhat proportionate" compared to the benefits obtained by the organisation. [*Source: socio-economic actors survey*] Co-financing ranges between 5% and 20% of the project budget, depending on the action.	Projects beneficiaries must complement the project budget with sources of co-financing other than the EU grant, which vary depending on the action.		
III.**BENEFITS**									
Direct benefits	Type: recurrent	Climate objectives: EUR 1 049 million (2021-2023) Digital contribution:	Contribution to policy priorities set under the European Education Area Contribution to Commission's priorities Contribution to large scale policy progresses at			Number of distinct organisations supported in funded projects: 77 671 (at cut-off date 31/12/2023) Number of funded projects: 72 000 (at cut-	Increased capacity of organisations: common benefits include enhanced internationalisation, experience in transnational and international cooperation, strengthen their capacities, produce innovative approaches, exchange good practices,	1.6 million actual participants (at cut-off date 31/12/2023) of which 15% with fewer opportunities 98% of participants consider they have benefited from participation *[source: 2022 Erasmus+ annual report]*	Enhanced skills and competences; personal growth and soft skills; increased sense of European belonging; language proficiency, cultural awareness and enhanced

		EUR 2 018 million Gender equality: 60% of mobility opportunities taken up by women [*source: Programme Performance Statement]* Over 3 000 contracted projects (EUR 169 ml contracted grant) working on the topic "European identity, citizenship and values" (at cut-off date 31/12/2023) Over 1 600 Youth Participation Activities (EUR 61 ml contracted grant) involving	EU and national levels, supporting the sectors' needs and supporting more cohesive policy approaches across Member States Contribution to building a sense of European identity and awareness of EU values across participating countries			off date 31/12/2023)	expanded networks, etc.	More than 90% have an increased European sense of belonging 85% of participants declare having increased their key competences *[source: 2022 Erasmus+ annual report]* 83% stated improved competences useful for their current work/studies *[source: 2022 Erasmus+ annual report]* 78% have improved their foreign language competence *[source: 2022 Erasmus+ annual report]*	intercultural competence

		more than 250 000 young people (call years 2021 to 2023) 88% of PC respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the programme is performing well in promoting common EU values and strengthened European identity							
Indirect benefits	Type: recurrent	Not possible to quantify	Multiplier effect: participating organisations raise capacity in other organisations (through network-building, knowledge exchange, training and curriculum development).						

TABLE 3: Simplification and burden reduction (savings already achieved)								
	Citizens/EU society		EU Public Administration & Implementing bodies		Erasmus+ beneficiaries		Erasmus+ participants	
	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment
Burden reduction following the introduction of simplification measures: lump-sums The use of lump sums, unit costs and flat-rate funding has considerably simplified the calculation of the grant amounts in comparison to the 'traditional' system of basing the amount of the grant on a detailed budget of eligible costs per cost category								
Type: recurrent			82% of respondents considered that the lump sum system simplifies the administration for NAs/EACEA *[NAs/EACEAs survey*]	Reduced administrative burden at application and payment stage reducing overheads for NAs and facilitating productivity gains	Not possible to quantify at this stage 92% share of organisations and institutions considering that procedures for taking part in the programme are proportionate and simple (2022 data)	Greater predictability for grant beneficiaries who can take the pre-established rates into account when submitting their applications making the actions more attractive; simplified reporting requirements		
Burden reduction following the introduction of simplification measures: accreditation The introduction of the accreditation scheme for mobility projects in school education, adult education, and youth improved programme accessibility to funding and reduced administrative requirements for recurrent beneficiaries								
Type: recurrent			61% of respondents agree to a high extent that it simplifies the application process [*NAs/EACEAs survey]*	Reduces administrative burdens for implementing bodies	Accredited organisations may gain indicatively about 70% time to prepare a grant request instead of submitting a full application form[484]. 45% of respondents agrees that it simplifies project management for beneficiaries	Reduces application time (and costs). Streamlines project management, fosters long-term planning and financial security for		

[484] Estimation based on the structure of the application form for non-accredited projects, compared to the request for funds for accredited projects.

			Estimated indicative savings for assessing accredited projects under 2021-2024 Calls: between EUR 1 million and EUR 5.9 million [*details under 4.1.2.4*] Accreditation system assessed very positively across most (31) national reports	Reduces assessment costs (savings increasing yearly and are expected to be more visible in the second part of the programming period)	*[NAs/EACEA survey]* 92% share of organisations and institutions considering that procedures for taking part in the programme are proportionate and simple (2022 data)	beneficiaries, reduces administrative burdens for beneficiaries.		
Burden reduction and increased accessibility following the introduction of simplification measures: small-scale partnerships The introduction of the action widened the access to the programme to small-scale actors, grassroots organisations and newcomers to Erasmus+, reducing entry barriers to the programme for organisations with smaller organisational capacity thanks to lower grant amounts awarded to organisations, shorter duration and simpler administrative requirements compared to the cooperation partnerships.								
Type: recurrent					Not possible to quantify	Greater predictability for grant beneficiaries; simplified administrative requirements; flexibility of the format. Increased accessibility for small and newcomer organisations		
Revamped IT architecture, including for implementing bodies, with the introduction of the "single entry point" for IT applications								
Type: one-off			100% of users (NAs and Commission users)	Facilitated access for all users, who can easily navigate, from one single entry page, through different	100% of Erasmus+ applicants/beneficiaries	Facilitated access for all applicants/beneficiaries, who can easily navigate, from one single entry page, through different IT modules (previously		

				IT modules (previously accessible through different hyperlinks)		accessible through different hyperlinks)		
***Administrative costs savings of programme implementing bodies (NAs) through introduction of several simplifications**:* introduction of multi-annual work programme, shorter and more targeted annual reporting (yearly reports); simplified contractual requirements (contribution agreements) with increased flexibility for the management of funds; digitalisation of contractual, payments and amendment procedures, use of digital signature; simplified rules for the implementation and reporting of certain tasks (TCA activities, funding rules for SALTOs, Eurodesk, national VET teams)								
Type: one-off and recurrent			Quantification of savings (in terms of FTE) are not yet measurable: for indirect management, NAs communicate their resources (FTE) in the multiannual work programme at the beginning of the programming period and will revise in 2025. Time to process amendments related to budgetary transfers: 11 days in 2023 (10 days in 2024), against the contractual	Reduced administrative burdens for implementing bodies (indirect management) Digitalisation of processes at level of NAs brought to increased efficiency in processing contribution agreements and amendments				

			deadline of 30 days).					
Digitalised and simplified implementation of the programme for participants, in particular through Erasmus Without Paper								
Type: recurrent					Potential savings of over €13.5 million prints annually across the Erasmus+ programme and a consequent 55% workload reduction for university administrative staff. [485]	More efficient management of student mobilities for higher education institutions, reduced data entry errors, accelerated approvals and greener processes.	218 546 downloads and close to 10 million webpage loads of the Erasmus+ app.	Simplified student mobility through the completion of learning agreements onlineand easier access to information and services for students.

PART II: II <u>Potential</u> simplification and burden reduction (savings)

*Identify further potential simplification and savings **that could be achieved** with a view to make the initiative more effective and efficient without prejudice to its policy objectives[4].*

	Citizens/EU society		EU Public Administration & Implementing bodies		Erasmus+ beneficiaries		Erasmus+ participants	
	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment
Further simplification measures to cater for the needs and nature of newcomers and small-sized applicants, including exploring new action formats								
Type: recurrent					Not possible to quantify	Expected impact/savings for applicants and beneficiaries. Expected wider outreach of newcomers/small-sized applicants.		
Ongoing simplification assessment action to alleviate reporting burden on participants, beneficiaries and implementing authorities: Commission is working together with the National Agencies and EACEA in order to explore simplification of administrative documents, application, monitoring and reporting processes having always in mind the need to keep a correct balance between reporting obligations and accountability rules.								

[485] López-Nores, Martín, José J. Pazos-Arias, Abdulkadir Gölcü, and Ömer Kavrar. 2022. "Digital Technology in Managing Erasmus+ Mobilities: Efficiency Gains and Impact Analysis from Spanish, Italian, and Turkish Universities" *Applied Sciences* 12, no. 19: 9804. https://doi.org/10.3390/app12199804

Type: recurrent			Not possible to quantify	Expected impact/savings for implemented bodies	Not possible to quantify	Expected impact/savings for applicants and beneficiaries	Not possible to quantify	Expected impact/savings for participants (reporting)

ANNEX V. STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTATION - SYNOPSIS REPORT

1. Introduction

Erasmus+ is the European Union (EU) programme in the fields of education and training, youth, and sport. Covering both an intra-European and an international dimension, Erasmus+ aims to support, in particular through learning mobility, the educational, professional and personal development of people in education, training, youth and sport, in Europe and beyond. Erasmus+ was established in 2014 as a result of the integration of the prior Erasmus programme with all previously existing EU programmes implemented in the fields of education, training, youth and sport. Building on the achievements of its 35 years of existence, as well as on those of other pre-existing programmes and previous initiatives, it is one of the EU's most visible and well-known success stories.

This document presents a synopsis of the consultation activities carried out in the context of the support study performed by ICF under a contract to support the European Commission (EC) in conducting an interim evaluation of the Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027, accompanied by a final evaluation of the Erasmus+ programme 2014-2020.

This synopsis report covers the public consultation, targeted consultations as well as feedback received during workshops. The stakeholder consultations took place between July 2022 and September 2024. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyse stakeholder input.

This report has the following aims:

- to inform policymaking of the outcome of the consultation activities and of the views expressed by the different categories of stakeholders; and
- inform stakeholders about how their input has been considered.

2. Consultation strategy

The aim of the support study was to assess the programme against five evaluation criteria:

1) the **effectiveness** of the measures taken to achieve the programme's objectives, especially with regards to new initiatives;
2) the continued **relevance** of all objectives of the programme;
3) the programme's internal and external **coherence** with other programmes with similar or complementary objectives;
4) the **efficiency** of the programme, including the inclusion and simplification measures put in place, as well as the scope for further simplification and burden reduction; and
5) the **European added value** resulting from the actions and activities supported by the programme, especially in terms of sustainable impact, compared with what could reasonably have been achieved by Member States at national and/or regional levels.

In line with the European Commission's Better Regulation guidelines, a consultation strategy was elaborated to gather input from all interested parties on the programme's performance against the five evaluation criteria. To this end, the consultation strategy was designed and implemented to support the assessment of different programme aspects in line with the objectives of the evaluation, but also to collect views on possible improvement options and on their impact on all relevant stakeholder groups.

To ensure a balanced consultation process and to capture the full diversity of the 'Erasmus+ ecosystem', the following stakeholder groups were identified across all programme fields:

- EU institutions (i.e. Commission services, EU Delegations, Commission's Agencies); ervices, EU Delegations, Commission's Agencies);
- International organisations(such as OECD, UNESCO, ILO, Council of Europe, World Bank);
- National, regional and local public authorities;
- Erasmus+ National Authorities;
- Erasmus+ National Agencies, and other programme structures, such as SALTO resource centres and National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs);
- Erasmus+ expert assessors (both for actions under direct and indirect management);
- Individual programme participants (both learners and staff) across all programme sectors and fields;
- Potential programme participants, not or not yet participating in the programme[486];
- Beneficiary organisations across all programme fields, including education and training institutions/providers, sport and youth organisations;
- European stakeholders in education, training, youth and sport (sectoral networks, professional bodies, social partners, youth and sport organisations, NGOs, civil society organisations);
- National stakeholders in education, training, youth and sport (sectoral networks, professional bodies, social partners, youth and sport organisations, NGOs, civil society organisations);
- Stakeholders in education, training, youth and sport in third countries not associated with the programme;
- Citizens (EU and non-EU).

A number of consultation activities were implemented, including:

- a Call for evidence;
- a Public consultation;
- a set of targeted consultations:
  - scoping interviews,

[486] Non-participants were targeted to support a counterfactual analysis aimed at assessing the impacts of participation in the learners and staff surveys, and to analyses the barriers to participation in the behavioural experiment.

- survey of beneficiary learners,
- survey of beneficiary staff,
- pre-post survey of pupils and young people,
- behavioural experiment with individuals who did not participate in the programme,
- survey of Erasmus+ National Agencies and the EACEA,
- survey of expert assessors,
- survey of socio-economic actors,
- interviews of 'key informants' at international, European and national levels,
- case studies.

In addition, five stakeholder workshops were organised as part of the study conducted by ICF to gather feedback on specific aspects of the evaluation.

The different stakeholder categories targeted and consulted for each of the consultation activities are shown in the table below.

Table 1: Stakeholder categories targeted and consulted for each of the consultation activities

Stakeholder type	Call for evidence	Public consultation	Scoping interviews	Survey of beneficiary learners	Survey of beneficiaries (staff)	Pre-post survey	Survey of National Agencies and EACEA	Survey of expert assessors	Survey of socio-economic actors	Behavioural experiment	Key informant interviews	Case studies	Workshops
EU institutions			X				X				X		X
International organisations		X									X		
Public authorities	X	X							X		X		
Erasmus+ National Agencies		X	X				X				X		X
Erasmus+ National Authorities	X	X	X								X		X
Erasmus+ expert assessors								X					
Individual programme participants	X	X		X	X	X						X	
Potential programme participants /	X	X		X	X	X				X			

non-participants													
Beneficiary organisations	X	X			X				X		X	X	X
European stakeholders	X	X							X		X		X
National stakeholders	X	X							X		X		X
International stakeholders	X	X			X				X		X		
Citizens	X	X											

The following table shows the timeline of the consultation activities implemented by ICF, and the level of stakeholder participation achieved for each of them.

Table 2: Stakeholder participation in consultation activities

Consultation activity	Timeline	Level of participation
Call for evidence	From 28 July to 12 September 2022	195 responses
Scoping interviews	Between 29 March and 26 May 2023	24 interviews
Public consultation	From 15 September 2023 to 8 December 2023	1,243 responses 64 position papers
Survey of beneficiary learners across programme fields	From 16 October 2023 to 11 December 2023	25 413 Erasmus+ participants (test group) and 2,094 non-participants (control group)
Survey of beneficiary staff across programme fields	From 16 October 2023 to 11 December 2023	26,332 Erasmus+ participants (test group) and 2,894 non-participants (control group)
Pre-post survey of pupils and young people[487]	From 16 October 2023 to 11 December 2023 (pre-survey) and from 07 June 2024 to 05 July 2024 (post-survey, school pupils only)	Pupils: 261 (pre-) and 105 (post-) Erasmus+ participants; 123 (pre-) and 26 (post-) non-participants (control group)
Survey of Erasmus+ National Agencies and the EACEA	Between October and December 2023	164 valid responses, including 156 from National Agencies and 8 from the EACEA
Survey of socio-economic actors	From 15 November 2023 to 22 December 2023	1 550 valid responses, of which 1 130 complete and 420 partial
Survey of expert assessors	From 26 October and 15 December 2023	1 842 valid responses
Behavioural experiment	Between 3 April and 10 May 2024	10 985 responses from individuals who have not previously taken part in the Erasmus+ programme
Key informant interviews	Between October 2023 and July 2024	264 interviews with 313 key informants at national (165), European (60) and international (42) level
Case studies	Between April 2024 and July 2024	44 case studies covering all programme fields, focusing on organisational level impacts (29 case studies) and system levels effects (7) as well as on Jean Monnet Actions (8). A total of 186 stakeholders were interviewed to perform these case studies (58 from organisations' leadership, 80 members of staff, 48 learners).
Stakeholder workshops	5 stakeholder workshops between June 2023 and September 2024	Over 540 participants in total

[487] A pre-mobility survey of young people took place as well in parallel with the pupils pre-mobility survey; however since it yielded insufficient response (7 participants and 5 non-participants), the post-component was not implemented.

3. Consultation activities

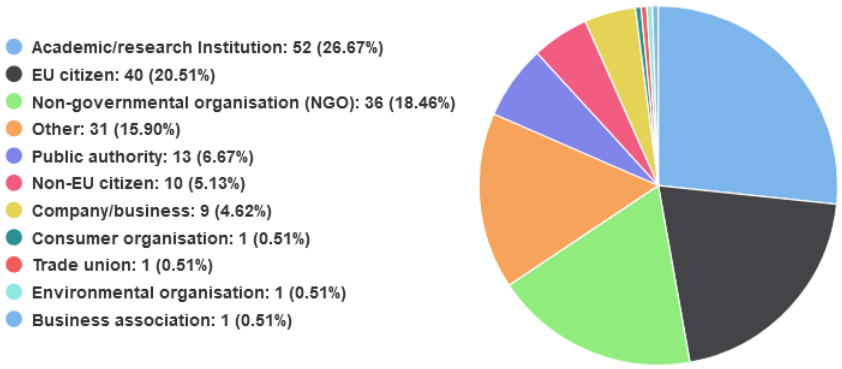
The following section provides an overview of each consultation activity indicating the types of stakeholders that were targeted, a short description of the employed methods and procedures, as well as a brief presentation of the results.

3.1. Call for evidence

A call for evidence was conducted by the European Commission between 28 July 2022 and 12 September 2022 on the Europa website *Have your say* portal[488] to collect inputs and evidence from programme stakeholders, with a view to help framing and scoping the upcoming evaluation exercise.

195 submissions were received, from **11 stakeholder groups**, mostly Academic/research institutions (26.67%), EU Citizens (20.51%), and NGOs (18.46%).

Call for evidence – Profile of respondents by stakeholder category[489]



Source: Europa website, Have your say portal [490]

181 responses were received from Erasmus+ programme countries (177 from EU Member States and 4 from third countries associated to the programme), while 14 were from third countries not associated to the programme. Overall, the countries providing the highest number of contributions were Cyprus (25, 13%), Germany (16, 8%) and Estonia (13, 7%). Out of the 195 submissions received, 22 (11%) included a position paper, 36.36% of which were submitted by NGOs.

Across the stakeholder groups, there was very strong support for the Erasmus+ programme and the opportunities it provides from an academic, professional, training, and personal perspective. Respondents also reported on issues concerning some areas of practical implementation, in particular administrative burden and IT tools.

Among respondents from academic/research institutions 62% expressed support for the changes introduced in the 2021-2027 programme. Specific areas viewed positively include: the focus on sustainability and inclusion, the additional funds for sustainable travel, or the additional flexibility in the use of funds.

Feedback from EU citizens was also predominantly positive, mostly highlighting the many opportunities provided by Erasmus+. Among respondents from NGOs, over a third explicitly expressed support for the improvements made in the 2021-2027 programme, such as the

[488] See : https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13454-Erasmus+-2021-27-interim-evaluation-Erasmus+-2014-20-final-evaluation_en

[489] These stakeholders' categories reflect pre-defined categories based on the Better Regulation standard template.

[490] Erasmus+ 2021-27 interim evaluation & Erasmus+ 2014-20 final evaluation (europa.eu)

introduction of small-scale partnerships or the enhanced inclusion and diversity measures. Besides the programme's IT tools, areas of attention reported by NGO participants included remaining obstacles to the participation of vulnerable persons.

3.2. Scoping interviews

The scoping interviews were carried out at the inception stage with a selection of officials from EU institutions (European Commission, European Parliament, EACEA), National Agencies and National Authorities representatives.

The main objective of this set of interviews was to gather high-level views on and ensure a better understanding of the perceived relevance and achievement of Erasmus+ objectives and priorities as well as the structure and management of the programme. They aimed at identifying overall trends, success factors and areas for improvement.

A total of **24 interviews** were completed between 29 March and 26 May 2023, conducted mostly online and following a semi-structured approach. The results and analysis of these interviews were presented in the Inception Report, submitted in June 2023 as part of the study conducted by ICF.

The insights obtained from the scoping interviews enabled the study team to better understand the key objectives of the evaluation, to finalise the analytical frameworks and adjust data collection activities as applicable, and to generate interest and participation in the study.

3.3. Public consultation

A public consultation was held to collect the views of the main programme stakeholders (e.g., stakeholders active in the education, training, youth and sport fields, individual programme beneficiaries and alumni, beneficiary organisations, national, regional and local public authorities and organisations) as well as EU and non-EU citizens. Running for 12 weeks, from 15 September until 8 December 2023, the public consultation was made available on the European Commission's 'Have your Say' portal [491] and was disseminated and promoted through various channels by the Commission, National Agencies, National Authorities and other programme stakeholders, including social media posts, news items on the programme websites, and announcements at events to ensure a large response rate across relevant stakeholders and among interested citizens.

The consultation questionnaire was designed around three possible response paths reflecting the respondents' level of knowledge of the programme: i) very familiar with the programme's objectives and actions, ii) partly familiar with the programme, iii) no knowledge. Respondents well familiar with the programme received the most in-depth questionnaire; those partly familiar were provided with a curated set of questions; and those with no knowledge of Erasmus+ received a much shorter and simplified questionnaire, focusing on the need for the programme and its possible continuation.

The full questionnaire contained 22 questions in total, most of them broken down into sub-questions, concerning the programme's relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and EU added value, as well as its future. A set of questions concerning the impact of contextual elements on the Erasmus+ programme was also included, focusing on the programme's responsiveness and resilience in light of the disruptive events of recent years (COVID-19 pandemic, war in Ukraine, inflation surge). The questions related to the 'efficiency' and

[491] Erasmus+ 2021-27 interim evaluation & Erasmus+ 2014-20 final evaluation (europa.eu)

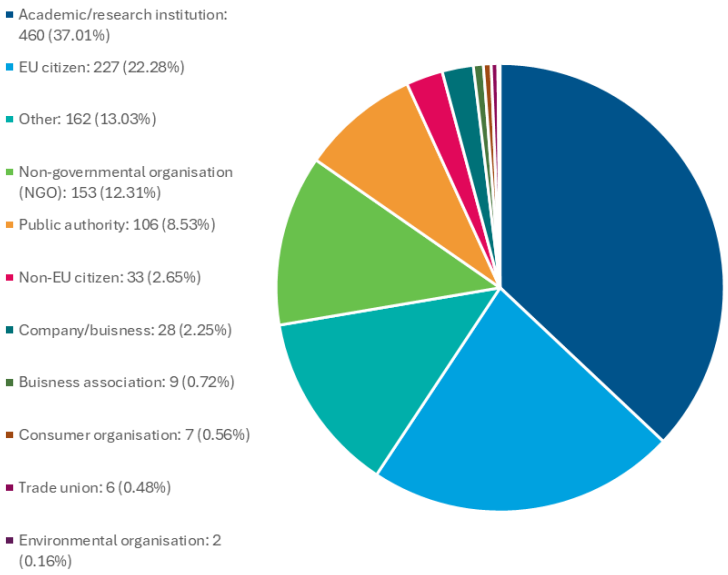
'coherence' criteria, as well as those on the 'impact of contextual elements on Erasmus+', were only asked to respondents with detailed knowledge of the programme.

Some questions had a range of answer options (Likert scale) while others were requesting open feedback; most questions were mandatory, while few were optional.

A total of **1,243 respondents** contributed to the public consultation in their individual capacity (40%) or on behalf of an organisation (60%). All 33 countries associated to the programmes[492] responded to the public consultation with at least one contribution. The country with the highest number of contributions overall was Germany (175), followed by Portugal (144) and Spain (129).

The distribution of respondents by stakeholder category is shown below.

Public consultation – Profile of respondents by stakeholder category[493]



In addition to answering the questionnaire, respondents could submit position papers, outlining their views on the Erasmus+ programme, or on some of its aspects most relevant to them. In total, 67 position papers were submitted by several types of organisations (e.g., umbrella organisations representing the education and training, youth and sport sectors, NGOs, schools, university networks, VET providers). In addition, 8 papers were submitted outside the consultation mechanism (i.e., by email), which the Commission decided to accept as part of the consultation process. A total of 75 papers were therefore received and considered. 11 of these submissions were found to be duplications, hence **64 position papers** were analysed.

A **factual summary report** was drafted in line with the Better Regulation requirements and published on the Europa website *Have your Say* portal [494] within eight weeks from the closure of the public consultation.

[492] 27 EU Member States and 6 third countries associated to the programme: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, North Macedonia, Serbia and Türkiye.
[493] These stakeholders' categories reflect pre-defined categories based on the Better Regulation standard template for EU public consultations.
[494] See: https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13454-Erasmus%2B-2021-27-interim-evaluation-Erasmus%2B-2014-20-final-evaluation/public-consultation_en

Summary of findings

The **relevance** of the specific objectives of the programme for 2021-2027 to current challenges and needs in the education and training, youth, and sport sectors is viewed very positively overall, however significantly more for the education and training sector than for the youth and sport sectors. These differences are, nonetheless, mostly due to a higher proportion of 'no opinion' shared for the youth and sport sectors, rather than a result of negative views. This likely reflects the fact that fewer respondents to the public consultation stemmed from those sectors and, hence, were familiar with the programme's objectives as well as with their current challenges and needs. In fact, the analysis of answers by sectors shows that the objectives in the youth and sport sectors are considered as extremely relevant by the respondents involved in those sectors.

Similarly, the relevance of the programme's horizontal priorities to current challenges and needs was assessed very positively across all stakeholder categories and sectors.

The continued relevance of the structure of the programme and the type of actions it supports in pursuit of its future objectives was assessed positively by a vast majority (94%) of respondents, across all stakeholder categories and sectors.

A majority of respondents also assessed very positively the **coherence** of Erasmus+ with other funding instruments addressing the education, training, youth and sport sectors available at national, EU, or international levels, yet to a varying degree (i.e. 78% for funding instruments at the national level, 66% for funding instruments at the European level and 53% at the international level). It should be noted that the lower level of agreement on the coherence of the programme with other funding instruments available at the EU and especially, the international level mostly results from a higher share of respondents indicating that they have no knowledge of the matter, suggesting that public consultation's respondents were generally more familiar with national funding instruments addressing the education, training, youth, and sport sectors than with instruments available at EU and international level.

Concerning the programme's **effectiveness**, most respondents indicated that the programme was fulfilling its objectives from a 'very large' to a 'large' extent, yet with some slight differences between sectors. Overall, the level of agreement was significantly higher for objectives in the education and training sector (i.e., close or over 80%) than for objectives in the youth (around 60%) and especially the sport sectors (close to 30%). Also in this case, these differences are due to a higher proportion of 'no opinion' for the youth and sport sectors (close to 25% and over 50% respectively), likely reflecting the fact that fewer respondents to the public consultation were stemming from those sectors. The analysis of answers by sectors shows that respondents involved in the youth and sport sectors perceive the programme's fulfilment of its objectives in their respective sectors very positively.

A significant majority of respondents indicated that the programme was performing particularly well in the following areas:

- promoting common EU values and strengthened European identity (88% strongly agreeing or agreeing);
- supporting EU policies and priorities (83%);
- fostering mobility and cooperation opportunities with the rest of the world, thanks to its international dimension (81%); and
- providing flexible mobility formats, such as group mobility and blended mobility (80%).

Respondents were more uncertain about the performance of the programme with regards to:

- ensuring the participation of grassroot and newcomer organisations through simplified grants (53% strongly agreeing or agreeing); and
- reducing its carbon footprint, for example by supporting sustainable transport modes (47%).

In terms of inclusion and diversity, most respondents indicated that the programme is particularly effective in **facilitating participation of people with fewer opportunities** that face cultural, social, or economic barriers (74% strongly agreeing or agreeing for each), and a bit less so for barriers related to health problems and to education and training systems (about 30% for each). This seems to be due to a higher share of respondents answering 'uncertain' or having no opinion concerning the latter barriers.

In terms of **efficiency**, public consultation's respondents expressed mixed views on the cost-effectiveness of actions funded by the programme, with a largely positive assessment concerning KA1 and less for KA2 and especially KA3, with a much higher share of respondents having no opinion or being uncertain in relation to the cost-effectiveness of this key action.

Overall, respondents positively assessed the programme's evolution and, specifically, the **changes occurred from the 2014-2020 programming period to the 2021-2027 one**. A majority indeed agreed that:

- the user-friendliness of the grant application to the programme had improved (55% of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing),
- the management of the programme had been effectively simplified (53%), and
- the user-friendliness of the guidance and support tools had generally improved over time (52%).

Views were mixed on the sufficiency of the programme's budget to achieve its objectives, with 50% of respondents in agreement and 38% disagreeing, or on the distribution of the budget between directly managed actions and those managed indirectly by National Agencies, and between programme actions, for which a significant share of respondents were uncertain or had no opinion.

Concerning **EU added value**, a vast majority of respondents positively assessed:

- the programme's contribution to the internationalisation of participating organisations (97% strongly agreeing or agreeing),
- its contribution to building a European identity/sense of belonging and to raising awareness of EU values (91%),
- the fact that Erasmus+ is funding activities which would not have been funded otherwise (90%), and
- the programme's contribution to improve inclusion, diversity, fairness, and equal opportunities at national, European, and international level (89%).

Concerning the **future of the programme**, over 50% of respondents indicated that all existing activities under KA1 (Learning mobility) should be maintained in a possible successor programme to Erasmus+, as well as most activities under KA2 (Cooperation among organisations and institutions). On the other hand, over half of respondents did not know/had no opinion about maintaining most of existing activities under KA3 (Support to policy development and cooperation) and under the Jean Monnet Actions. The majority of respondents

also agreed from 'a very large' to a 'large' extent, that the following aspects would have to be addressed to maximise the impact of a possible successor programme to Erasmus+:

- increasing the overall programme budget (82%);
- simplifying the administrative requirements to access funding (82%);
- increasing the level of individual grants (76%);
- providing better access to people with fewer opportunities (74%)
- increasing the opportunity for international mobility and international cooperation with countries outside Europe (74%).

3.4. Surveys of beneficiaries

A set of online surveys, referred to as 'beneficiaries' surveys', were conducted with the beneficiaries of the Erasmus+ programme, from both programme and non-programme countries, including both learners (school pupils, higher education students, VET learners, adult education learners, young people outside of formal education/ training) and staff (from school, higher education, VET, adult education, youth organisations and sport organisations).

Specifically, the following surveys were implemented:

- A **post-mobility survey among programme participants**, i.e. individuals who participated in an Erasmus+ learning mobility activity, in all target categories of learners and staff, and a corresponding survey among individuals who did not take part in any Erasmus+ learning mobility activity (non-beneficiaries) in the same categories of learners and staff (control groups). The survey was aimed at measuring experiences, attitudes and effects of taking part in the programme (i.e., for learners: effects in relation to skills, employability and progression to further education; for staff: effects on professional development, adoption of new teaching methods).
- A **combination of pre- and post-mobility surveys** among school pupils and young people outside of formal education/training, and corresponding control group surveys among non-participating pupils and young people[495], to allow for a more fine-grained measurement of short-term effects of taking part in an Erasmus+ experience in the school education and youth sectors and compare attitudes/ skills/ beliefs shortly before and right after the participation.

Survey participants were recruited on the basis of databases of programme participants and beneficiaries provided by the European Commission. For the learners' control groups, survey participants were recruited via snowballing and social media recruitment as no contact database of non-participants exists. Social media recruitment was implemented through banners on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Google Ads (Search, Display and YouTube) in five programme countries[496]. Furthermore, communication and information actions were performed by the Commission through its own communication channels (e.g. social media, advertising during events, news items) and by requesting support to National Agencies to act as multipliers and further support the dissemination of the surveys through their own communication channels. A significant aspect of the recruitment involved leveraging existing contacts to facilitate snowball recruitment to further recruit participants within the participant and non-participant groups.

The following table provides the detail of target and achieved sample sizes for each survey and category after the performance of data cleansing:

[495] See footnote 2.
[496] RO, IE, PT, PL, DK.

Table 3: Beneficiary surveys - fieldwork dates and target and achieved sample sizes

Learners survey - Fieldwork: 16/10/2023 to 11/12/2023					
Survey		**Test group (participants)**		**Control group (non-participants)**	
Programme fields	**Target groups**	**Target**	**Achieved**	**Target**	**Achieved**
School education	Pupils	111	571	N/A	284
Higher education	Higher education students and recent graduates	15,200	16,761	N/A	819
VET	VET students, apprentices and recent graduates	4,800	5,281	N/A	796
Adult education	Adult learners	29	90	N/A	28
Youth	Young people outside formal education/training	2,250	2,710	N/A	167
	Total	***22,390***	***25,413***	***N/A***	***2,094***
Staff survey - Fieldwork: 16/10/2023 to 11/12/2023					
Survey		**Test group (participants)**		**Control group (non-participants)**	
Programme fields	**Target groups**	**Target**	**Achieved**	**Target**	**Achieved**
School education	School staff (e.g. teachers, headmasters, administrative staff)	3,000	3,900	150	719
Higher education	Higher education staff (e.g. administrative and teaching staff)	11,000	14,884	400	1529
VET	VET staff (teachers, trainers…)	2,500	3,243	200	235
Adult education	Adult education staff	1,350	1,501	100	122
Youth	Youth workers and staff of youth organisations	2,350	2,473	150	241
Sport	Coaches and staff of sport organisations	200	331	50	48
	Total	***20,400***	***26,332***	***1,050***	***2,894***

Pre-post survey - Fieldwork: 4/10/2023 to 11/12/2023 (pre-survey) and 7/06/2024 to 5/07/2024 (post-survey, school pupils only)							
Survey		**Test group (participants)**			**Control group (non-participants)**		
Programme fields	**Target group**	**Target**	**Achieved (Pre-)**	**Achieved (Post-)**	**Target**	**Achieved (Pre-)**	**Achieved (Post-)**
School education	Pupils	97	261	105	39	123	26
Youth	Young people outside formal education/training	16	7	N/A	7	5	N/A
	Total	***114***	***268***	***N/A***	***46***	***128***	***N/A***

For the learners' survey, the target sample sizes were achieved for all categories, both for the test groups (participants) and the control groups (non-participants). The number of respondents in the adult education sector was much lower than the other categories due to the limited budget of the action, as well as to its recent start in 2021, in pandemic times, and the consequent much smaller size of the available contact database.

For the staff survey, the target sample sizes were achieved for all categories, both for the test groups (beneficiaries) and the control groups (non-beneficiaries), with the exception of the sport staff control group (48 respondents recorded against a target of 50).

For the pre-post survey, given the small numbers of respondents achieved in the pre-mobility survey of the youth category, it was decided that the post-mobility survey for this category would not be carried out. The post-survey was only implemented for school pupils.

Summary of findings

Beneficiary survey of learners: The analysis of survey data indicates a positive correlation between participation in the Erasmus+ programme and some of the outcomes investigated for learner participants. The statistical evidence suggests that participating in the programme increased participants' problem-solving and autonomy skills, and their level of digital competence. It also suggests that participating in Erasmus+ increased the participants' sense of European identity, being confident in their efforts in education or training, recognising that employers value mobility and transnational educational experiences, and completing their studies or other learning activities.

Beneficiary survey of staff: The data analysis indicates a positive correlation between participation in the Erasmus+ programme and some of the outcomes investigated for staff participants. The statistical evidence suggests that participating in the programme has had varied but significant effects across different sectors, with particularly strong outcomes in areas related to international networking (e.g., development of other projects, continued exchange of professional information, keeping abreast of developments in the professional community) and transnational partnerships (strategy, cooperation and network size).

Pre-post mobility survey of school pupils: The data analysis indicates that participation in the Erasmus+ programme has a positive correlation with some of the outcomes explored for school pupils. Specifically, statistical evidence suggests that participation in the programme was found to have increased the likelihood of participants taking action to live more sustainably and the participant's level of cultural awareness and expression.

3.5. Survey of National Agencies and EACEA

A survey addressing the 55 Erasmus+ National Agencies across the 33 programme countries [497] and EACEA was conducted between October and December 2023 to collect feedback from the bodies in charge of the implementation of the programme actions [498].

Each National Agency was requested to submit one reply per country and per sector/field[499] under their responsibility, while EACEA was requested to submit one reply per programme sector/field, plus one reply for the Jean Monnet Actions.

A total of **164 valid responses** were received, including 156 from National Agencies (95%) and 8 from the EACEA (5%).

Summary of findings

The survey results show that the Erasmus+ programme is perceived by National Agencies and EACEA as being **highly relevant** in the context of today's socio-economic needs and challenges. Erasmus+ was also assessed very positively in terms of **internal and external coherence**. In particular, it was seen as strongly aligned with EU policy priorities as well as highly complementary to other EU-funded programmes and international initiatives.

[497] 27 EU Member States and 6 third countries associated to the programme, i.e. Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, North Macedonia, Serbia and Türkiye.
[498] National Agencies for actions under indirect management, and the EACEA for actions under direct management.
[499] School education, VET, higher education, adult education, youth, and sport.

Concerning **effectiveness** and related factors, 36% of survey respondents indicated that the programme fully attains its goals within their respective sectors, and an additional 63% argued that it does so partially. Concerning the **programme architecture**, 55% of respondents consider it fully appropriate and 42% partially appropriate for achieving its objectives.

The survey found that 63% of respondents deem the programme's **financial envelope** either fully (17%) or partially (46%) appropriate and proportionate to Erasmus+ objectives regarding their sector of competence, *vs.* 36% stating that the funding was either not really or not at all appropriate and proportionate. When asked for suggestions to improve programme efficiency, respondents identified several crucial areas requiring enhancement, including further simplification of grant agreements, administrative procedures, and programme guidelines, with the aim of reducing complexity and improving overall efficiency; establishment of reliable IT tools to minimise errors and delays; improved communication channels between the EACEA and National Agencies; or encouragement of collaboration and knowledge-sharing among National Agencies.

3.6. Survey of socio-economic actors

The socio-economic actors surveyed included education and training organisations, civil society organisations, public authorities (at national, regional and local levels), companies, and other sectoral and professional organisations having participated in the programme in the period 2014-2023.

The target group was composed by organisations identified on the basis of the survey design and contacted through a randomly selected sample of organisations from the Erasmus+ programme database, covering actions under both direct and indirect management. The survey invitation was disseminated by e-mail only, reaching out to over 8 000 contacts.

The survey was made available in six languages (ES, DE, EN, FR, IT and PL), from 15 November to 22 December 2023 (including deadline extensions). After data cleansing, in total, **1 550 valid responses** were received, of which 1,130 were complete (73%) and 420 (27%) were partially complete. 50% of responses were submitted by respondents from education and training organisations, followed by representatives of civil society organisations (18%) and of public authorities (local, regional, and national) (13%).

Summary of findings

The survey results indicate that the Erasmus+ programme is essential to the implementation of the projects it finances, with about 70% of respondent organisations stating that their projects would not have been undertaken without Erasmus+ funding. The survey results also indicate a high level of satisfaction among respondent organisations that participated in the programme, most of which are highly motivated to participate again in the future, both in similar and different activities (over 90% considering it likely or highly likely in both cases).

Socio-economic actors were also asked to identify the main barriers hindering similar organisations from participating in the Erasmus+ programme. Approximately half of responding organisations identified the lack of available staff to get involved in such activities as the main barrier. This barrier was the most frequently cited across all types of organisations addressed through the survey. The second most cited barrier was application procedures, mentioned by 40% of organisations, but emphasised particularly by civil society, youth organisations and public authorities. Among companies, the lack of knowledge about the programme was cited by 43%. For sport organisations, the main barriers were identified as

application procedures, grant levels to cover the actual costs, knowledge about the Erasmus+ programme, and a lack of staff (all cited by 45% of sport organisations).

When asked about their involvement in other EU-funded projects, only about a third of respondents indicated having previously participated or being currently participating in such projects. Among respondents who participated in other EU-funded programmes in the past, the most common were the European Social Fund programmes (ESF/ESF+, 31%), the Interreg programmes (21%), and Horizon 2020/Horizon Europe (13%). These EU funding programmes were also those respondents were currently participating the most: ESF+ programmes (34% of respondents), followed by Horizon Europe (17%) and the Interreg programmes (16%).

3.7. Survey of expert assessors

The survey addressed the experts responsible for assessing applications for the calls for proposals and final reports of projects implemented under Erasmus+ actions under direct and indirect management over both programme generations.
The survey was conducted between 26 October and 15 December 2023 in English only. The survey link was disseminated through National Agencies and EACEA, who were asked to forward the survey invitation to their mailing lists of expert assessors in charge of evaluating applications and final reports, respectively, for projects under indirect and direct management. In total, **1 842 valid responses** were received and analysed, distributed as follows:

- 70% of the total respondents were from experts in charge of assessing Erasmus+ project applications and final reports of indirectly manged actions,
- 20% of respondents were conducting these assessments for actions under direct management,
- the remaining 10% of respondents was dealing with the assessment of project proposals and final reports of both directly and indirectly managed actions.

35% of respondents indicated that they conducted assessments for the Erasmus+ programme applications/projects originating in Spain, followed by Italy (16%), France, Belgium (both 13%) and Portugal (11%). Conversely, none of the respondents indicated that they had assessed Erasmus+ applications/ projects in Malta, The Netherlands, or Norway.

4.7.1 Summary of findings

The survey results provide insights into the role of the **guidance** received by expert assessors in enhancing the assessment process of project proposals and final reports within the previous and current Erasmus+ programme. The vast majority of respondents find this guidance to be very useful for their assessments (81%) and agree or strongly agree that it provides agreed and clear standards to use for their assessments (96%). 67% of respondents indicated that the guidance received under the current Erasmus+ programme generation has improved the way they assess applications/projects. 92% of respondents also perceive a positive evolution concerning the IT tools supporting the assessment of applications/projects over the two programming periods, with 29% indicating a significant improvement and 63% a moderate improvement.

33% of respondents indicated that the overall **quality of project applications** has improved in the current generation of Erasmus+ compared with the previous programme, while 10% stated that it has worsened, and 24% that it has remained the same. 33% indicated that they do not know as they have not assessed projects under one of the two programme generations.

85% of respondents expressed a positive stance towards the **project award criteria**, indicating that they either strongly agree (34%) or agree (51%) that the criteria effectively capture the essential features crucial for delivering high-quality project results, and 74% (out of which 22% strongly agree and 52% agree) find the award criteria sufficiently clear for those preparing applications. In addition, 79% of respondents either strongly agree or agree that the weighting of the award criteria appropriately reflects the importance of each quality aspect in the project application.

3.8. Behavioural experiment

A behavioural experiment was designed and implemented as part of the support study to analyse the factors that prevent learners in higher education, VET and youth from taking part in the Erasmus+ programme.

The behavioural experiment was implemented through a pre-selected panel of 10 000 individuals in 10 EU Member States (Czechia, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Romania, Spain, and Sweden), aged 18-30 and who never participated in the programme. The aim was to:

- explore factors preventing learners' participation in Erasmus+, and
- test behavioural interventions designed to influence learners' beliefs and their willingness to participate in the Erasmus+ programme.

The experiment targeted learners from both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged backgrounds to study the determinants of Erasmus+ participation among the general learners' population, as well as more specifically among those considering themselves as having 'fewer opportunities' due to facing one or several barriers to participation, in line with the Erasmus+ definition of 'fewer opportunities' as set out in its framework of inclusion measures [500].

A total of **10 985 valid responses** were registered (between a minimum of 1 065 and a maximum 1 147 participants in the 10 participating countries). 49.2% of respondents were male, 50.3% female, and 0.4% and 0.2% indicated "other" and "prefer not to say" respectively. 75.7% declared being affected by one or more of the 8 barriers allowing to classify participants as having fewer opportunities.

The experiment aimed to estimate the causal effects of providing information (at a high or low extent) about:

i) the benefits of Erasmus+ mobility actions addressing learners in the higher education, VET and youth fields; as well as
ii) the effects of explaining how to acquire information, on both learners' beliefs and willingness to participate in the programme.

In addition, it also aimed to estimate the causal effects of changing learners' beliefs on their willingness to participate, using random treatment assignment as an instrument for beliefs.

The outcomes of this analysis were aimed to help better understand the relevance of the Erasmus+ mobility actions for potential participants in the youth, higher education, and VET sectors with fewer opportunities compared to those without, as well as their responsiveness to prompts about the benefits of the programme and about access to more information about it.

[500] Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1877 of 22 October 2021 on the framework of inclusion measures of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programmes 2021-2027, OJ L 378, 26.10.2021, p. 15. See also Implementation Guidelines on Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy (https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/document/commission-decision-framework-inclusion-2021-27).

Summary of findings

The analysis yielded three key findings:

1. Overall, the provision of information about the benefits of participating in Erasmus+ mobility actions was found to positively influence respondents' beliefs about the effect of programme participation on their chance of getting a job and improving their skills. It was also found to have a positive effect on respondents' willingness to participate in an Erasmus+ mobility action in the future. Moreover, it was found that presenting participants with a high estimate of the benefits from participation was effective to influence their beliefs about participation in a mobility activity and increasing their chance of getting a job.
2. The provision of information about how to find more information on Erasmus+ learning mobility opportunities was found to positively influence respondents' beliefs on (i) the ease/difficulty of acquiring such information, (ii) their likelihood of actually acquiring more information, and (iii) their willingness to participate in an Erasmus+ learning mobility action within the next year and within the next few years. Moreover, showing how to find more information on Erasmus+ learning mobility opportunities through online channels only was found to be more effective for increasing their likelihood to acquire more information than showing them both online and in-person channels.
3. Evidence was found that the interventions had varying effects on participants with different characteristics.

Together, these findings suggest that information provision is overall an effective tool in positively influencing learners' beliefs and their willingness to participate in Erasmus+ learning mobility. To maximise the effect of the interventions, the information presented should include a high estimate of programme benefits and online information channels through which learners can easily find more information about Erasmus+ learning mobility.

3.9. Key informant interviews

Key informant interviews were conducted to gather qualitative information and insights concerning the performance of the Erasmus+ programme against the evaluation criteria. Three main types of interviewees were targeted:

- **National-level interviewees** in selected Member States and third countries associated to the programme, including national policy officers, programme managers (e.g. Erasmus+ national authorities representatives and committee members, Erasmus+ national agencies representatives), and stakeholder organisations involved in Erasmus+ implementation (e.g., Higher education institutions, VET organisations, youth and sport organisations, NGOs, civil society organisations, sectoral networks, business organisations, etc.). The aim of these interviews was mostly to collect insights on perceptions of system-level impacts of Erasmus+ and concrete changes influenced by the programme.
- **European-level interviewees**, including representatives from relevant European Commission services, EU agencies, and umbrella organisations active at European level and representing all programme sectors. The objective of these interviews was to collect insights on the systemic impact of the programme at EU level, as well as on the programme's resilience and responses, specifically related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ukraine war and high levels of inflation.

- **International-level interviewees**, including representatives of international organisations [501], EU delegations, programme bodies interacting with third countries not associated to the programme (e.g. National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs) and regional SALTOs (Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities) resource centres), as well as beneficiary organisations (mostly higher education institutions and networks) in third countries not associated to the programme. The objective of these interviews was to better understand the international dimension of Erasmus+, specifically the extent to which it contributes to the EU's objectives at the international level.

For each of these three levels, key informant interviews used semi-structured topic guides focusing on the following evaluation criteria:

- **Relevance**: alignment of the programme with policies and needs in the education and training, youth and sport sectors, and contribution to inclusivity and international cooperation.
- **Effectiveness**: implementation of programme objectives, policy influence, impact on institutions and individuals, and best practices.
- **Efficiency**: adequacy of programme/projects funding and implementation challenges.
- **Coherence**: collaboration among entities and potential areas for improved cooperation.

The interviews covered the following selection of **countries:**

- **25 programme countries** covered through national level interviews, and including:
  - 21 EU Member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden), and
  - 4 third countries associated to the programme (North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Türkiye).
- **14 third countries not associated to the programme** (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ghana, Ukraine, USA, Azerbaijan, Colombia, El Salvador, Morocco, Nigeria, Cameroun, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam), covered through international level interviews with programme beneficiaries.

A total of **267 interviews** were conducted online between October 2023 and July 2024.

Table 4: Overview of interviews conducted by key informant level and type

Key informant type	Interviews
International level	**42**
EU delegations [502]	*15*
Regional SALTOs	*3*
NEOs	*3*
International organisations	*5*
Organisations in third countries not associated to Erasmus+	*16*
European level	**60**
European Commission and EU Agencies	*22*
European stakeholder organisations	*38*
National level	**165**
National policy officers and stakeholder organisations in Member States and third countries associated to Erasmus+	*149*

[501] Organisations with an international scope (i.e. without a country or EU specific mandate and scope of action).
[502] Interviews were carried out with EU delegations in: Region 1 (Kosovo, Montenegro), Region 2 (Georgia), Region 3 (Lebanon), Region 5 (Bangladesh, Pakistan, Vietnam), Region 6 (Uzbekistan), Region 9 (Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Benin, Cabo Verde, Burkina Faso, Ghana), Region 10 (Brazil).

Key informant type	Interviews
National programme managers in Member States and third countries associated to Erasmus+	*16*
TOTAL	**267**

The table below shows the number of key informant interviews conducted by Erasmus+ sector/field. Some key informants, due to their role or organisation, covered more than one sector/field, which is why the total number shown in the table below exceeds the total number of completed interviews indicated in the preceding table. This is the case of 46 interviewees who were, in great part, covering more than one (or all) education and training sectors. Other key informants, who either did not cover a specific sector or covered all sectors, are included in the 'General' category.

Table 5: Overview of interviews by sector

Sector/field	International	European	National	Total
Higher education	9	9	40	**58**
VET	0	8	25	**33**
School education	0	4	19	**23**
Adult education	0	4	24	**28**
Youth	3	11	36	**50**
Sport	2	3	13	**18**
General	23	27	53	**103**
Total	**37**	**66**	**210**	**313**

The conducted interviews were summarised, anonymised, and analysed for common trends and insights, in particular with regards to emerging needs and trends in education and training, youth and sport that Erasmus+ should address as well as potential areas for improvement.

Summary of findings – International-level interviews

International-level interviews revealed that Erasmus+ is uniquely positioned to facilitate knowledge and good practice sharing between Europe and the different parts of the world in key areas such as greening, digitalisation and inclusion.

While Erasmus+ initiatives support digital skills and inclusion, difficulties persist in addressing local needs effectively, especially in regions like Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. The needs considered of highest relevance among international-level informants include the internationalisation of higher education and the enhancement of learners' mobility in VET.

Interviews highlighted that Erasmus+ contributes to the employability of young people and graduates in non-associated countries. At the level of organisations, the programme has considerably contributed to modernising and upgrading teaching curricula, thus enhancing the overall quality of education in partner countries. Overall, it is acknowledged that Erasmus+ contributes to educational reform and capacity-building of educational institutions and stakeholders internationally, despite ongoing challenges in accessibility and inclusivity. The scalability of Erasmus+ projects to influence policy levels remains a challenge, particularly in Africa and Asia. Despite these challenges, Erasmus+ has facilitated notable achievements in education quality, mobility, and institutional capacity-building globally. The increased budget allocation for 2021-2027 is praised overall, but interviewees indicated that **more funding would be needed for sectors other than higher education**. Implementation challenges

include administrative complexities, lack of visibility for funding opportunities, and slow communication processes, reported in particular for Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, while the main barriers for third country learner participation in the programme are linked to financial and visa constraints.

Overall, while improvements like the establishment of Erasmus+ National Focal Points (ENFPs) are noted, there remains a need for better coordination and responsiveness in supporting Erasmus+ projects.

EU Delegations noted synergies with Horizon Europe (mostly its Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions), emphasising capacity building and mobility. Non-associated third-country organisations see Erasmus+ as providing unique opportunities for capacity building without overlapping with other programmes.

Summary of findings – European-level interviews

The Erasmus+ programme is seen as aligning well with EU policy priorities, focusing on digital skills, green initiatives, inclusion, and civic participation. Emphasis on adult education and VET is increasing. Capacity building and internationalisation, especially in VET, are highlighted as key aspects of the programme. European stakeholder organisations praise the efforts under the current Erasmus+ programme to promote inclusion and accessibility.

Erasmus+ is viewed as having evolved positively, becoming more flexible and inclusive. It has expanded to include a wider range of objectives and activities, emphasising sectoral needs like collaboration between education and business, promoting apprenticeship mobility and supporting the Centres of Vocational Excellence. The programme is recognised as significantly supporting the building of the European Education Area and the European Skills Agenda, through internationalisation, cooperation, and its contribution to the development of national qualification frameworks.

New features introduced under the 2021-2027 programme, such as the 'Erasmus accreditation', the DiscoverEU learning cycle and blended mobilities, are seen positively. According to the interviewees, Erasmus+ significantly impacts national policy implementation, especially in smaller EU Member States with limited state funding, thereby fostering reforms in higher education, in particular. Despite positive developments, Erasmus+ still faces challenges in translating project outcomes into policy, in particular outside the EU.

The increased budget for the 2021-2027 is overall regarded positively, yet interviewees underline a growing demand for increased funding for capacity building initiatives, particularly in areas like youth and VET, with a call for greater flexibility in budget allocation to meet evolving needs. Interviewed stakeholders acknowledge that Erasmus+ has improved cooperation and communication but highlight challenges with inconsistent interpretations of programme rules at the national level. Simplified application processes have increased accessibility, yet complex IT tools and financial management remain issues. Mixed views exist on actions under indirect management, with some interviewees supporting their flexibility and others noting implementation complexities. In particular, interviewed representatives from civil society organisations testified participation barriers, arguing that flexibility in budget allocation is crucial for adapting to changing circumstances.

Synergies between Erasmus+ and EU research programmes such as Horizon Europe are frequently highlighted, both by Commission/EU Agencies informants and by European stakeholder organisations, pointing to potential for collaboration in areas such as digital education and skills development.

Summary of findings – National-level interviews

National-level interviewees generally report strong alignment between Erasmus+ priorities and national policies [503], particularly in education, higher education, and VET. This is credited to the programme's focus on internationalisation, skills development, and societal challenges like inclusivity and digitalisation. However, challenges persist, such as operationalising priorities like the green transition and better aligning priorities in specific sectors such as youth, sport, and adult education. Some countries highlight bureaucratic hurdles [504] and the need for clearer programme priorities to better reflect national strategies [505]. Despite improvements in alignment, disparities remain between countries and sectors, necessitating enhanced coherence between Erasmus+ objectives and national policies.

While the current programme is seen as more responsive to diverse needs, access barriers persist, particularly for marginalised groups in the VET and youth sectors [506]. Informants stress the need for streamlined administration, increased financial support, and tailored assistance across sectors to ensure equitable participation and maximise the programme's impact on professional development and systemic change in European education [507].

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted Erasmus+ projects, prompting a shift to online formats across most sectors. Digitalisation accelerated, which fostered virtual tools and platforms, thereby enhancing resilience, but also revealed disparities in digital skills and infrastructure across countries. Additionally, the war in Ukraine curtailed mobility, yet the programme adapted with flexibility and support. Financial challenges due to inflation affected project quality despite attempts to mitigate through increased funding.

Concerns about budget proportionality were expressed by informants across sectors such as adult education and VET, which face lower funding levels compared to higher education. Demand for Erasmus+ funding surpasses available budget in numerous countries [508], despite a significant increase for 2021-2027. Calls were made for more flexibility and coordination between National Agencies and the European Commission to address funding imbalances effectively.

Most national-level key informants highlighted how Erasmus+ aligns with national programmes aimed at improving skills, promoting digitalisation, or enhancing internationalisation [509]. While recognising the uniqueness of Erasmus+, some stakeholders (from higher education, school education, VET) highlighted a need for improved coordination and synergy between Erasmus+ and other EU programmes [510]. This includes concerns about

[503] Reported by informants from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye

[504] Reported by informants from Austria, Belgium, Czechia, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye.

[505] Reported by informants from Czechia, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Sweden.

[506] Reported by informants from Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Sweden

[507] Reported by informants from Austria, Belgium, Czechia, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye

[508] Reported by informants from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye.

[509] Reported by informants from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Malta, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden

[510] Reported by informants from Austria, Czechia, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Türkiye.

overlapping funding structures, differing administrative procedures, and a lack of strategic synchronisation between the respective programme's calls.

3.10 Case studies

As part of the stakeholder consultation strategy, case studies were carried out to complement insights gained from surveys, key informant interviews and workshops. Three types of case studies were carried out, interviewing in total 186 stakeholders:

- **Organisational-level case studies**, examining organisational developments, changes in staff work and professional growth, learners' motivations, and development in organisations coordinating Erasmus+ projects in all programme fields. For each case study, interviews were typically carried out with the concerned organisation's leadership, staff, and learners [511]. A total of 130 individuals were interviewed for performing the organisational-level case studies.
- **Jean Monnet case studies**, assessing how Erasmus+ grants enhance European studies' teaching and research quality, help reach new audiences, and analysing the extent to which similar activities existed in the organisation prior to the reception of the grant and how organisations plan to sustain these activities on completion of the grant. These case studies focused on the Jean Monnet Actions in the higher education field and on the newly introduced actions in other fields of education and training (schools and VET), and on Jean Monnet Designated Institutions. 37 individuals were interviewed for performing the Jean Monnet case studies.
- **System-level case studies**, analysing how specific actions impact practices and policymaking across all programme fields, with interviews mainly targeting project leaders and partner organisations. 19 individuals were interviewed for performing this set of case studies.

The case study **selection process** was carried out randomly based on several criteria:

- **Implementation period**: organisations coordinating projects completed in 2018-2020 (previous programme) and 2021-2023 (current programme), as well as ongoing projects at an advanced stage.
- **Experience level**: a mix of experienced, less experienced, and newcomer organisations, based on the number of Erasmus+ projects coordinated.
- **Geographical distribution**: balanced coverage of larger and smaller countries.
- **Action types**: coverage of KA1 mobility activities (learners and/or staff), KA2 partnerships, KA3 policy development support. In addition, Jean Monnet case studies cover most type of Jean Monnet actions implemented under the current programme.
- **Thematic coverage**: balanced coverage of Erasmus+ horizontal priorities.
- **Sectors**: balanced coverage of the six sectors.

The selection was made using the Erasmus+ Project Results Platform, with the Commission's input. A reserve list was established to replace organisations that were non-responsive or declined to take part in the case studies.

The case studies were carried out through semi-structured interviews, supplemented in some cases with project documentation. They reflect diverse stakeholder perspectives across sectors and actions, structured around the main evaluation criteria.

[511] In the sport sector, no "learners" were interviewed as the programme doesn't cover this type of mobility.

A total of 44 case studies were carried out: 29 organisational-level cases, 8 Jean Monnet cases and 7 system-level cases.

The tables below provide an overview of the type and number of case studies conducted as well as their respective focus.

Table 6: Organisational-level case studies

CS#	Field	Lead Organisation	Country
1	SCH	Istituto comprensivo Manzoni-Radice	IT
2	SCH	Bundeshandelsakademie Bundeshandelsschule Oberpullendorf	AT
3	SCH	I Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. Henryka Sienkiewicza w Kedzierzynie-Koźlu	PL
4	SCH	Pädagogische Hochschule Freiburg	DE
5	SCH	Primary school Anton Skala	RS
6	ADU	Asociația Sprijin+	RO
7	ADU	Afeji Hauts-de-France	FR
8	ADU	Oktatasi es Szakerto Bt.	HU
9	ADU	Społeczny Instytut Ekologiczny	PL
10	ADU	Unitre (Associazione Nazionale delle Università della Terza Età - Università delle Tre Età A.P.S.)	IT
11	HED	Technische Universität Berlin	DE
12	HED	Univerza v Mariboru	SI
13	HED	Universidad de Sevilla	ES
14	HED	Satakunnan ammattikorkeakoulu	FI
15	SPO	THOMAS MORE Mechelen-Antwerpen Safe Sport Allies	BE
16	SPO	Stichting Flik-Flak	NL
17	SPO	So Europe Eurasia Foundation	IE
18	SPO	European Hockey federation	BE
19	SPO	EuropeActive	BE
20	VET	FH Joanneum Gesellschaft Mbh	AT
21	VET	Chambre de Métiers et de l'Artisanat Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes	FR
22	VET	Upper-Secondary School of Electrical and Computer Engineering and Technical Gymnasium Ljubljana (Vegova Ljubljana)	SI
23	VET	Kauno technologijų mokymo centras	LT
24	VET	AKMI Anonimi Ekpaideftiki Etairia	EL
25	YOU	Ifjúsági Nomád Klub	HU
26	YOU	Društvo ustvarjalcev Taka Tuka	SI
27	YOU	Agenzija Zghazagh	MT
28	YOU	Unternehmergesellschaft (haftungsbeschränkt) "Roter Baum" Berlin	DE
29	YOU	Youth for exchange and understanding international	BE

Table 7: Jean Monnet case studies

CS#	Action Type	Field	Lead Organisation	Country
30	Teacher Training	SCH	Casa do Professor	PT
31	Learning EU initiatives	SCH	Profilirana Prirodo-Matematicheska Gimnazia Akademik Ivan Tsenov	BG
32	Networks for Schools	SCH	Istituto Statale d'Arte - Liceo artistico "Edgardo Mannucci"	IT
33	Jean Monnet Projects	HED	Scuola superiore di studi universitari e di perfezionamento Sant'Anna	IT
34	Jean Monnet Modules	HED	Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna	IT
35	JM Designated Institution	-	College of Europe - Bruges, Belgium, and Natolin, Poland	BE, PL
36	JM Designated Institution	-	European University Institute, Florence, Italy	IT
37	JM Designated Institution	-	European Institute of Public Administration, Maastricht, The Netherlands	NL

Table 8: System-level case studies

CS#	Field	KA	Action Type	Project Title	Organisation	Country
38	HED	KA2	European Universities alliances	Charm-EU	University of Barcelona	ES
39	HED	KA3	Policy Experimentation	Edlab: European Degree Label institutional laboratory	Universidad de Granada	ES
40	SCH	KA1	Erasmus+ Accreditation	Bildungsdirektion Steiermark	Board of Education of Styria	AT
41	ADU	KA3	Social inclusion through education, training and youth	Regional Capacity for Adult Education and Learning	European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA)	BE
42	VET	KA2	Sector Skills Alliances in vocational education and training Lot 1 – vocational excellence	Pilot Platform of Vocational Excellence Water (Pilot PoVE Water)	CIV Water	NL
43	YOU	KA3	Youth Wiki	Youth Wiki	Agenzija Zghazagh (Malta), Ministry of National Education and Youth (France), Youth Board of Cyprus	MT, FR, CY
44	SPO	KA2	Collaborative partnership	FIA European Young Women Programme	Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA)	FR

3.11 Stakeholder workshops

Five workshops were organised to gather stakeholders' feedback on specific aspects of the support study conducted by ICF:

Table 8: Overview of stakeholder workshops

#	Date and format	Topic	N° of participants	Participant types
1	14/06/2023 Physical (Brussels)	Preliminary findings of scoping interviews and stakeholder consultation strategy.	70	Representatives of Erasmus+ National Agencies
2	04/03/2024 Online	Three meta-analyses to support the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 Interim Evaluation and Erasmus+ 2014-2020 Final Evaluation	87	Experts in the field, policymakers, Erasmus+ national agencies' representatives, stakeholder organisations, Commission's Inter-Service Group members assisting with the preparation of the Erasmus+ evaluation
3	20/03/2024 Hybrid (Brussels / online)	Key issues for a possible successor of the Erasmus+ programme	115 (of which 41 online)	Representatives from Erasmus+ National Authorities, Erasmus+ National Agencies, stakeholder organisations active at European level across all programme fields, representatives from the European Parliament, the Commission's Inter-Service Group members assisting with

#	Date and format	Topic	N° of participants	Participant types
				the preparation of the Erasmus+ evaluation
4	09/07/2024 Hybrid (Brussels/ online)	Findings from the Draft Final Report on the Erasmus+ support study	159 (of which 120 online)	Representatives from Erasmus+ National Authorities, Erasmus+ National Agencies, stakeholder organisations active at European level in all programme fields, representatives from the other EU institutions, Commission's Inter-Service Group members assisting with the preparation of the Erasmus+ evaluation
5	19/09/2024 Online	Synthesis of national reports on the implementation and impact of Erasmus+	126	Representatives from Erasmus+ National Authorities, Erasmus+ National Agencies, other EU institutions, Commission's Inter-Service Group members assisting with the preparation of the Erasmus+ evaluation

Workshop 1 (14 June 2023) took place in Brussels in the context of the National Agencies' event. The objective of the workshop was to provide National Agencies with an overview of the preliminary findings from the scoping interviews carried out in the inception phase with different types of stakeholders, to gather feedback on these preliminary findings as well as inputs for the data collection activities and suggestions concerning the stakeholder consultation activities. The workshop was attended by approximately 70 National Agency representatives.

Workshop 2 (4 March 2024) aimed to present the preliminary results of the three meta-analyses undertaken as part of the support study via a systematic quantitative literature review. These three meta-analyses focused on specific individual level effects of taking part in a mobility under the Erasmus+ programme: 1) effects on skills improvements and academic performance, 2) effects on employment outcomes, and 3) effects on European values. Interaction with workshop participants mainly focused on methodological choices: the selection of exclusion criteria, the definition of the counterfactual, the challenge of overcoming (self-)selection bias for all themes, especially the theme on European values. Workshop participants were invited to propose additional studies for inclusion in the meta-analyses, which were assessed by the study team to complete the task.

Workshop 3 (20 March 2024) aimed to present and discuss the initial findings from the Erasmus+ evaluation related to potential issues of the current Erasmus+ programme and how these could inform the objectives and design of its potential successor programme beyond 2027. Participants were invited to share their experiences with the current programme and ideas for a possible successor programme to Erasmus+ around four areas: (1) Erasmus+ objectives and priorities; (2) programme structure; (3) management and (4) resources.

Workshop 4 (9 July 2024) aimed to present and discuss the findings from the draft final report of the external consultancy study informing the evaluation of Erasmus+, in view of collecting additional insights into the various aspects of the evaluation and helping refine the findings and recommendations emerging under each evaluation criterion. The feedback collected during and

after the workshop[512] contributed to the finalisation of the support study and supported the production of its final report.

Workshop 5 (19 September 2024) presented and discussed the report synthetising the National reports on the implementation and impact of Erasmus+ submitted by Erasmus+ National Authorities ('synthesis report' prepared by ICF). The feedback collected during and after the workshop contributed to the finalisation of the synthesis report.

[512] 21 additional contributions were collected through a EUsurvey link on the five evaluation criteria and the preliminary list of recommendations.

ANNEX VI. COMPLEMENTARY INFORMATION ON THE INTERVENTION LOGICS OF ERASMUS+ 2014-2020 AND ERASMUS+ 2021-2027

Erasmus+ 2014-2020

- ***Inputs***

Erasmus+ 2014-2020 had an overall indicative **financial envelope** of EUR 14.774 billion under Heading 1 (Sustainable growth) and of EUR 1.68 billion under Heading 4 (EU as global player) of the EU budget.

The **European Commission** bears the overall responsibility for the supervision and coordination of the agencies in charge of implementing the programme at national level. It is assisted by the **Erasmus+ programme committee** composed of the representatives of the Member States. The European Commission manages the budget and sets priorities, targets and criteria for the programme. Furthermore, it guides and monitors the overall implementation, and evaluates the programme at European level after having received the National Reports from participating countries. It also manages directly few actions of the programme[513].

At European level, the **European Commission's Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency** (EACEA) is responsible for the implementation of actions under direct management [514] which account for a small share of the total budget. The largest share of the budget is implemented through indirect management. The European Commission entrusts implementation and promotion tasks to **National Agencies**[515] established in each participating country, which implement those actions of the programme with the highest volume [516] so as to bring the programme as close as possible to its beneficiaries and to adapt to the diversity of national education, training and youth systems.

The programme actions are implemented mainly by means of open Calls for proposals, while few others are implemented identified beneficiaries or public procurement.

The implementation of the programme is also supported through structures such as the SALTO resource centres, which provide qualitative support to National Agencies and programme stakeholders in the youth field, the National Erasmus+ offices (NEOs) deployed in third countries not associated to the programme with a role of promotion of Erasmus+ opportunities.

[513] These actions consist mainly of administrative expenditure (studies, external communication and dissemination, IT systems, etc.), policy coordination and support actions, politically sensitive and new actions, pilot projects and preparatory actions.
[514] These actions are: large-scale European Voluntary Service (until 2018, when the action was discontinued from Erasmus+ to be implemented under the European Solidarity Corps) and Joint Master Degrees (KA1), Knowledge Alliances and Sector Skills Alliances (KA2), most of the KA3 actions, Jean Monnet activities and sport actions.
[515] By the end of the programming period 58 NAs (including the Serbian and UK NAs) were appointed and supervised by the National Authorities in their respective country. Since 2014, their performance is also controlled by Independent Audit Bodies identified in each country and delivering an Independent Audit Opinion as part of the NAs' yearly management declaration.
[516] NAs manage KA1 mobility (except Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees), KA2 strategic partnerships, structured dialogue between young people and decision-makers under KA3.

Erasmus+ 2021-2027

- ***Inputs***

The 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme is implemented under both **direct and indirect management in 33 countries,** i.e. 27 EU Member States, three EFTA/EEA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) and three candidate countries (North Macedonia, Republic of Türkiye and Republic of Serbia).

In continuity with the 2014-2020 programme, the **European Commission** bears the overall responsibility for the running of the programme, is assisted by the **Erasmus+ programme committee** composed of the representatives of the Member States, manages the budget, and sets priorities, targets and criteria for the programme on an on-going basis. Furthermore, it guides and monitors the general implementation, follow-up and evaluation of the programme at European level. The European Commission also guides and coordinates the structures in charge of implementing the programme at national level. Additionally, it manages directly a few actions of the programme.

At the European level, the European Commission's **European Education and Culture Executive Agency** (EACEA) is responsible for the implementation of Erasmus+ actions under direct management.

The largest share of the programme's budget is implemented through indirect management. The European Commission entrusts implementation and promotion tasks to **National Agencies**, established in each of the 33 countries participating in the programme. The National Agencies bring Erasmus+ as close as possible to its beneficiaries at local, regional and national level and adapt to the diversity of national education, training and youth systems. The European Commission also entrusts implementation activities in indirect management mode to some **international organisations**, mainly for better knowledge purposes, including OECD or Council of Europe.

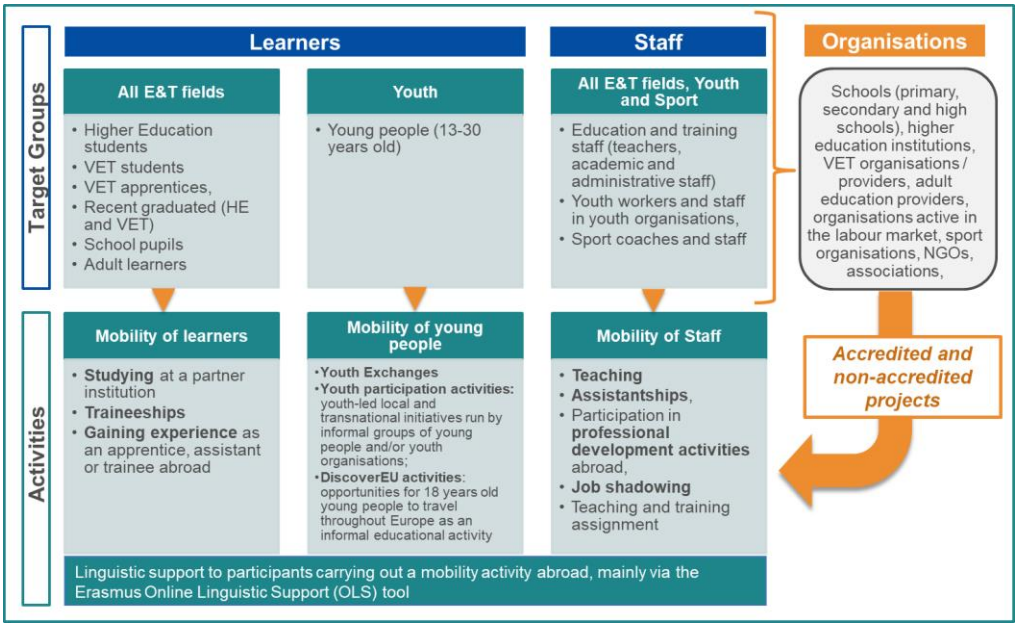
The implementation of the programme is also supported through structures such as the SALTO resource centres, which provide qualitative support to National Agencies and programme stakeholders, the National Erasmus+ offices (NEOs) and the Erasmus+ National Focal Points (ENFP) deployed in third countries not associated to the programme with a role of promotion of Erasmus+ opportunities.

- ***Outputs and Activities***

- **Key action 1: Learning mobility**
    - **Short and long-term group and individual mobility** opportunities for **learners** (all education and training sectors), and **young people** (youth) as well as for **staff** (all programme sectors). These activities provide opportunities for formal, informal and non-formal learning, which can be carried out through a physical or blended mobility, i.e. a combination of physical mobility with a virtual component facilitating a collaborative online learning exchange and teamwork.
    - **Mobility projects and accreditations:** Erasmus+ learning mobilities of individuals are designed in the context of projects providing a framework for the preparation and follow up of the different activities they include. This allows beneficiary organisations in the fields of education and training, youth and sport to build or increase their capacity to work in an international environment and build

future partnerships. Accredited organisations benefit from a simplified grant application process.

Key Action 1: target groups, activities and outputs



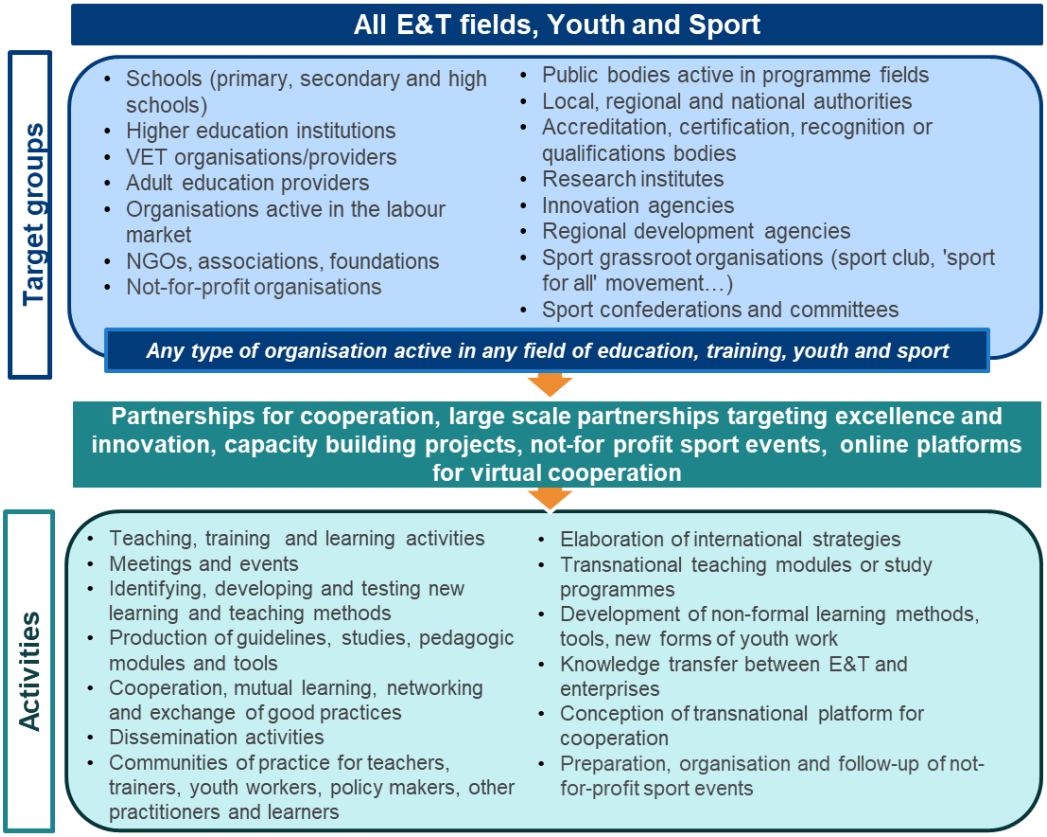
Source: EAC elaboration

- **Key action 2: Cooperation among organisations and institutions**

Transnational and international partnership opportunities for European, but also third country organisations and institutions:

- partnerships for cooperation, including small-scale partnerships, designed to widen access to the programme to small-scale actors and individuals who are hard to reach in education, training, youth and sport;
- Large scale partnerships include the 'Partnerships for excellence (European Universities, Centres of Vocational Excellence, Erasmus+ Teacher academies and Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters Degrees) and the 'Partnerships for innovation (Alliance for innovation and forward-looking projects), aiming at systemic impact at European level and focussed on thematic areas that are strategic for Europe's growth and competitiveness and social cohesion;
- Capacity building in higher education, VET, youth and sport supporting international cooperation through multilateral partnerships. The activities and outcomes of these projects are geared to benefit the individuals, organisations and systems in eligible third countries not associated to the programme.
- Online platforms and tools for virtual cooperation.

Key Action 2: target groups, activities and outputs

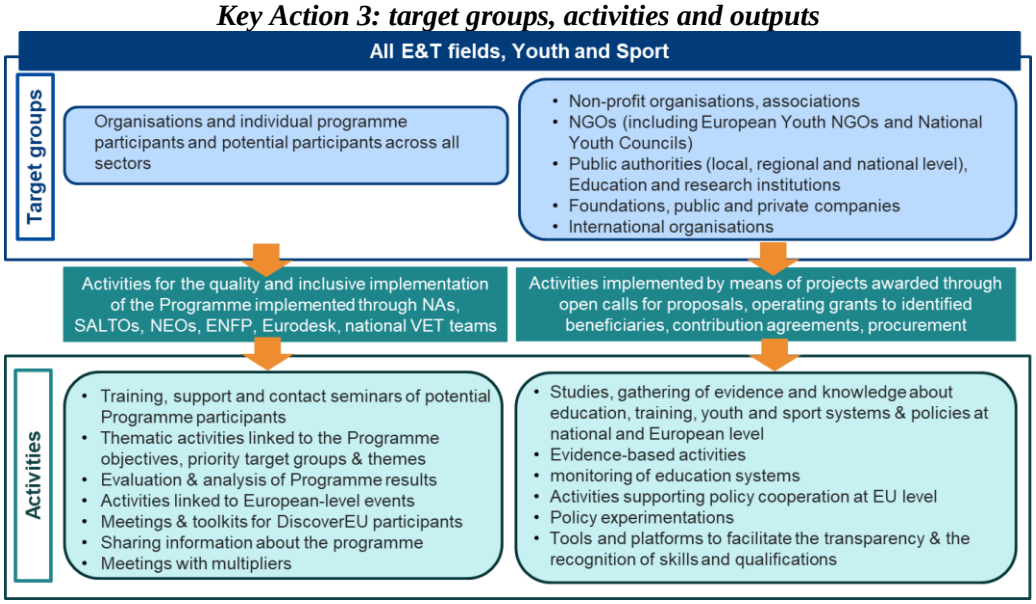


Source: EAC elaboration

- **Key action 3: Support to policy development and cooperation**

This set of activities is featured for its diversified character, going from grants awarded through open calls for proposals (e.g. policy experimentations, Civil society cooperation) to other awarded to identified beneficiaries (e.g. activities supporting policy networks), via contribution agreements or public procurement. They comprise: i) support to policy development and cooperation at European Union level, including gathering evidence and knowledge about education, training, youth and sport systems and policies at national and European level, including via European policy experimentations; ii) support to tools (such as Europass and Youthpass) and measures that foster the quality, transparency, and recognition of skills, competences and qualifications; iii) policy dialogue and cooperation with key stakeholders and international organisations; iv) activities for the quality and inclusive implementation of the programme.

Key Action 3: target groups, activities and outputs



Source: EAC elaboration

Jean Monnet Actions: in the 2021-2027 programme the Jean Monnet Actions were extended beyond the higher education sector to other fields of education and training. These actions support teaching and research on EU integration, policy debates and wider outreach beyond the academic context, as well as learning about the EU and its values in schools and VET institutions. They also provide support to designated institutions pursuing an aim of European interest that conduct research, including for preparing future policies, and teaching for future staff of international organisations and for civil servants.

- ***3. Results***

The expected results of the programme intervention can be summarized at the level of each key action as follows:

- **Key action 1 – Learning mobility**: the intervention seeks to bring positive change for **learners and staff** in the form of improved skills and competences (including language, digital, green and soft skills), enhanced personal developments, better awareness of EU values. The intervention also aims to obtain a series of learning outcomes linked to the four horizontal priorities of the programme.

  The introduction of the accreditation scheme in the fields of VET, school education, adult education and youth, and the overall project dimension in which individual mobilities are framed allows to expect the development of higher capacity of educational and training, and youth organisations to act in an international environment and to develop partnerships and cooperation with organisations in other countries.

- **Key action 2 – Cooperation among organisations and institutions:** the programme seeks changes in pedagogies, methodologies, content and practices. Transnational cooperation projects are expected to generate e.g. the development and/or implementation of innovative and inclusive pedagogies or curricula, new methods of youth work, the implementation of new organisational practices, enhanced networking and exchange of good practices with foreign partners (including outside Europe and from other fields). The intervention is also expected to enhance the cooperation between organisations in view of increasing the response

to the green transition and fostering digital readiness. These results are mainly seen at the level of organisations and institutions.

- **Key action 3 – Support to policy development and cooperation**: the intervention aims at improving the national education, training, youth and sport systems, developing a European dimension, and enhancing the overall impact of the programme at national and European level. The actions supported under key action 3 are designed to act at policy level and to support the quality implementation of the other programme actions, facilitating the generation of their long-lasting effects at individual and organisational level, producing a systemic effect. Given its systemic character, this type of intervention is **not intended to produce immediate results on specific target groups but rather mid- and long-term impacts.**

- **Jean Monnet Actions**: in the field of higher education the intervention supports all over the world teaching, training, and research on European Union studies as well as policy debate on Union policy priorities, involving the academic world, policy makers and the wider society. As a result, better knowledge about the European Union integration matters is expected, with a stronger role of the EU in a globalized world. In other fields of E&T, it supports teaching and learning about the EU, its functioning and its values in schools in programme countries. As a result of the intervention, it is expected that teachers are better equipped to teach about the EU and that the learning outcomes on EU matters in schools and VET institutes increase.

- ***Impacts***

The impacts of the programme are identified at three levels:

- **Individual level**: the intervention aims to contribute to enhance skills, employability, entrepreneurship and innovation capacity of learners and young people, to ensure a better transition to further levels of education. In the medium and long term, an increased capacity of staff can be expected to trigger modernisation and international opening of their organisations. The intervention should also contribute to develop a European identity and sense of belonging, to foster more active participation in the democratic life and civic society, to increase awareness of EU values and to ensure deeper knowledge on the EU and its policies.

- **Institutional/organisational level**: the intervention contributes to developing long-lasting partnerships among organisations and institutions and to their internationalisation, to fostering their adaptability to the digital transformation and the green transition. At this level, the intervention aims to increase the capacity of educational institutions by fostering internationalisation, the progressive adoption of innovative teaching and learning methods and tools, and the recognition of youth work. It is also expected that the programme will increase the capacity of higher education institutions (HEIs) to teach about EU subjects and support the creation of structured centres providing EU specific high-level knowledge in the field of European studies worldwide.

- **Systemic/policy level**: the main impacts are expected in relation to the programme support to the establishment of the European Education Area and advancing the policy cooperation in the fields supported by the programme. In the long term, it is expected that the programme contributes to build more inclusive, innovative and digital education systems, including non-formal and informal education, in order to foster

innovation. It is also expected that the programme contributes to improve international cooperation to build more cohesive communities and sustainable socio-economic development.

ANNEX VII. OVERVIEW OF INDICATORS

Erasmus+ 2014-2020

Table A - Programme indicators established in the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ Regulation: 2020 achievement versus 2020 target[517]

Type	Indicator[518]	2013 baseline	2020 yearly achievement	2020 target
Output	The number of staff supported by the programme	86 000	203 000	136 000
Output	The number of participants with special needs or fewer opportunities[519]	26 700	43 000	77 000
Output	The number and type of organisations and projects[520]	– Indirect management - projects: 11 000 / Organisations: 32 000 Direct management - Projects: 800 / Organisations: 2 000	Indirect management - projects: 25 000 / Organisations: 82 000 Direct management managed– Projects: 5008/Organisations: 3 000	/ [521]
Education and Training				
Output	The number of pupils, students and trainees participating in the programme	301 000	500 000 [HE: 350 000 VET: 150 000]	543 000 [HE: 412 000 VET: 131 000]
Output	The number of higher education students receiving support to study in a partner country	/	25 000	3 900

[517] Data on 2014-2020 indicator achievements refer to the latest reporting carried out under the 2022 Programme Performance Statement (PPS), based on a cut-off date of 21 December 2021, which is earlier than the cutoff date of the evaluation (31 December 2023). For this reason, few discrepancies could be noted with the total achievement referred to in the final evaluation of the 2014-2020 programme due to the longer timeframe needed to complete projects, in particular mobility activities. More in general, any differences presented between the PPS data and any other data presented in this document (stemming from Erasmus+ monitoring data extracted from DG EAC databases and dashboards) are due to the fact that DG EAC's databases are continuously updated. PPS documents present a static version of the programme's performance at a specific time period when data were extracted (i.e. usually, on the last day of each year). On the contrary, DG EAC's databases are regularly updated and present the performance of the programme in real-time. For the purpose of this evaluation, data were frozen at 31 December 2023 to provide the most reliable and possibly updated overview of programme performance.

[518] The list of indicators set up in the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ Regulation also included the number of users of Euroguidance, for which the last measurement took place in 2016 (achievement: 2 983 273). The indicator was then discontinued as individual Euroguidance Centres were using different methodologies to estimate and track numbers of users, making the reporting difficult.

[519] KA2: only pupils in the School Exchange Partnerships action (KA229) are covered; KA3: young people participating in the youth dialogue (KA347).

[520] This composite indicator tracked i) the number of contracted projects per management mode (all key actions, Jean Monnet activities and Sport), and ii) the number of participations of organisations.

[521] No target was set for this indicator upon agreement with central services. This was due to the inherent limitations at the encoding stage of organisations' details that usually provide the source systems with insufficient information.

Type	Indicator[518]	2013 baseline	2020 yearly achievement	2020 target
Output	The number of higher education students from a partner country coming to study in a programme country	/	37 000	15 000
Output	The number of partner country higher education institutions involved in mobility and cooperation actions	1 000	1 235	1 300
Result	The percentage of participants who have received a certificate, diploma or other kind of formal recognition of their participation in the programme (E&T)	100% HE 65% VET	100% HE 91% VET	100 HE 75% VET
Result	The percentage of participants declaring that they have increased their key competences (E&T)	81%	94%	88%
Result	The percentage of participants in long-term mobility declaring that they have increased their language skills (E&T)	94% HE 81% VET	96% HE 95% VET	98% HE 90% VET
Result	The number of students receiving training through Jean Monnet activities	120 000	432 000	360 000
Youth				
Output	The number of young people engaged in mobility actions supported by the programme	60 000	117 000	124 000
Output	The number of youth organisations from both programme countries and partner countries involved in international mobility and cooperation actions	5 300	6 984	6 000
Output	The number of users of the Eurodesk network	140 000	300 000	140 000
Result	The percentage of participants who have received a certificate – for example a Youthpass –, diploma or other kind of formal recognition of their participation in the programme	26%	91%	65%
Result	The percentage of participants declaring that they have increased their key competences (Youth)	75%	96%	80%
Result	The percentage of participants in voluntary activities declaring that they have increased their language skills (Youth)	87%	95%[522]	95%
Output	Size of membership of sport organisations applying for, and taking part in, the programme (Sport)	0	40%[523]	50%
Sport				
Result	The percentage of participants who have used the results of cross-border projects to combat threats to sport (Sport)	0	75%[524]	75%

[522] Reported for the last time in 2019.
[523] Percentage of small grassroot organisations, less than 1 000 members, in projects. Reported until 2019.
[524] The value corresponds to 2019, last year when the achievement for this indicator was reported.

Type	Indicator[518]	2013 baseline	2020 yearly achievement	2020 target
Result	The percentage of participants who have used the results of cross-border projects to improve good governance and dual careers (Sport)	0	75%	75%
Result	The percentage of participants who have used the results of cross-border projects to enhance social inclusion, equal opportunities and participation rates (Sport)	0	75%[525]	75%
Indicators referring to European targets and benchmark for learning mobility (measurements based on Eurostat data, not directly linked with programme participants)				
Europe 2020 headline education target[526]	Percentage of 18-24 years-old with only lower-secondary education who are not enrolled in education or training	11.9%	10.3%	10%
	Percentage of 30-34 years-old with completed tertiary or equivalent education	37.1%	41.6%	>40%
Mobility benchmark[527]	Percentage of higher education graduates who have had a period of higher education-related study or training (including work placements) abroad	2.9%	10.7%[528]	20%
	Percentage of 18-34 years-old with an initial vocational education and training qualification who have had an initial vocational education and training-related study or training period (including work placements) abroad	2-3%	3%[529]	6%

Erasmus+ 2021-2027

Table B - Indicators established in the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ Regulation

Type	Indicator name	Achievement level at end 2023	Target by 2027	Progress to 2027 target [530]
Output	Number of participants in learning mobility activities under key action 1	3 246 360 [531]	8 215 900	40%

[525] The value corresponds to 2019, last year when the achievement for this indicator was reported.
[526] Achievement for these indicators refer to Eurostat data from 2019, latest available data within the programming period.
[527] Achievements for these indicators refer to Eurostat data.
[528] Latest data available: 2016.
[529] Only 2014 data available.
[530] For indicators with a cumulative target at the end of the programming period, progress-to-target is calculated according to the formula (sum of results – baseline)/ (target – baseline). The baseline for all indicators of the current programme was set at '0' per corporate guidance. However, for those indicators in continuity with the previous programming period, the achievement in 2020 is considered the baseline for the current programme.
[531] The methodology applied to calculate the yearly achievements in the Programme Performance Statement is a combined methodology due to the *sui generis* structure, including rules, of the mobility strand of the programme. More specifically, final data on (actual) participants (i.e. mobilities) are available once all projects are administratively closed (between 2 to 4 years after the project starts, depending on the type of action). Until mobility data are deemed as final, numbers are calculated based on estimates/provisional data which are provided by organisations during the application phase of the projects. This explains the difference between the figure reported for this indicator in table 7, with the number of actual participants at the cut-off date of the evaluation (i.e. 1.6 million), mentioned in the text.

Type	Indicator name	Achievement level at end 2023	Target by 2027	Progress to 2027 target [530]
Output	Number of participants in virtual learning activities under key action 1	211 600	264 300	80%
Result	Number of people with fewer opportunities taking part in activities under key action 1	445 635	924 810	48%
Output	Number of organisations and institutions taking part in the programme	KA1: 210 449 KA2: 63 445 KA3: 1 401	KA1: 506 620 KA2: 153 520 KA3: 3 092	KA1: 42% KA2: 41% KA3: 45%
Output	Number of newcomer organisations and institutions taking part in the programme under key actions 1 and 2	29 533	79 915	37%
Output	Number of small-scale partnerships supported under key action 2	5 894	13 355	44%
Output	Number of users of virtual cooperation platforms supported under key action 2	2 128 723	6 410 000	32%
Type	**Indicator name**	**Achievement level at end 2023**	**Target 2023**	**Target 2027[532]**
Impact	Share of participants that consider they have benefited from their participation in learning mobility activities under key action 1	E&T: 99% YOU: 99% SPO: 99%	E&T: 95% YOU: 91% SPO: 74%	E&T: 95% YOU: 95% SPO: 95%
Impact	Share of participants that consider they have an increased European sense of belonging after participation in activities under key action 1	E&T: 89% YOU: 96% SPO: 95%	E&T: 64% YOU: 60% SPO: 55%	E&T: 85% YOU: 68% SPO: 70%
Result	Share of organisations and institutions that consider they have developed high-quality practices as a result of their participation in key action 2	[data not available [533]]	E&T: 67% YOU: 67% SPO: 65%	E&T: 75% YOU: 75% SPO: 65%
Result	Share of organisations and institutions that consider that the procedures for taking part in the programme are proportionate and simple	E&T: 86% YOU: 91% SPO: 63%	E&T: 61% YOU: 62% SPO: 55%	E&T: 65% YOU: 70% SPO: 63%
Output	Share of activities addressing climate objectives under key action 1	E&T: 21% YOU: 86% SPO: 34%	[not available]	20% [all fields]
Output	Share of projects addressing climate objectives under key action 2	E&T: 36% YOU: 24% SPO: 11%	E&T: 15% YOU: 17% SPO: 15%	E&T: 25% YOU: 25% SPO: 15%

[532] For all indicators expressed in form of percentage (non-cumulative) the progress to the final 2027 target is 48%.

[533] Data for 2023 is not available yet: data is captured from final reports, once projects are closed (2 to 4 years after start).

Table C - Additional indicators established under Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/2710[534]

Type	Name of the indicator	Achievement level at end 2023	Target by 2027
Output	The share of activities addressing digital transformation, including the Digital Opportunity Traineeship (DOT) under key action 1	14%	20%
Output	The share of projects addressing inclusion and diversity under key action 2	44%	35%
Output	The share of projects addressing digital transformation under key action 2	40%	25%
Output	The share of projects addressing participation and civic engagement under key action 2	28%	20%
Output	The number of less experienced organisations taking part in the programme under key actions 1 and 2	46 432	98 000
Result	The share of participants in learning mobility that consider they have reached a better understanding of inclusion and diversity in their society and/or are more committed to working against discrimination, intolerance, xenophobia and racism	40%	60%
Result	The share of participants in learning mobility that consider they have learnt about environmental, climate and sustainability issues and/or have changed their habits to become more sustainable	30%	40%
Result	The share of participants in learning mobility that consider they have learnt about new and useful ways to apply digital technologies and/or are eager to use them in their study or work	30%	40%
Result	The share of participants in learning mobility that consider they have learnt more about Europe, the European Union and European values or are more interested in participating in elections, in other democratic processes, and in the life of their local community	38%	60%
Result	The number of people with fewer opportunities receiving Erasmus Mundus scholarships	146 [535]	/
Impact	Increased capacity of organisations	Positive trend	Increasing and positive trend
Impact	Contribution to policy development, strategies and cooperation in education and training, youth and sport	Positive trend	Level of contribution - Positive trend

[534] The baseline for these 12 indicators is '0'. Targets have been estimated and set only at the end of the programming period, to be reviewed once more data is available, after the interim evaluation.
[535] The tracking tools for this indicator were still under construction at the moment of the evaluation. The completion of the field for "fewer opportunities" was not mandatory yet, therefore the figure is partial. Moreover, data for 2022 and 2023 is provisional.

ANNEX VIII. OVERVIEW OF CONTINUED AND DISCONTINUED ACTIONS BETWEEN ERASMUS+ 2014-2020 AND ERASMUS+ 2021-2027

PROGRAMMING PERIODS		
Fields	**Erasmus+ 2014-2020** • ***Discontinued activities in orange*** • ***Actions moved from one key action to another are in green***	**Erasmus+ 2021-2027** • ***New activities in blue*** • ***Actions moved from one key action to another are in green***
Key Action 1 – Learning mobility		
E&T	• Mobility of higher education students and staff • Mobility of VET learners and staff • Mobility of school staff • Mobility of adult education staff • **Students Loan Guarantee Facility** • Accreditations in HE, VET • Language assessment and support • **Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees**	• Mobility of higher education students and staff • Mobility of VET learners and staff • Mobility of **school pupils** and staff • Mobility of **adult education learners** and staff • Language learning opportunities • **Virtual exchanges in higher education** • Accreditations in HE, VET**, SCH and ADU**
Youth	• Mobility of young people • Mobility of youth workers • **Volunteering Charter** • **EVS**	• Mobility of young people • Mobility of youth workers • **Youth participation activities** • **DiscoverEU activities** • **Virtual Exchanges in Youth** • **Accreditation in Youth**
Sport	• *Not applicable*	• **Mobility of sport staff**
Key Action 2 – Cooperation between organisations and institutions		
E&T	• Strategic partnerships • **Alliances (Knowledge Alliances, Sector Skills Alliances)** • Capacity building in the field of higher education • **Transnational cooperation activities (TCA)** • **Virtual exchanges in higher education** • IT support platforms	• Partnerships for cooperation, **including small-scale partnerships** • **Partnerships for excellence (including European Universities alliances, Centres of Vocational Excellence[536], Erasmus+ Teachers Academies, Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees)** • **Partnerships for innovation (including Alliances for Innovation and Forward-looking projects)** • Online platforms and tools for virtual cooperation • Capacity Building in the fields of higher education, **and VET**
Youth	• Strategic partnerships • Capacity Building in the field of youth • **Transnational cooperation activities (TCA)**	• Partnerships for cooperation, **including small-scale partnerships** • Online platforms and tools for virtual cooperation • Capacity Building in the field of youth
Sport	• Small collaborative partnerships • Collaborative partnerships • Not-for-profit European sport events	• Partnerships for cooperation, including small-scale partnerships • Not-for-profit sport events • **Capacity Building in the field of Sport**

[536] European University alliances and Centres of Vocational Excellence are considered new actions of the 2021-2027 programme despite pilots carried out in the last years of the 2014-2020 programme implementation.

PROGRAMMING PERIODS		
Key Action 3: Support to policy development and cooperation		
Across sectors	• Implementation of the Union policy agendas • Implementation of EU transparency and recognition tools and support for Union-wide networks and European NGOs • Policy dialogue with relevant European stakeholders and international organisations • Support to resource centres and specific organisations	• Preparation and implementation of the EU general and sectoral policy agendas in education and training • Quality, transparency and recognition of skills and competences • Policy dialogue and cooperation with stakeholders • Qualitative and inclusive implementation of the programme (including **Training and Cooperation Activities (TCA)**, SALTO Resource Centres, Eurodesk, national VET teams, **DiscoverEU Learning Cycle** • **Cooperation with other EU instruments and support to other policy areas** • Dissemination and awareness-raising activities
Jean Monnet Actions		
E&T	• Jean Monnet in the field of higher education	• Jean Monnet in the field of higher education • **Jean Monnet in other fields of education and training**