

Strengthening the vocational training dimension of Erasmus+

Presented by Junge ÖVP (AT) and JG SVP (Italy)

Supported by Junge Union (Germany), Top Tým (Czech Republic), ONNED (Greece), JSD (Portugal), NNGG (Spain), TOP Tým (Czech Republic), CSJ (Luxembourg)

Recognizing that:

1. Erasmus+ is a unique programme that promotes education, youth, and sports. It provides opportunities for students, trainees, teachers, and others to learn, teach, or gain experience abroad. It fosters collaboration between educational institutions and contributes to the development of essential skills and could have the potential to support the reduction of skilled workers' shortage.
2. Erasmus+ not only supports education but also fosters cultural understanding and expands horizons beyond borders among citizens, laying the groundwork for long-term cooperation across all societal levels. Youth unemployment fell from 16.7 % in 2021 to 14.5 % in 2022, but still is one of the major challenges the European job market.[1]
3. The accreditation process currently presents a substantial bureaucratic hurdle for small to medium-sized (educational) institutions to participate. Success is uncertain due to stringent standards, which mandate a minimum score of 70/100 points with no category allowed to score below 50%.[2]

Acknowledging that:

1. With the 2022 total budget of 4 billion Euros, the Erasmus+ programme funded 26,000 projects, around 73,000 organisations and some 1.2 million participants in mobility activities.[3] The 1.2 million participants include university students, trainees, school and higher education staff, trainers, youth workers, and young people in general.
2. Throughout the EU, there is a need for more skilled workers in various sectors, like in construction, healthcare, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)[4]. However, the Erasmus+ programme offers very little for apprentices and future skilled workers. In addition, not many young people in vocational training know about this programme. This situation should be improved.
3. European companies are grappling with labor shortages, necessitating both employers and workers to adjust to evolving skill requirements, particularly in the context of green and digital transitions. In the joint statement by President Biden and President von der Leyen on March 10th 2023 it was highlighted that the

transatlantic partnership, especially for younger generations, should be strengthened.[5]

4. Only the most exemplary institutions secure accreditation, increasing the challenge for smaller educational establishments. The extensive data required in advance proves impractical for many schools, hindering their ability to fully engage in the European perspective.

YEPP calls on:

1. The European Commission and the Directorate-General Education, Youth, Sport, and Culture (DG EAC) to expand the communication needs for the vocational training dimension of Erasmus+.
2. The DG EAC to directly approach companies through the national Chambers of Commerce and setting targets to increase the number of participants per country.
3. The DG EAC to develop a model for financial support for those companies that do not have their apprentices for the training period. This should create more incentives for employers to enable their employees and especially apprentices to participate in the Erasmus+ programme.
4. The European Commission to include the dimension of vocational training in the implementation of the “Transatlantic Erasmus”.
5. The need to simplify and harmonise the accreditation process. Efforts should be made to simplify forms and reduce the volume of information demanded in advance, ensuring that a wider range of schools can successfully navigate the accreditation process and actively participate in the broader European educational framework.
6. Strengthen the Erasmus+ brand and identity as a flagship initiative of the European Union, symbolizing excellence, diversity, and solidarity in education, training, and youth development, and showcasing its achievements and success stories at the national, regional, and international levels and to highlight also the vocational training dimension of this initiative.

[1] European Commission, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&furtherNews=yes&newsId=10619> (08.02.2024)

[2] Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps, <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/app-forms/af-ui-opportunities/#/erasmus-plus> (08.02.2024)

[3] Erasmus+, <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/de/resources-and-tools/statistics-and-factsheets>
(08.02.2024)

[4] European Commission,
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&furtherNews=yes&newsId=10619>
(08.02.2024)

[5] The White House, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/03/10/joint-statement-by-president-biden-and-president-von-der-leyen-2/>
(08.02.2024)