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Position Paper

on the European
Commission
Proposal for the
Erasmus+
programme
for the period
2028-2034



EFIL - European
federation for
Intercultural Learning

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On 15 July 2025 the European Commission published the proposal for the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2028-2034, including the proposals for budget and regulations for the Erasmus+ programme. The **upcoming programming period of Erasmus+ will be crucial to realise the European Education Area, the Union of Skills and the future EU Youth Strategy**, as the main initiatives of the EU in the fields of education and training and youth.

We call for the European Commission, Member states and the European Parliament to secure a **5 times increase of Erasmus+**, and in particular a **5 times increase for the school education sector, namely 2,735 million**.

This measure will ensure that all youth take part in a learning mobility and that these mobilities contribute to the policy changes aspired by the European Education Area and Union of Skills: increased trust among school systems in Europe and recognition of learning periods abroad in general secondary education.

The Erasmus+ programme is broadly recognised as the most well-known programme of the EU and continues to be uniquely relevant in European society. However the available funding can not keep up with the demand. The positive effect of the programme has not gone unnoticed as the competition for funding is increasing, with quality project applications exceeding the available funds¹. The Letta and Draghi reports underline how learning mobility fosters the development of transversal skills of the individuals, and moreover fosters European unity, both in terms of promoting a European identity and solidarity, as well as alignment on education policy and trust across Member States, but the reports also highlight the funding gap. The European Parliament has requested a tripling of the current budget for Erasmus+ in order to secure the continuity of the current programme activities, while the Draghi report put forward a five-time increase of the budget for the Erasmus+ programme to be able to reach its ambition of providing mobility opportunities to every young person in the EU.

Though promising, the proposed budget for Erasmus+ programme 2028-34 is not sufficient. The current budget proposal was launched as nearly a doubling of the current budget, with a nominal increase of 20 billion euros - from the current Erasmus+ budget of 26 billion euros to 42 billion euros. However, the real budget increase is nearly eaten up when taking into account the integration of the European Solidarity Corps into the Erasmus+ programme as well as factoring in inflation - thus the proposal is far from a tripling or five-times increase of the budget.

¹ European Commission (2025). "REPORT FROM THE 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 the final evaluation of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme", p.1.

European youth and education policy needs adequate funding to provide individuals with learning mobility opportunities developing transversal skills, build the capacity of organisations, and drive policy change in line with EU priorities.

It is not only about funding, but how this funding is distributed. Erasmus+ needs:

- A set budget per sector (Youth, European Solidarity Corps, School, VET, Higher Education, Adult Education), taking into account both the high current demand in certain sectors (Youth, School, VET, Higher education) and the fact that some sectors need to be boosted, such as Adult Education.
- Clear mention of Operating grants for European networks in the field of education, training and youth. These are currently foreseen under KA3, an action which is no longer present in the proposal for 2028-34. Operating grants to European Networks are essential to ensure continuous cooperation among national level organisations across Europe, strengthen European identity and belonging, while contributing to the implementation of EU policies and programmes at national level.
- Mobility targets as called for in the Council recommendation Europe on the Move, adopted in May 2024.
- Clear objectives to ensure effective communication and sound evaluation: the current proposal puts forward objectives that overlap (b, d), address too many aspects (c), or address some sectors only (f, g).
- Clear definitions and coherent use of terms such as competences and skills, in line with the Council recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning.
- A strong Inclusion and Participation strategy: these are built in the current programme and need continuity.

Erasmus+ is the backbone of European youth work and policy, hence EFIL fully supports the European Youth Forum claims in relation to the Youth Chapter of the programme, calling for a 5-times increase of the current Erasmus+ budget, and 15% of the E+ budget to Youth, and in particular to projects managed by youth-led organisations.

Erasmus+ is essential to achieve EU policy objectives in the field of education and training. The European Education Area (EEA) is the EU's shared vision for the education and training sector in order to foster collaboration among European Union Member States to build more resilient and inclusive national education and training systems. On 14 May 2024 the Council of the European Union adopted the Council Recommendation 'Europe on the Move' - learning mobility opportunities for everyone, which outlines how Member States can progress towards realising the EEA. Erasmus+ is a key initiative from the EU to foster collaboration in education across the EU, but it is far from the only contribution. Longstanding initiatives such as bilateral internationalisation agreements between Member States (e.g. Franco-German exchanges), for-profit and non-profit learning mobility programmes are already contributing towards increasing trust and collaboration between Member States. Erasmus+ must be leveraged to capitalise on

these existing activities to drive policy change towards the EEA, in line with the recommendations outlined in Europe on the Move. For example, through Erasmus+ educational institutions are encouraged and supported to create an institution-wide internationalisation strategy, which once defined can benefit the wider mass of learners and staff, not only the participants to the Erasmus+ programme, and hence create change in line with the EEA more efficiently.

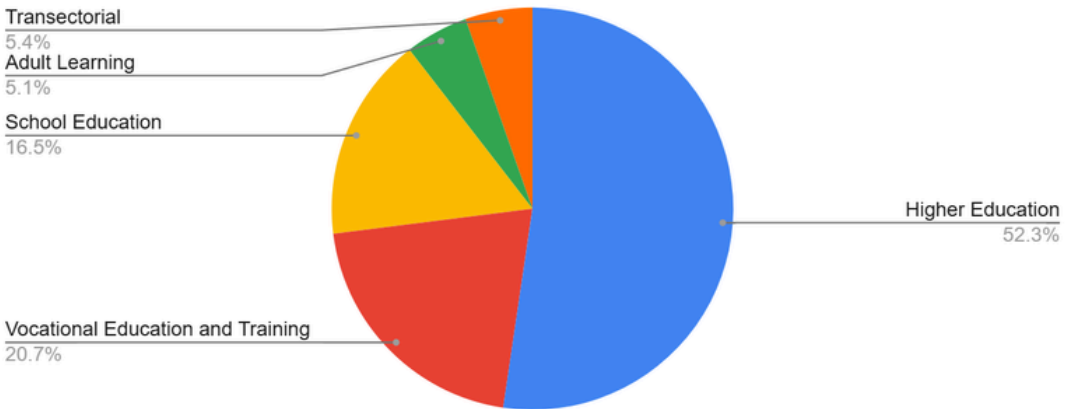
Young people in school education and vocational education and training need a fair share of the funding... because the vast majority of young people are there!

Pupils from pre-primary until upper secondary amount to 74,3 million pupils, accounting for **78.6%** of all pupils and students in the EU². Across the EU, most pupils between the ages of 6 and 15 are enrolled in compulsory education³ and it is the responsibility of Member States to ensure their right to inclusive, equitable, quality education and training. Although education is a national responsibility, Erasmus+ covers gaps that are not covered by national priorities and funding.

“Without Erasmus+, it is likely that the benefits deriving from the programme for individuals and organisations would be drastically reduced. Internationalisation of education, training, youth and sport sectors would be reduced to close to zero in several countries, especially in the youth and sport sectors.”⁴

In 2023, school education and vocational education & training (VET) combined, received **37%** of the budget for Education and Training (74% of the total E+ budget).

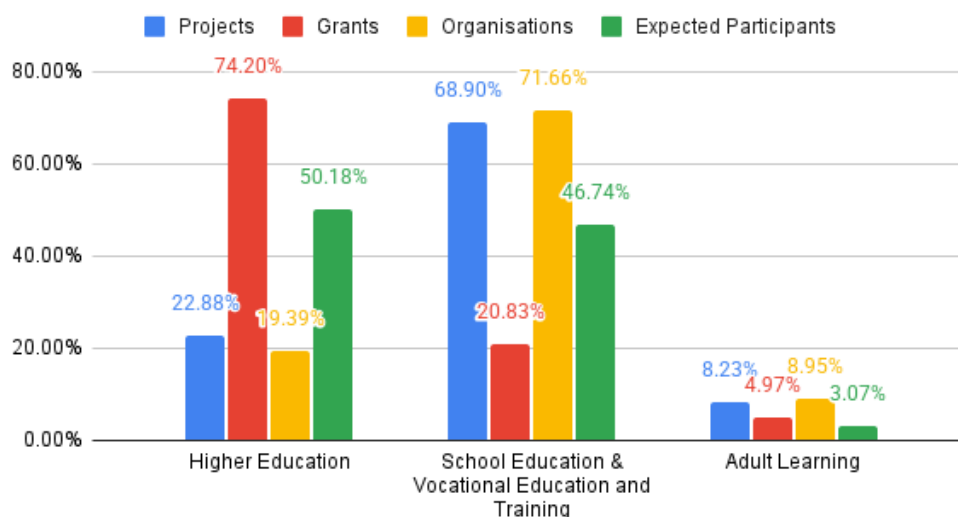
Erasmus+ Budget 2023 for Education and Training



² Eurostat datasets educ_uoe_enra01, educ_uoe_enra02, educ_uoe_enrp02
³ European Commission (2023). Compulsory education in Europe 2023/2024
⁴ European Commission (2025). “REPORT FROM THE 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 the final evaluation of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme”, p. 6

When looking at the contracted projects, school education and VET was granted the largest number, involved the largest share of organisations and close to half of the participants, they did not receive the largest share of the funding allocated to contracted projects.⁵

Contracted Projects 2023 in Education and Training



Based on this data, there are real concerns that the programme will not be able to maintain its current activities, let alone grow, without a substantial budget increase. The 2021-2027 programming period introduced the accreditation scheme for beneficiaries in VET, school education, adult education and youth, allowing for simplified access to funding for mobility projects and reducing the administrative burden on recurrent beneficiaries. The accreditation model has been highly successful and favourably evaluated, especially underlining its cost-efficiency, but also relies on sufficient funding to continue sustaining the projects and activities of already accredited organisations, not to mention the recruitment of new accredited organisations. **Especially the field of school education has seen an immense interest from schools**, with the number of accredited organisations almost doubling two years in a row, from 2021 to 2022 and again from 2022 to 2023.⁶

“It [the school education sector] shows a potential for significant additional growth in coming years, provided that the available budget grows significantly to support and sustain such a growth”⁷

⁵ [Erasmus+ Annual Report 2023 - Statistical Annex](#)

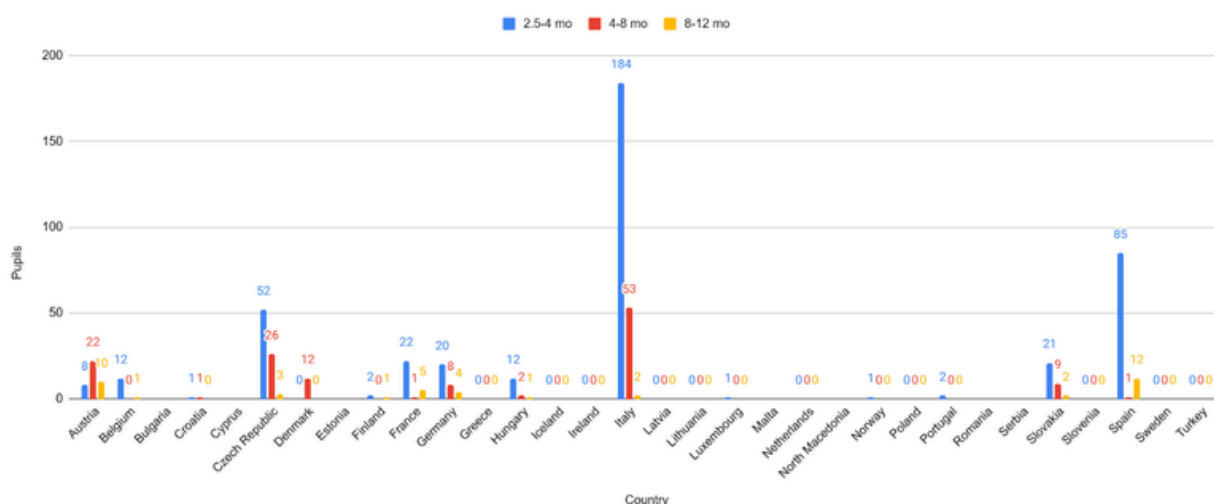
⁶ European Commission (2025). [“COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT EVALUATION Interim evaluation of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme and final evaluation of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme”](#), p. 23

⁷ European Commission (2024). [Erasmus+ Annual Report 2023](#), p. 64

In the school sector, a variety of projects and activities have to be funded in order to achieve key policy objectives. Across the EU, 27.5 million pupils⁸ between the ages of 13 and 21 are enrolled in school education and should get the opportunity of a learning experience abroad - for their personal development and for the systemic change of the EU. Currently the Erasmus+ programme reaches 15% of the EU's young people⁹, and though broader access to the programme is essential, we must also ensure that young people are offered a variety of learning mobility opportunities.

Though there is not always a direct correlation between spending and results, more high-cost activities such as longer-term individual learning mobilities have shown greater individual effect¹⁰ and are the only ones that can generate policy change in the area of recognition of learning periods abroad - at the centre of both the EEA and the Union of Skills. Currently Erasmus+ long-term Individual Pupil Mobility (IPM) longer than 2.5 months is implemented in only 10 countries out of the 32 Erasmus+ programme countries, and mostly in those where there is already an accessible system for recognition of learning periods abroad (Austria, Italy, Slovakia, Czechia) and/or a culture of long-term IPM (Germany, Spain).

Long-term IPM School Year 2022-2023



In the school year 2022/23, out of 10,165 pupils on learning mobility - only 42 spent a full school year abroad, amounting to 0.4% of all learning mobility for pupils.

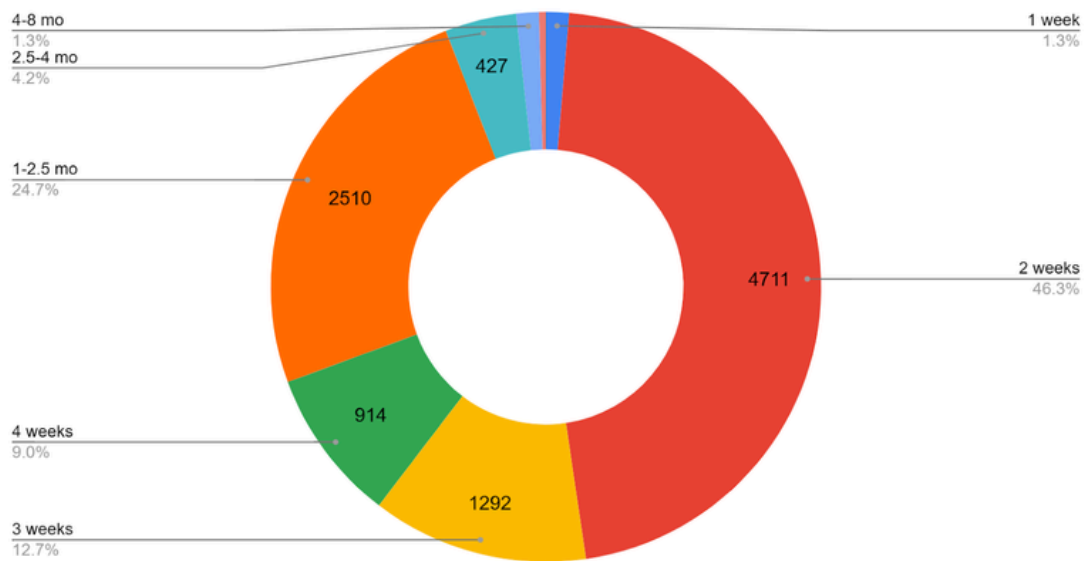
⁸ Eurostat: educ_uae_enra02

⁹ M. Draghi (2025). The future of European competitiveness, Part B | In-depth analysis and recommendations, p. 268

¹⁰ A. Bardi, M. Vecchione, M. Baiutti and R. Ruffino (2023). "What happens to exchange pupils' values during their life abroad?". Trimestrale Intercultura, p.19-26

Long-term IPM School Year 2022-2023

Total: 10165 pupils



Overall, to foster trust across the Union with initiatives such as automatic recognition of learning periods abroad, a variety of inclusive learning mobility opportunities has to be made available for learners, which in turn requires sufficient funding. **These impactful learning experiences stand at risk without sufficient funding for the overall programme.**