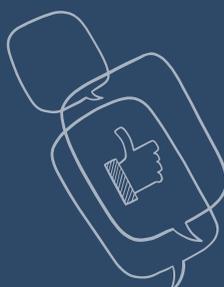


THE ERASMUS+ GENERATION DECLARATION

Europe faces major societal challenges that need to be addressed smartly. Erasmus+ can help us do exactly that. The Erasmus+ Generation, the nine million people who have to date experienced the Erasmus+ programme and its predecessors, has a clear message to leaders in Europe: **we need a bigger programme to have a bigger impact on the future of Europe. Erasmus+ already has the structure in place to tackle Europe's biggest challenges and achieve our collective goals. It now needs the funding to match it!**



With this Declaration, the Erasmus+ Generation puts forth its vision for the future of the Erasmus+ programme beyond 2020. The Erasmus+ Generation has enjoyed the opportunity to study, train, volunteer, teach or gain professional experience in another country, broadening our horizons in the process and enhancing our skills. By coming together with all our experiences, we have created a number of proposals we believe will make the programme even more effective – not only for future participants, but for Europe as a whole.

TACKLING SOCIETAL CHALLENGES FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE



Unequal opportunities, migration, and climate change are examples of issues that will continue to affect our society. The history of Europe tells us that seclusion and nationalism are not the way forward. Shared problems need shared solutions. Sustainable shared solutions are based on trust, and trust is built on personal relations. Continuous efforts and a constructive framework are the foundation we need to create this trust. The Erasmus+ programme is one of those frameworks, and one that has had tremendous success with life-enriching impacts.

- 1 To promote a sense of European citizenship and community, the programme should provide special support to universities, schools, vocational education and training institutions and organisations involved in adult education and youth and sport activities which work on curricula and non-formal activities underpinned by European values. Such beacons of common values would serve to promote a European identity among institutions and local communities.
- 2 To build generational bridges and enhance social cohesion, Erasmus+ should offer opportunities for young people and senior citizens to engage jointly in volunteer work, as well as support other activities that help foster a more direct contact between participants and society as a whole.
- 3 To make Europe a more welcoming and inclusive society, the programme must help equip teachers, youth workers and coaches who work with migrants and refugees with competences to support the integration, education and employability of these groups.
- 4 To help citizens navigate the overload of sometimes unreliable information in the digital age, media literacy should be added as a horizontal priority for cooperation projects to integrate critical thinking and media education in their activities.
- 5 To ensure sustainable development in Europe and beyond, climate change should be included in the horizontal priorities of each Erasmus+ Key Action. Project proposals that apply green project management practices should receive additional points in the evaluation process.

BRIDGING THE SKILLS GAP THROUGH DIVERSE LEARNING

To strategically tackle the skills gap and maximise learning outcomes, Erasmus+ should fund a wider range of participants and activities and better coordinate, reinforce and communicate the actions it supports. Erasmus+ should work hand in hand with other EU programmes tackling similar issues such as skills enhancement; entrepreneurship and innovation; employability; active and life-long learning; and validation of both formal and informal learning.

- 6 More funds should be allocated to the mobility of teachers and trainers to allow for greater exchange of innovative pedagogies and best practices in work-based learning and the development of 21st century skills.
- 7 We need to develop an approach to life-long learning that allows people of all ages and at all stages of their professional development to be re-trained and up-skilled. The programme should involve more employers by offering opportunities for traineeships and work-based learning, where staff from enterprises can provide and take part in training, teaching and work-based placements.
- 8 Even more should be done to ensure that the programme recognises and values soft skills such as adaptability, cultural understanding, critical thinking, and problem solving and communications skills as much as formal learning outcomes. The opportunity to develop such soft skills should be available to all Erasmus+ participants at all stages of their personal and professional development.
- 9 There should be more opportunities for short-term mobility combined with the use of virtual mobility, such as digital courses and virtual cooperation, not only to enhance participants' practical and intercultural skills, but also to foster an entrepreneurial mindset.
- 10 The programme needs to encourage Erasmus+ participants to integrate more into their host locations to develop language and intercultural communication skills. This could be achieved by giving participants the chance to be hosted by a local person or family.

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT FOR INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN CIVIL SOCIETY

Erasmus+ aims to engage participants in civil society and empower them in their personal, professional and citizenship development. The future programme has to increase this dimension in order to ensure sustainable effects not only for individuals, but for society as a whole. Civic engagement should not be a side effect of the programme but a clear dimension of it with mechanisms incorporated within the programme to support it.

- 11** The European Civic Education dimension of Erasmus+ needs to be further developed to foster a sense of European identity and commitment to common European values at all educational levels, by addressing democracy, human rights, solidarity and respect for the rule of law.
- 12** The programme needs to support non-formal learning projects at the national and local level that have a clear European dimension and focus on developing skills for civic engagement and participation in democratic life.
- 13** Through youth work and Structured Dialogues, the programme should increase opportunities for youth and groups typically not involved in policy development so they can better shape policy, not only by engaging them in consultations, but also in co-decision-making processes.
- 14** A common platform of alumni networks, coordinated nationally and internationally, should be created to enable and encourage Erasmus+ alumni to build on their experiences and get involved in civic initiatives.
- 15** Volunteering organisations need to be further supported to adequately host, send, recruit and train volunteers of all ages for both local and international engagement.

FOSTERING INCLUSION TO PROMOTE COMMON VALUES

The importance of inclusion is widely acknowledged and many countries have taken progressive steps to ensure that human rights are fully respected. Despite this, people in many parts of Europe keep facing various disadvantages: from economic and social challenges, to physical and mental disabilities, which hinder their chances of participating in Erasmus+. The programme must react by being more inclusive, not only towards disadvantaged groups, but also towards smaller organisations that may find it harder to access the programme.

- 16** The programme should offer funding for Erasmus+ ‘ambassadors’ to visit underrepresented rural areas and explain to people the benefits of taking part in Erasmus+ and encourage them to embrace mobility opportunities.
- 17** Erasmus+ should in the future include a specific budget for institutions that enables them to provide a support structure for participants from disadvantaged backgrounds and guide them through a successful Erasmus+ experience.
- 18** To make the programme truly inclusive, we need to guarantee higher financial support for disadvantaged students and learners.
- 19** The programme should offer small organisations opportunities to organise small scale projects to match their capacity for participation – and it should have proportionate application procedures.
- 20** To help new organisations with Erasmus+ administrative procedures, provide guidance and ensure local representation, regional Erasmus+ contact persons should be appointed, such as experienced applicants and coordinators.



AN ACCESSIBLE PROGRAMME BEYOND EUROPE FOR STRONGER, MORE SUSTAINED GLOBAL IMPACT

Although Erasmus+ is open to the world, some communities are under-represented. Erasmus+ needs to face up to this challenge and foster more cooperation with the rest of the world by encouraging and sustaining partnerships not only between European and non-European higher education institutions and youth organisations, but also schools, adult, sport and vocational education and training organisations, as well as businesses.

- 21 The international dimension of Erasmus+ should be opened up to include all sectors of education, training, youth and sport. Partner organisations should be encouraged to incorporate Erasmus+ into their internationalisation strategies.
- 22 The programme should reach out to less involved partner countries through an increased budget, specialised training and alumni networks. To maximise the outreach, both programme and partner countries should be subject to the same rules, so that the latter do not have tighter limitations than the former and to make it easier for newcomers to join.
- 23 We need to support capacity building in the developing world to enable countries to implement educational programmes that encourage sustainable practices, ethical governance, food security and innovation.
- 24 The programme should allow European NGOs to apply for funding through a centralised process independent of the place where they are based to ensure wider impact and outreach of their programmes and projects both within and beyond Europe.
- 25 The United Kingdom should be kept in Erasmus+ as a symbol of strong and global collaboration.

THINK BIG – BUT MAKE IT SMART AND SIMPLE!

Erasmus+ provides the best framework for intercultural learning, while opening up opportunities to develop innovative ideas and share common European values. Therefore, Erasmus+ has to be accessible and inclusive. This calls for clear and simple structures, targeted actions as well as simple tools and more information, communication and support.

- 26 European charters for school, youth and adult education organisations should be created that, once awarded, entitle them to a simplified application and reporting procedure, mirroring what exists in higher education and vocational education and training.
- 27 The programme should integrate and ensure compatibility of all IT tools for easy access and secure exchange of information. The Online Linguistic Support should be fully integrated with the Erasmus+ Mobile App and opened up to all Erasmus+ participants.
- 28 E-applications and reports need to be simple and user-friendly, avoid repetitions and be editable by all project partners. A community help-desk should be created where good practices and examples are shared among peers. Participants' feedback on hosting organisations and courses should be collected and used to provide an easily accessible information database for future Erasmus+ participants.
- 29 The programme should provide for greater budget flexibility in granted projects by enabling transfers within budget according to needs so that beneficiaries can fully use allocated funding.
- 30 Whenever possible, national legislation should facilitate the implementation of the Erasmus+ framework and remove any legal barriers to it.



The Erasmus+ Generation believes in the potential of Erasmus+ to create a brighter future for Europe – Let's give the programme the funding it needs to achieve its full potential!

THANK YOU TO THE ERASMUS+ GENERATION AND TO THOSE WHO LED THE ONLINE DISCUSSIONS IN THE PROGRAMME COUNTRIES AND BEYOND

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|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
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