

# Attitudes towards the planned EU pilot project – *“Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs”*

Survey among young would-be  
and existing entrepreneurs in all  
EU Member States

## Summary

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# Attitudes towards the planned EU pilot project - “Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs”

survey conducted by The Gallup Organization  
and coordinated by Directorate-General  
Communication



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The interpretations and opinions contained in it  
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**THE GALLUP ORGANIZATION**

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## Introduction

The European Commission (Directorate - General for "Enterprise and Industry") is about to start a pilot action "*Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs*" to establish a mobility programme for young existing entrepreneurs and young would-be entrepreneurs. The beneficiaries would be entrepreneurs (owners or managers of SMEs and micro-enterprises) who are in the process of setting up a business or who have recently (in the last 3 years) started up a business.

The pilot action will seek to ensure that experience is pooled among such young entrepreneurs at the European level by means of traineeships and training courses in key or complementary sectors. The relevant representative bodies (Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and Craft Associations) will be invited to support and promote this pilot action.

The goal of the Flash Eurobarometer 212 "*Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs*" was to gather information about the needs, attitudes and ideas of the potential beneficiaries of the planned pilot action with the aim of taking these opinions into account before any official launch. This Flash Eurobarometer consisted of three separate surveys:

- Phase 1: start-up counselling and support organisations
- Phase 2: trainers and counsellors of start-up organisations
- Phase 3: young would-be and existing entrepreneurs

The present report presents summarises the results of Phase 3 – the survey among young would-be entrepreneurs and young existing entrepreneurs. At the beginning of the interview, the young would-be and existing entrepreneurs were introduced to the idea of the European Commission launching an "EU programme that would support young would-be entrepreneurs who want to spend a period of time in another country in order to learn from and exchange experiences with entrepreneurs and look for potential partners."<sup>1</sup> After this introduction, the respondents were asked about various aspects of such an "*Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme*". These questions covered the:

- General attitudes towards the idea of a mobility programme for young entrepreneurs
- Desired elements and ideal scope of the programme
- Preferred characteristics of the host enterprise
- Young entrepreneurs as potential hosts for other young entrepreneurs
- Expected impact of the envisaged mobility programme

This Flash Eurobarometer survey was conducted between the 28<sup>th</sup> September and 20<sup>th</sup> October 2007. Almost 7,000 randomly-selected young would-be entrepreneurs (N=3922) and young existing entrepreneurs (N=3002) between the ages of 18 and 40 were interviewed in all of the EU Member States. The survey was carried out by telephone, with WebCATI (web-based computer assisted telephone interviewing).

Sampling was achieved in two steps, a random representative sample of the general population between the ages of 18 and 40 was selected, and the sampled persons were screened as to whether or not they belonged to any of the two broad beneficiary groups (existing and would-be entrepreneurs) of the planned programme. The results of the screening interviews indicate that 11% of EU citizens between 18 and 40 years-of-age identify themselves as a would-be entrepreneur and 8% are already entrepreneurs.

As the achieved sample of young actual and existing entrepreneurs was recruited from a random general population sample for each Member State surveyed, we can consider these subsamples as random and representative as well. We remind readers that higher levels of sampling errors can be associated with the relatively low number of cases in some Member States. Nevertheless, the margin

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<sup>1</sup> For reasons of simplification the survey used the term "programme" and not "pilot project". The name "*Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs*" is provisional and does not anticipate any future action in this field.

of sampling error associated with the overall EU level results for both broad beneficiary groups is lower than  $\pm 2\%$ . The overall results, therefore, constitute very solid and statistically robust findings at both the EU and nation state level.

## Main findings

### *General attitudes towards the programme*

- **Overall, the idea** of the *Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme*, that provides exchange opportunities for young people who are either in the process of setting up a business, or have recently done so, **is attractive for both target groups** (young would-be and young existing entrepreneurs) that would benefit. More than four-fifths (81%) of young would-be entrepreneurs say that participation in the planned *Erasmus* programme could be useful for them. Among those who are already entrepreneurs, only slightly fewer regard the programme as “useful” (71%).
- While **in eastern and southern European countries, a vast majority of respondents regard the programme as useful** (82% - 94% of young would-be entrepreneurs, 67% - 85% of young entrepreneurs); respondents in northern and western European countries find it somewhat less attractive (55% - 80% of young would-be entrepreneurs, 43% - 67% of young entrepreneurs).
- **No time available is the reason most often cited** (by 55% of young would-be entrepreneurs and 62% of young entrepreneurs) as an important barrier to participation by those who did not find the programme to be useful. **No advantage for their (planned) company** is the second most important reason mentioned by both young would-be entrepreneurs (55%) and young entrepreneurs (59%).
- When asked about the potential impact of the *Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme*, a large majority of respondents in **both target groups agree that gaining experience at a company in another Member State would contribute to knowledge and inter-cultural understanding**, would make it easier for a young (would-be) entrepreneur to start up a business and would increase the chances of success in a business start-up.

### *Desired characteristics of the programme*

- **A plurality of young would-be and young existing entrepreneurs agree that all of the main objectives of the programme defined in the survey are important.** Respondents are slightly more likely to find goals directly related to their own business to be important (e.g., receiving training on how to successfully run a business) and less likely to agree with statements about objectives that focus more on the general economic perspective (e.g., learning about the economic and legal environment in another Member State).
- **The percentage of respondents who consider the educational aspects of the programme less useful is generally slightly higher for those who already run a business than for young would-be entrepreneurs.** Still, the various educational objectives, especially the possibility of learning or practicing a foreign language were regarded as useful by a large majority of respondents in both target groups.
- A majority of respondents think that **the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme should not be limited to young entrepreneurs**; results show that 45% of young would-be entrepreneurs and 51% of young entrepreneurs suggest an upper age limit of ‘over 40’ for participation in the programme.
- Slightly more than half of young would-be entrepreneurs and 34% of young entrepreneurs think that **the ideal duration of the programme (for the time spent in another Member State) should be six months or more.** Young entrepreneurs more often than young would-be entrepreneurs give a preference for a shorter exchange of experiences. Younger respondents

are more likely to find it necessary to stay with another entrepreneur for six months or more, while older respondents are more likely to think that the stay in another Member State should be limited to less than three months.

- **A majority of both young would-be entrepreneurs and young entrepreneurs are willing to contribute to the financing of their time spent abroad** (70% of young would-be entrepreneurs and 68% of young entrepreneurs), especially by paying travel costs (70% of young entrepreneurs and 66% of young would-be entrepreneurs). Large proportions of both target groups are also willing to pay for any preparatory costs (e.g. language courses) and daily expenses.
- In several New Member States (NMSs) and also in some southern European countries, respondents are **less willing to pay their daily expenses** than they are willing to cover travel costs and preparatory costs.

#### *Characteristics of the ideal host company*

- In both target groups, approximately two in three respondents would **prefer to learn from a more experienced entrepreneur** than a younger less experienced one.
- In both target groups, a majority of respondents prefer a mobility programme that **brings together entrepreneurs from the same business sector**. Slightly more young entrepreneurs than young would-be entrepreneurs prefer sectoral matching (59% vs. 53%), while, on the contrary, young would-be entrepreneurs have a preference for a programme that allows entrepreneurs from different business sectors to collaborate (35% vs. 29%).
- A clear majority of young would-be entrepreneurs (71%) and existing entrepreneurs (70%) would **prefer to learn in a micro- or small company** (up to 50 employees).

#### *Respondents as potential hosts*

- Nearly two in three young entrepreneurs, who have started up a business in the last three years, answered that **they are ready to contribute to the programme by hosting a young entrepreneur or would-be entrepreneur from another EU Member State**.
- While three in four of these are willing to share their skills and know-how and to introduce a guest entrepreneur to the local business environment, **respondents proved to be less willing to contribute to the actual cost of a young entrepreneur's stay**. While approximately two in three respondents said they were willing to provide board and lodging, only about half of the respondents would offer a small salary or provide office space, training and language courses. Even fewer entrepreneurs (36%), would be ready to cover travel expenses.

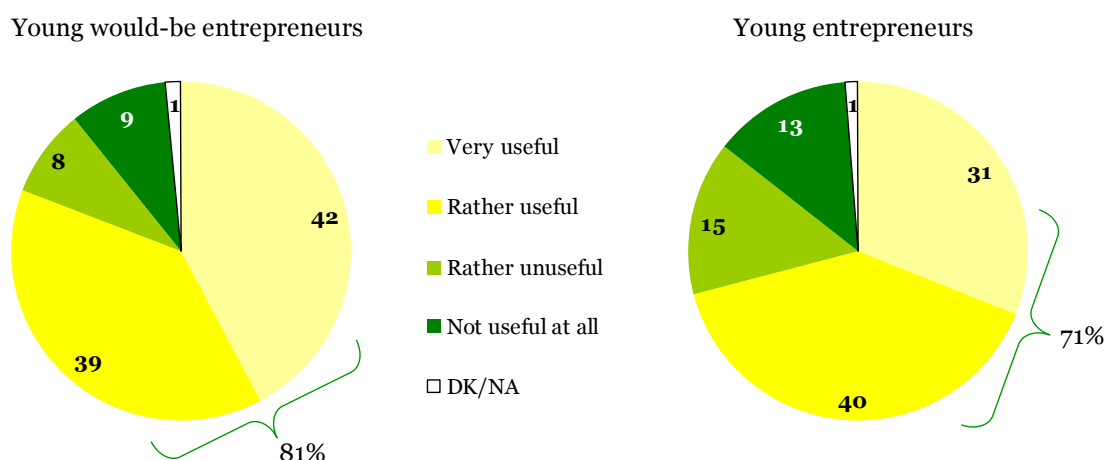
## 1. General attitudes

### 1.1 Attractiveness of the programme

When confronted with an idea of an EU-wide mobility programme for young entrepreneurs, the majority of the Union's young people, either planning to start their own business or having recently started one, respond positively. Across Europe, a large majority of young existing and young would-be entrepreneurs feel that participating in the *Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme* could be 'useful'.

The judgement of the usefulness varies according to whether the respondent has already started a business or if he, or she, is planning to do so in the next three years. Overall, more than four-fifths (81%) of young would-be entrepreneurs say that participation in the planned *Erasmus* programme would be useful or very useful for them. Among those who are already entrepreneurs, slightly fewer regard the programme as "useful" (71%).

#### Usefulness of participating in the programme



B1. There is the idea to launch an EU programme that would support young would-be entrepreneurs who want to spend a period of time in another country in order to learn from and exchange experiences with other entrepreneurs and look for potential partners. How useful would it be for you to participate in such a programme, provided that expenses are at least partially covered?  
%, Base: young would-be entrepreneurs N=3425, young entrepreneurs N=2742

When looking at the differences between Member States, roughly two groups can be distinguished. The first group consists of mostly eastern and southern European countries, and the second group covers both the northern and western European countries. While in the first group a vast majority of respondents judge the programme to be useful (between 82% and 94% of young would-be entrepreneurs and between 67% and 90% of young entrepreneurs), respondents in the second group are generally less supportive of the *Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme*. In this latter grouping, only between 55% and 80% of young would-be entrepreneurs and between 43% and 67% of young entrepreneurs think that the programme would be beneficial.

### 1.2 Reasons for not participating in the programme

In order to determine more about the reasons why individual respondents might not participate in the *Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme*, those interviewees that responded negatively were presented with a list of possible reasons for not wishing to take part in the *Erasmus* programme.

**No time available** is the reason most often cited as an important barrier to participation in the programme by both young would-be entrepreneurs (55%) and young entrepreneurs (62%). As the

latter group usually face a heavy workload during the business start-up phase, they see this as the main reason for not taking part in the programme; of the 62% of young entrepreneurs that considered this to be important, 42% said it was a *very* important reason.

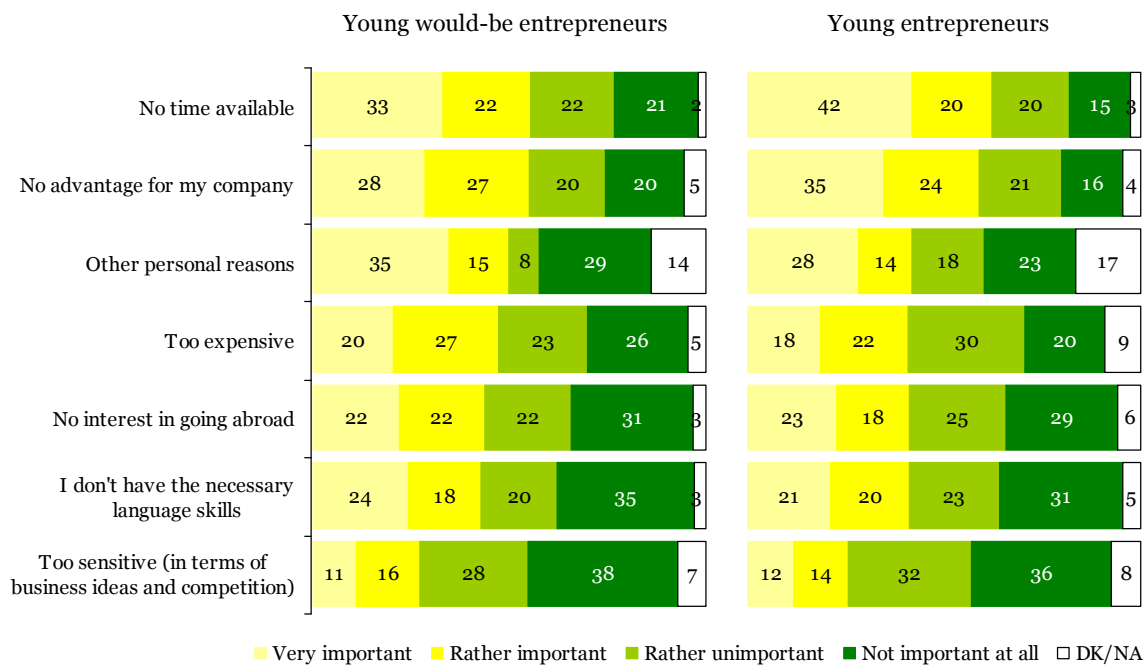
Both the majority of young entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs who do not consider the programme useful also feel that learning from another European entrepreneur offers **no advantage to their (planned) company**. This is the second most important reason cited by both young would-be entrepreneurs (55%) and young entrepreneurs (59%). Once again, the young entrepreneurs consider it to be a *very* important reason (35%).

The factor that comes third for both respondent groups is **‘other personal reasons’**, such as having a family that they can’t easily leave behind (50% of the young would-be and 42% of young entrepreneurs consider this to be important). Such personal reasons for not participating in the programme are more often considered as *very* important by young would-be entrepreneurs than by young entrepreneurs (35% compared to 28%).

Given less importance, slightly less than half of young would-entrepreneurs (47%) mention the **expenses** related to participation in the planned *Erasmus* programme as a barrier and 44% mention **no interest in going abroad**. In addition, 42% of young would-be entrepreneurs feel that they do not have the necessary **language skills** for participating in the programme. The reasons - cost, language skills and no interest in going abroad - are given equal weighting in importance, when it comes to young entrepreneurs’ reasons for not participating in the programme. Forty one percent of young entrepreneurs cite both a lack of interest in going abroad and insufficient language skills as a barrier, while four out of ten mention that participation would be too expensive.

The problem of **competition between entrepreneurs** is not considered as an important reason for non-participation in both groups (only 27% of young would-be entrepreneurs and 26% of young entrepreneurs have such a concern).

### Reasons for not participating in the programme



B2. What would be the reasons for you for not spending some time abroad and learning from and exchanging experience with another entrepreneur?  
 Could you tell me for each of the following reasons if they are very important, rather important, rather not important or not important at all?  
 %, Base: those who do not think participating in the programme is useful  
 young would-be entrepreneurs N=654, young entrepreneurs N=796

## 2. Desired scope of the “Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme”

### 2.1 Preferred objectives of the programme

When young and young would-be entrepreneurs were asked about the main objectives of the *Erasmus for young entrepreneurs programme*, a plurality of them agree that all of the programme’s main objectives (as defined in the survey) are important.

Primarily, more than nine out of 10 respondents agree that one of the programme’s main objectives should be to **improve language skills**. Both young (59%) and young would-be entrepreneurs (61%) are most likely to *strongly agree* with this objective.

We also see that respondents in both groups are more likely to agree with statements that define **objectives directly relating to their own business**, such as being able to:

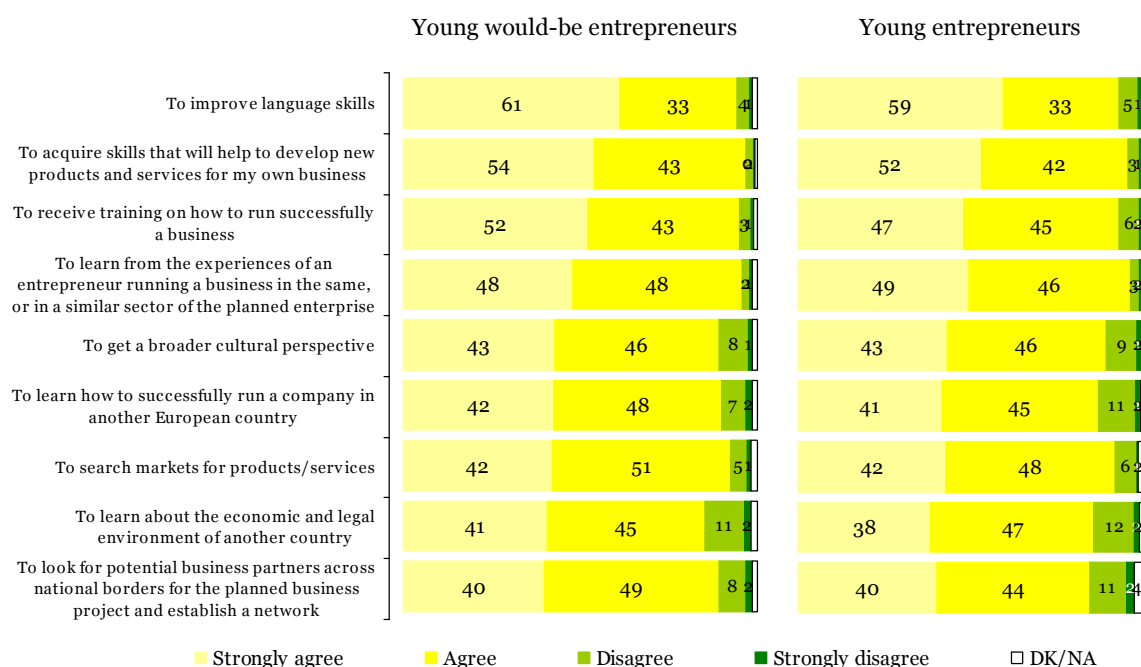
- receive training on how to run a business successfully,
- acquire skills in developing their own business and
- learn from the experiences of an entrepreneur in the same sector,

and slightly less likely to agree with statements about **objectives that focus more on a general economic and inter-cultural perspective**, such as being able to:

- learn about the economic and legal environments in another Member State,
- learn how to successfully run a business in another country and
- develop a broader cultural perspective.

For example, 54% of young would-be entrepreneurs and 52% of young entrepreneurs *strongly* agree with the objective of acquiring skills that would help the development of new products and services for their own business, while just 41% of young would-be entrepreneurs and 38% of young entrepreneurs *strongly* agree that one of the main objectives of the programme should be to learn about the economic and legal environment in another Member State.

### Main objectives of the programme



B8. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with what should be the main objectives of such an EU Programme:  
 %, Base: young would-be entrepreneurs N=3425, young entrepreneurs N=2742

## 2.2 Educational objectives of the programme

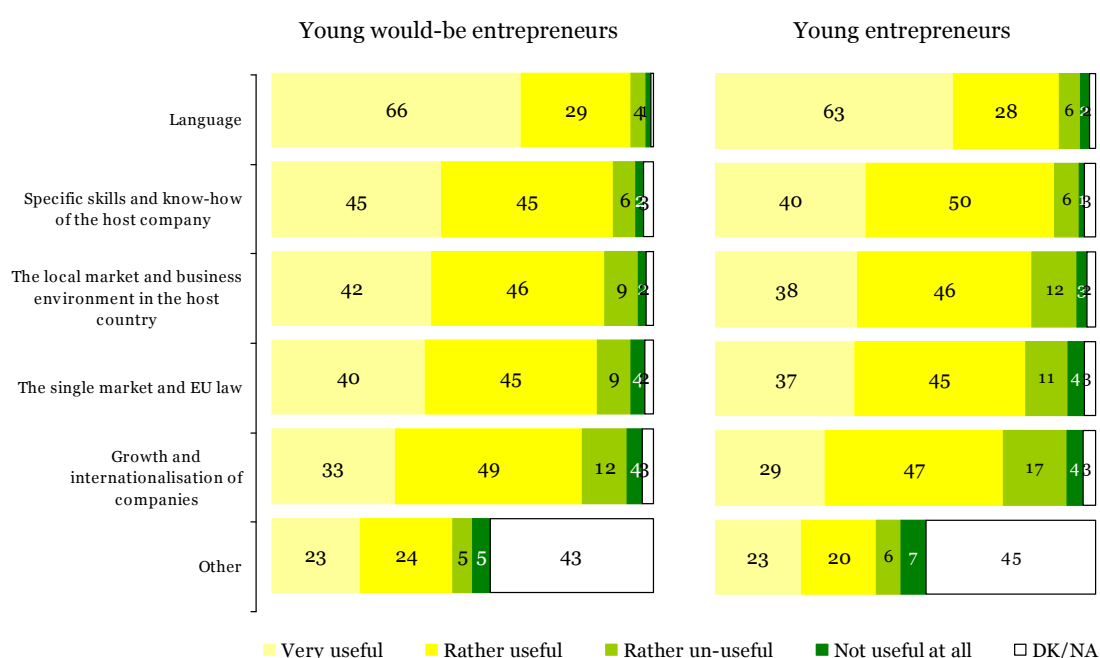
Since there are educational objectives to the planned *Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme*, the respondents were also asked to how useful it would be for them to learn about certain topics. Overall, we find that a large majority of respondents in both target groups would like to learn more about the topics covered in the survey as they consider them all to be at least *rather useful*. The percentage of respondents who consider the educational aspects of the programme as *less useful* is generally slightly higher for those who already run a business than for young would-be entrepreneurs.

In accordance with the answers to the question about the programme’s objectives, the largest percentage of young and young would-be entrepreneurs consider it *very useful* for them to **learn another language** (66% of young would-be entrepreneurs and 63% of young entrepreneurs). Only 5% of young would-be entrepreneurs and 8% of young entrepreneurs say that it would not be particularly useful or not useful at all, to learn another language.

Relatively speaking, learning about the **growth and internationalisation of companies** is considered to be the least useful objective; even so, only 16% of young would-be entrepreneurs and 21% of young entrepreneurs say that it would not be useful for them to learn about this topic. This is in line with their preference to primarily visit small- or even micro enterprises and not larger ones (see section 4.3 for details). Nonetheless, one in three young would-be entrepreneurs and 29% of young entrepreneurs still consider it a *very useful* topic to learn about within the framework of the programme.

For the other educational areas, we find that 45% of young would-be entrepreneurs and 40% of young entrepreneurs consider it very useful to learn about the host company’s **specific skills and know-how**, and 42% of young would-be entrepreneurs and 38% of young entrepreneurs say it would be very useful to learn about the host company’s **local market and business environment**. Finally, learning more about the **single market and EU law** is considered to be very useful by four out of 10 young would-be entrepreneurs and by 37% of young entrepreneurs.

### Useful topics to be taught about in the framework of the programme



B9. If you consider learning as one of the main objectives for such an EU Programme, how useful the following topics would be for you to be taught about? Very useful, rather useful, rather not useful, or not useful at all? %; Base: young would-be entrepreneurs N=3425, young entrepreneurs N=2742

## 2.3 No limitations for the target group

### 2.3.1 All entrepreneurs should be invited

A majority of young would-be entrepreneurs (79%) agree that the *Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme* should **not be limited to young entrepreneurs but should be open to other target groups**. Slightly less than one in five (19%) state the opposite.

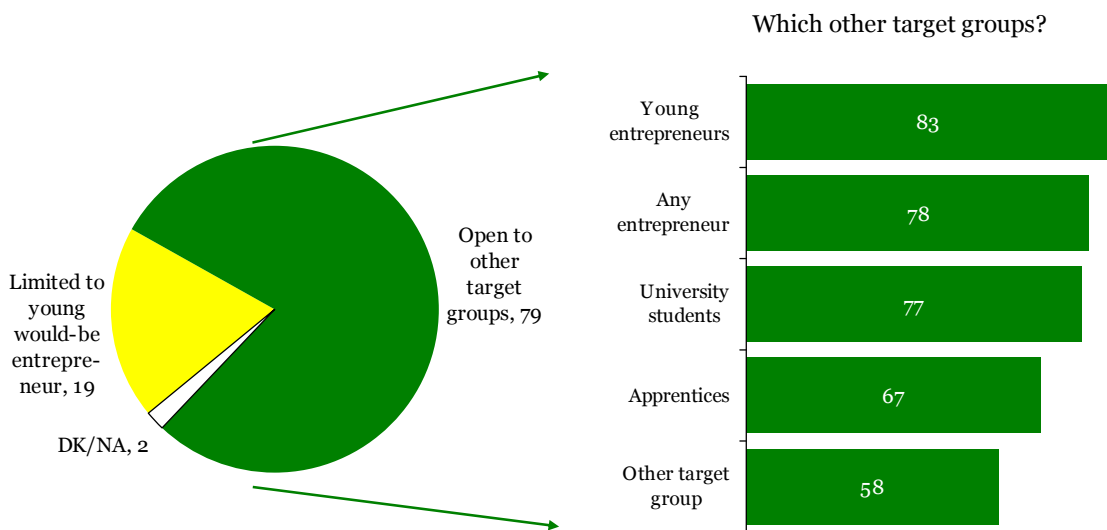
The young would-be entrepreneurs most often mention that the programme should be opened-up to young entrepreneurs (83%), followed by any type of entrepreneur (78%) and university students (77%). A smaller proportion of this target group say that the programme should be opened up to apprentices (67%) and 58% report that the programme should be accessible for other target groups than the ones already mentioned.

The results for young entrepreneurs are very similar to those of young would-be entrepreneurs. A similar proportion of the former (78%) agree that the planned programme should be open to other target groups than themselves.

Also similar to the young would-be entrepreneurs, a large majority of young entrepreneurs mention *all* types of entrepreneur should be admitted to such a programme; 83% would open the programme to any entrepreneur and 79% for young entrepreneurs. Slightly more than seven out of ten young entrepreneurs (72%) would open up the programme to university students and 66% to apprentices.

#### Target groups of the programme

Young would-be entrepreneurs



B4\_1. Should such a Programme be limited to young would-be entrepreneurs or should it be open to other target groups?  
 B4\_2. Which other target groups?  
 %, Base: young would-be entrepreneurs N=3425

Looking at the individual country results for young and young would-be entrepreneurs who are willing to open up the programme to other target groups, we observe in almost all countries that both respondent groups are somewhat more willing to open up the programme for the other group of interest (i.e. would-be entrepreneurs or young entrepreneurs) and for any type of entrepreneur than they would be to open it up to university students or apprentices. For example, in Ireland, 75% and 79% of young entrepreneurs mention, respectively, would-be entrepreneurs and any type of entrepreneur as a preferred target group compared to, respectively, 55% and 66% who mention university students and apprentices.

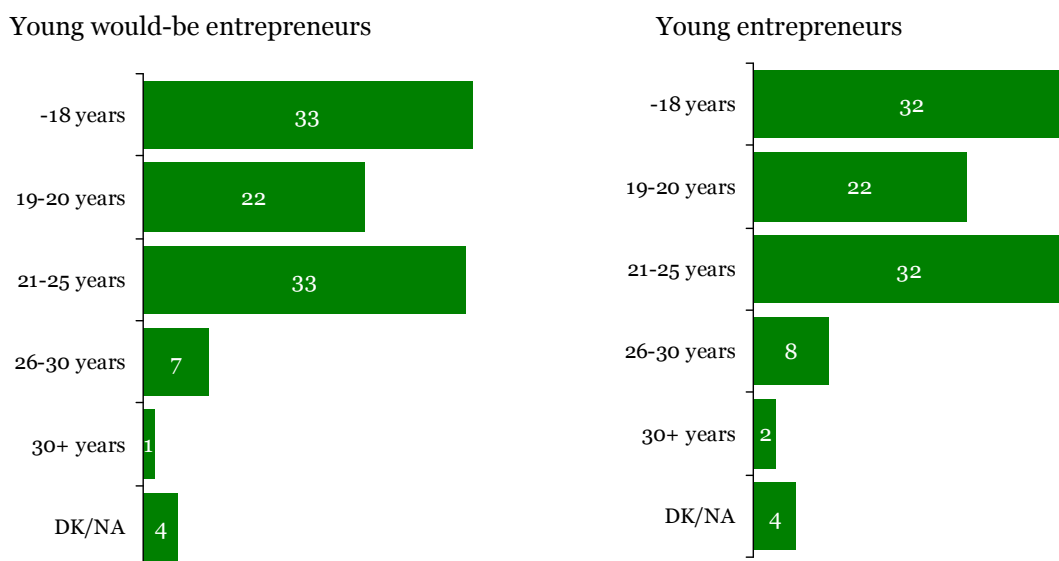
The acceptance of university students and apprentices as target groups appears to be somewhat higher in the NMSs than in the EU-15. For example, while the percentage of would-be entrepreneurs who mention university students as a target group is 93% in the Czech Republic, 92% in Poland and 88% in Bulgaria, the percentages for the Netherlands and Finland are, respectively, 55% and 29%.

### 2.3.2 Entrepreneurs of all ages should be invited

#### *Lower age limit of the target groups*

One in three respondents in both groups (33% for young would-be entrepreneurs and 32% for young entrepreneurs) state that the **lower age limit of the target groups for the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme** should be less than 18. Slightly more than one in five respondents in each target group (22%) answer that the programme should have a lower age limit of 19 or 20 years-of-age, and one in three respondents in each group (33% for young would-be entrepreneurs and 32% for young entrepreneurs) say that the lower age limit should be between the ages of 21 and 25. Finally, only one in 10 young entrepreneurs, and 8% of young would-be entrepreneurs, think that participants should be older than 25 in order to take part in the programme.

#### Lower age limit of the target group



B5\_1. What should be the age range of the target group of such a programme? Could you tell me first what the lower age limit should be for the target group?  
%, Base: young would-be entrepreneurs N=3425, young entrepreneurs N=2742

Respondents in the 18-24 year-old age group are more likely to prefer a very young lower age limit than their older colleagues. Almost seven out of 10 young would-be entrepreneurs who are between 18 and 24 years-of-age (67%) think that the lower age limit to participate in the programme should be below 20, while only five out of 10 young would-be entrepreneurs between 25 and 34 years-of-age (49%) and 45% of those in the oldest age category say the same. We observe a similar pattern of differences for the young entrepreneurs.

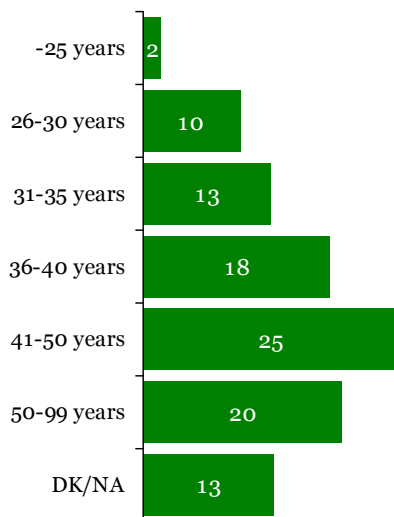
#### *Upper age limit of the target groups*

Looking at results for the **upper age limit of the target groups**, we see that 45% of young would-be entrepreneurs and 51% of young entrepreneurs say that the upper age limit should be over 40. This result is consistent with the finding that a majority of respondents think that the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme should not be limited to young entrepreneurs but should be open to all entrepreneurs (Question 4\_2).

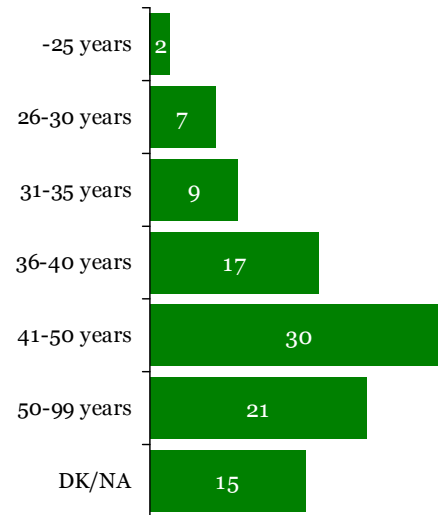
On the other hand, 43% of young would-be entrepreneurs and 35% of young existing entrepreneurs say the upper age limit should be less than 40. Of the young would-be entrepreneurs, 10% say that the upper age limit of the programme should be between 26 and 30 years-of-age, 13% select an age limit between 31 and 35 and 18% select an age limit between 36 and 40. The corresponding percentages for the young entrepreneurs are slightly lower, with 7% selecting an upper age limit between 26 and 30, 9% between 31 and 35, and 17% between 36 and 40 years-of-age. Finally, a very small proportion of the respondents (2% of each group) report that the upper age limit should be less than 25 years-of-age.

### Upper age limit of the target group

Young would-be entrepreneurs



Young entrepreneurs



B5\_2. And what should be the upper age limit for the target group?  
%, Base: young would-be entrepreneurs N=3425, young entrepreneurs N=2742

The older the would-be entrepreneurs the more likely he or she will mention an age limit over 40 years of age or no age limit. More than five out of 10 young would-be entrepreneurs, who are between 18 and 24 years-old (55%), state that the upper age limit for taking part in the mobility programme should be below 40. The corresponding percentages for young would-be entrepreneurs who are between 25 and 34 years-of-age and between 35 and 40 years-of-age are, respectively, 40% and 18%. A similar pattern emerges for young entrepreneurs. However, for that group, we also find that women are more likely to say that the age limit for the programme should be over 40 (60% compared to 46%).

### 3.4 Long programmes are preferred

Slightly more than half of the young would-be entrepreneurs think that the ideal duration to exchange experiences with an entrepreneur in another Member State would be *six months or more*; 22% of the respondents in this group report that the ideal length of the programme should be around six months and 30% answer that the length of the stay should be longer than that.

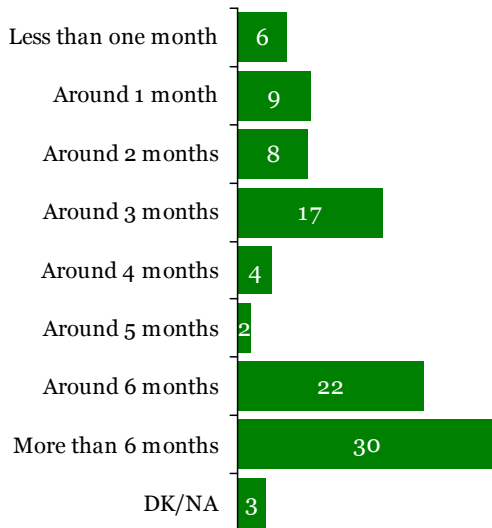
In comparison with young would-be entrepreneurs, a smaller proportion of young entrepreneurs report that the ideal duration of the time spent in another Member State should be six months or more; only 14% of young entrepreneurs answer that the ideal length should be around 6 months and 20% answer that the time spent abroad should be longer than six months.

Young entrepreneurs, however, are more likely to give a preference for a shorter exchange of experiences with other entrepreneurs. For example, while 6% of young would-be entrepreneurs report that the ideal duration of the time spent abroad should be less than one month, the percentage of young entrepreneurs is 13%. Similarly, while 9% of young would-be entrepreneurs say that the duration of the work experience in another Member State should be approximately one month and 8% say that it

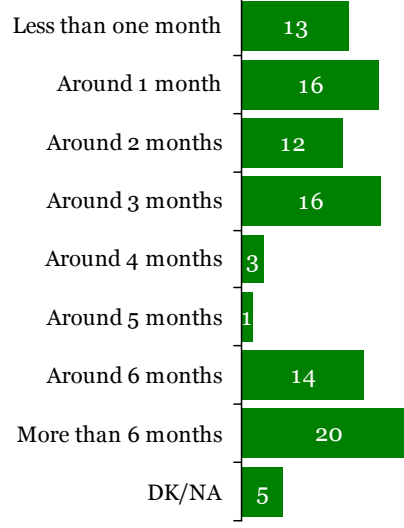
should be around two months, the percentages for young entrepreneurs are 16% and 12%, respectively.

### Ideal length of stay abroad

Young would-be entrepreneurs



Young entrepreneurs



B10. What should be the ideal length of the period that you would be able to spend abroad? Please tell me the number of months.  
%, Base: young would-be entrepreneurs N=3425, young entrepreneurs N=2742

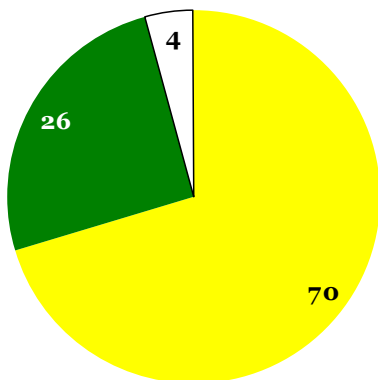
For both target groups we observe that younger existing entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs are more likely to find it necessary to stay with another entrepreneur for six months or more, while older respondents are more likely to think that the time spent abroad should be limited to less than three months. We find, for example, that 43% of entrepreneurs between 35 and 40 years-of-age state that the ideal length is less than three months compared to only 32% of the entrepreneurs younger than 24.

### 3.5 Cost sharing

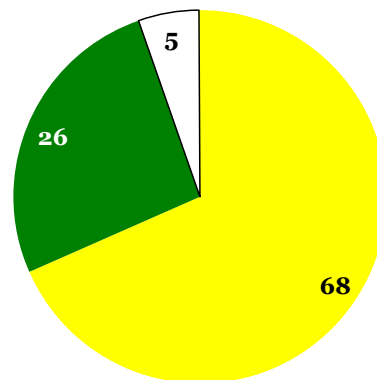
A majority of both young would-be entrepreneurs (70%) and young entrepreneurs (68%) are willing to contribute to the financing of the time spent abroad in the programme. Only 26% of both target groups report that they are not willing to contribute to the financing of their stay in another Member State.

#### Willingness to personally contribute to the financing of the stay abroad

Young would-be entrepreneurs



Young entrepreneurs



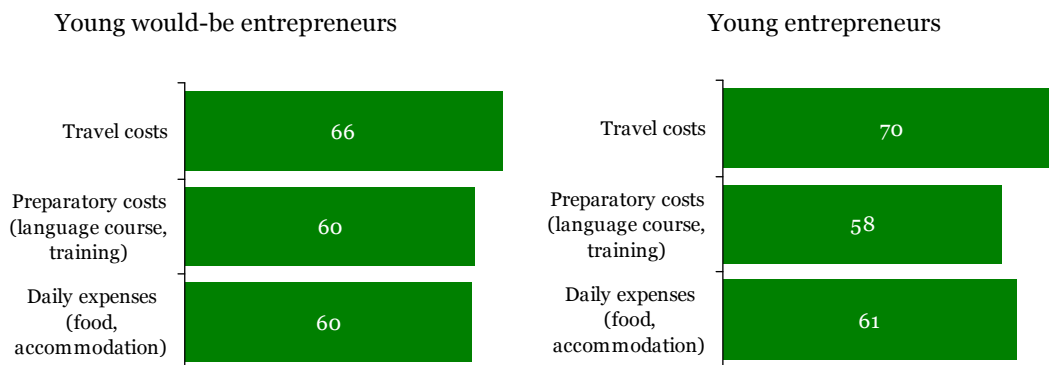
■ Yes  
■ No  
□ DK/NA

B11. Would you be ready to contribute to the financing of your stay abroad?  
%, Base: young would-be entrepreneurs N=3425, young entrepreneurs N=2742

Both young and young would-be entrepreneurs, who said they were willing to financially contribute to their stay abroad, are most likely to mention that they are **willing to pay for travel costs** relating to the programme. Seven out of 10 young entrepreneurs and 66% of young would-be entrepreneurs are willing to pay for travel costs.

However, large proportions of each group of respondents are also **willing to pay for preparatory costs, such as language courses or other training**, and for **daily expenses, such as food and accommodation**. Six out of 10 young would-be entrepreneurs are willing to pay for preparatory costs and the same proportion is willing to contribute to the cost of their time spent in another Member State. The corresponding percentages for young entrepreneurs are 58% and 61%.

### Willingness to contribute to the financing of the stay abroad - type of costs



B12. What type of costs would you be ready to cover yourself?  
%, Base: those who are ready to contribute to the financing of the staying abroad  
young would-be entrepreneurs N=2408, young entrepreneurs N=1877

We found that young Finnish existing and would-be entrepreneurs were among those least willing to contribute financially to the exchange. In addition, if Finnish respondents are willing to contribute, they are less likely than respondents in most other countries to accept to cover their preparatory or travel costs. However, they are very likely to say they are willing to cover daily expenses during the programme. For example, while only 33% of Finnish would-be entrepreneurs who want to contribute themselves are willing to pay for preparatory costs, 83% are willing to cover daily expenses. In the UK, we can observe a similar pattern of differences in the willingness to cover each type of costs.

The Polish results show the opposite; for young and young would-be entrepreneurs willing to contribute financially to their stay, we find that they are very willing to cover preparatory and travel costs, but are very unlikely to be willing to cover daily expenses. While 86% of Polish young entrepreneurs, willing to contribute themselves, accept to cover preparatory costs and 88% travel costs, only 42% are willing to cover daily expenses. The corresponding percentages for young would-be entrepreneurs are 79%, 87% and 50%. This pattern - a lower willingness to cover daily expenses compared to travel and preparatory costs - can be observed in several NMSs and also in some southern European countries. For example, in Slovakia, young would-be entrepreneurs who want to contribute to their stay are willing to cover 63% of preparatory costs and 69% of travel costs. However, only 38% of them are willing to cover daily expenses.

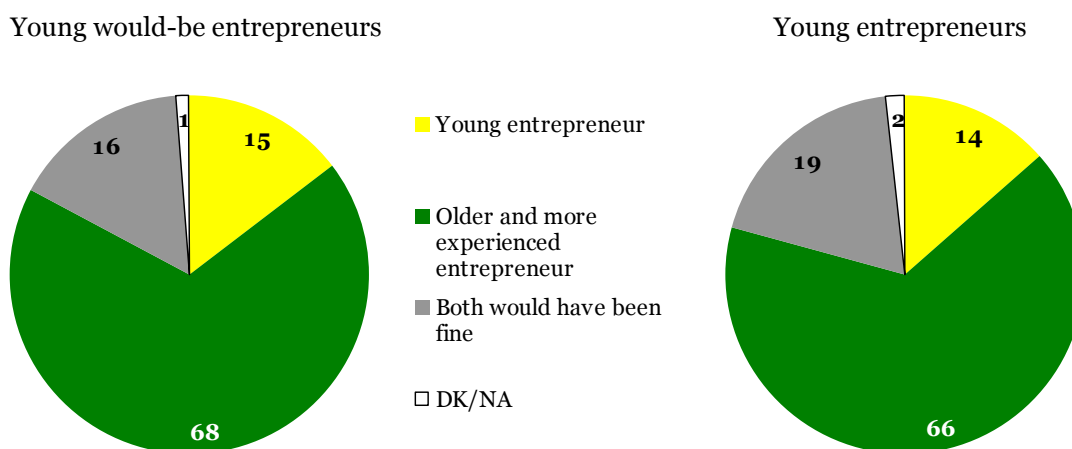
### 3. Characteristics of the ideal host company

#### 3.1 A preference for an older and more experienced entrepreneur

In both target groups, young would-be entrepreneurs and existing entrepreneurs, approximately two in three respondents (68% and 66% respectively) would prefer to learn from an older and **more experienced entrepreneur** than a **younger entrepreneur** (15% and 14%). Nearly one in five young would-be entrepreneurs (16%) and young entrepreneurs (19%) report **no specific preference** in this regard.

Comparing both respondent groups, we can see that both a majority of young would-be entrepreneurs and young entrepreneurs prefer learning from an experienced business person. Estonia is the only exception to the rule, where, in both respondent groups, a considerably higher number of young would-be and young entrepreneurs do not regard the host’s age as a factor.

#### Preferred age group of host entrepreneur



B3. What do you think would be more advantageous for you: to learn from and exchange experiences with a young entrepreneur who has established his/her company quite recently, OR with an older and more experienced entrepreneur?  
 %, Base: young would-be entrepreneurs N=3425, young entrepreneurs N=2742

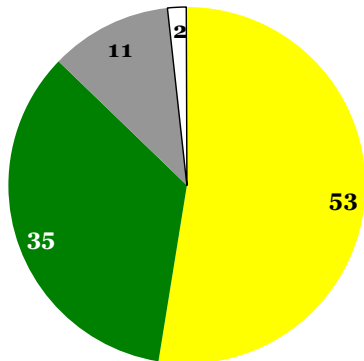
In most of the EU Member States, a clear majority of young would-be entrepreneurs and young entrepreneurs show a preference for learning from an older entrepreneur. Estonia is the only exception to the rule, where, in both respondent groups, a considerably higher number of young would-be and young entrepreneurs do not regard the host’s age as a factor.

#### 3.2 A preference for host enterprises from the same sector

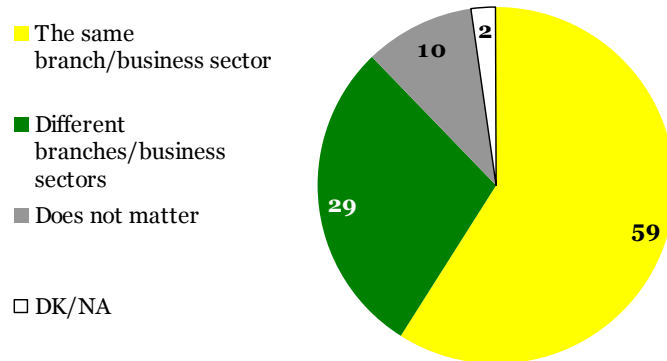
In both target groups, existing and would-be entrepreneurs, a majority of respondents prefer a mobility programme that brings together two entrepreneurs from the **same business sector**. Slightly more young entrepreneurs than young would-be entrepreneurs prefer meeting an entrepreneur from the same business sector (59% vs. 53%), while, on the contrary, young would-be entrepreneurs have a preference for a programme design where entrepreneurs from different business sectors can collaborate (35% vs. 29%).

## Branches/business sectors of guest and host entrepreneurs

Young would-be entrepreneurs



Young entrepreneurs



B6. From which branches / business sectors should the person moving abroad and the host entrepreneur come from:  
%, Base: young would-be entrepreneurs N=3425, young entrepreneurs N=2742

When comparing the results for young entrepreneurs and young-would be entrepreneurs, we can find similar response patterns in some of the countries: In France, the Czech Republic, Finland, Spain and Portugal, respondents from both target groups clearly prefer meeting an entrepreneur from the *same* business sector (from 65% to 81%) as opposed to meeting an entrepreneur from a different sector (from 2% to 30%). The opposite view is taken in Denmark, Malta and Austria, where respondents from both groups think that bringing together entrepreneurs from different sectors would have the most beneficial outcome.

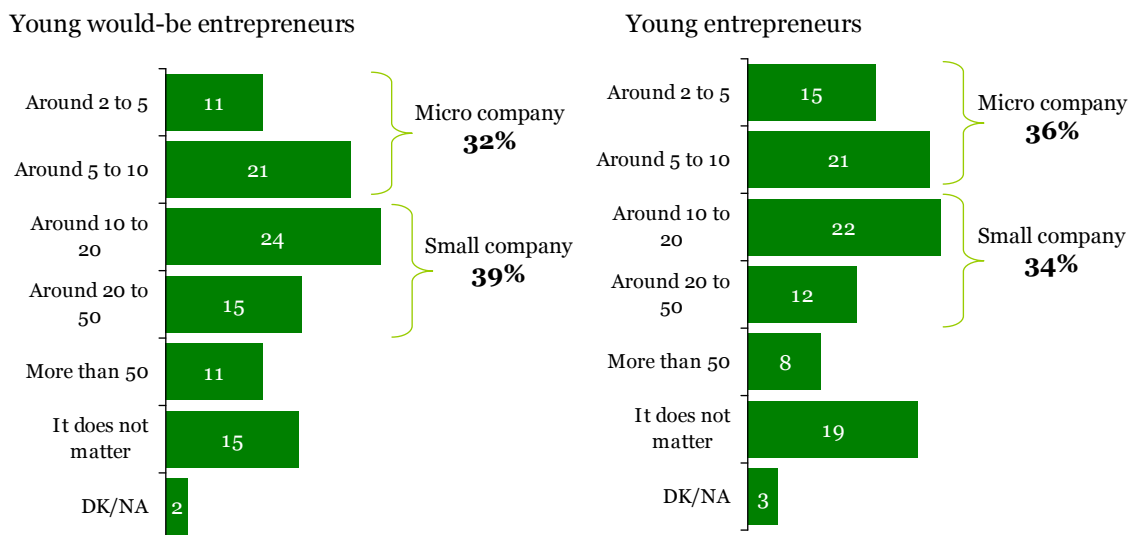
### 3.3 A preference for small and micro enterprises as hosts

A clear majority of young would-be entrepreneurs (71%) and existing entrepreneurs (70%) would **prefer to learn in a micro or small company (up to 50 employees) to learning in larger companies** (11% and 8% for the two groups, respectively). This is probably linked to the business plans of the respondents in question.

Would-be entrepreneurs tend to prefer to be hosted by a small company, with an employee size of between 10 and 50 employees, to a micro enterprise with fewer than 10 employees (39% vs. 32%). However, about the same percentage of young entrepreneurs would opt for either a micro or small company (36% vs. 34%).

For nearly one in six young would-be entrepreneurs (15%) and one in five young entrepreneurs (19%) the size of the host company is of no importance.

### Preferred size of the host company



B7. What should be the size of the enterprise you visit, for instance how many employees should the enterprise have?  
 %, Base: young would-be entrepreneurs N=3425, young entrepreneurs N=2742

Those respondents who prefer medium-sized or larger companies are more likely to come from one of the eastern European countries while respondents from the old Member States rather opt for acquiring experiences at a smaller company. It is for example the Bulgarian young would-be entrepreneurs who are most in answering that they would prefer a company with more than 50 employees and also the Bulgarian young entrepreneurs who are second most in doing so. Those young would-be entrepreneurs and young entrepreneurs who prefer a micro or a small company come mostly from old Member States like Denmark, Ireland, the UK, Italy or Sweden. Hungary can be considered as an outlier in this trend, as it is an eastern European New Member state where respondents rather opt for small than big companies.

## 4. Potential hosts

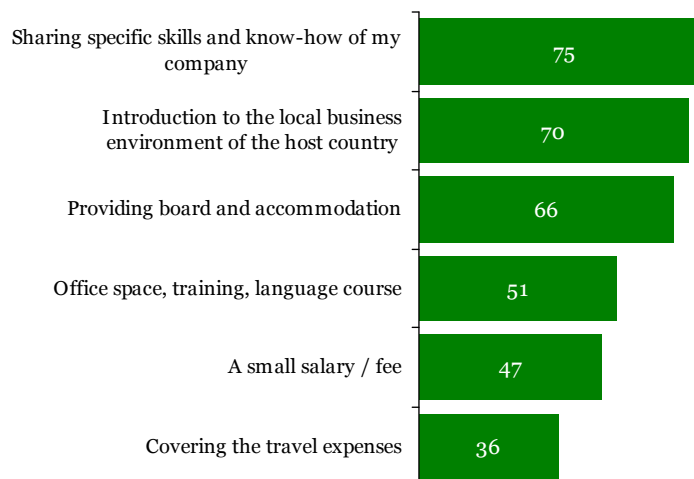
As previous sections demonstrated, young entrepreneurs would prefer to benefit from the advice of experienced and older host colleagues. However, the survey also asked the existing entrepreneurs about their willingness to act as a host. The young entrepreneurs, who have started up a business in the last three years, were asked if they were **ready to contribute to the hosting of another young entrepreneur or would-be entrepreneur** – a question that was answered positively by nearly two in three young entrepreneurs (62%).

Young female entrepreneurs are slightly less willing to contribute to the hosting of another young (would-be) entrepreneur than their male counterparts (59% vs. 64%). Respondents in the 35-40 year-old age group are also less keen to host another entrepreneur than their younger colleagues (57% vs. 63% of 18-24 year-olds and 66% of 25-34 year-olds).

Those young entrepreneurs that expressed a willingness to act as a host were then presented with a list of ways in which they could contribute in practice. For each of those items, e.g. lodgings, office space, training courses etc., they were asked if they would be ready to offer facilities to a guest entrepreneur.

Results show that, while approximately three in four respondents are willing to **share their skills and know-how** (75%) and to **introduce the guest entrepreneur to the local business environment** (70%), respondents proved to be less willing to contribute to the actual costs of a guest's stay. While approximately two in three respondents said they were willing to provide **board and lodgings** (66%), only about half of the respondents (willing to act as a host) would offer **office space, training and language courses** (51%) and **a small salary** (47%). Even fewer respondents, one in three, are ready to **cover travel expenses** (36%).

### Type of the contribution



C14. What kind of contribution could you offer when hosting a young (would-be) entrepreneur?  
%, Base: those who ready to contribute to the hosting of a young (would-be) entrepreneur  
young entrepreneurs N=1706

## 5. Anticipated impact of the planned Programme

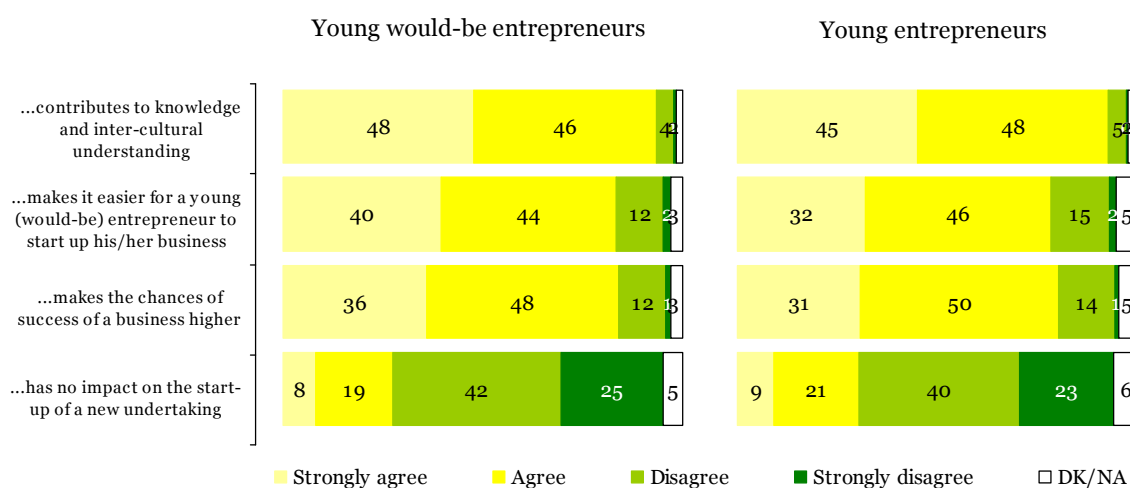
When asking young and young would-be entrepreneurs about the potential impact of the *Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme* (with a list of possible benefits presented in the questionnaire), more than nine out of 10 respondents in both groups agree that gaining business experience in another Member State **would contribute to knowledge and inter-cultural understanding**. Furthermore, just under half (48%) of young would-be entrepreneurs and 45% of young entrepreneurs say they *strongly* agree with this statement.

The survey also found 84% of young would-be entrepreneurs agreeing that gaining business experience in another Member State would make it **easier for them to start up his/her business**, and the same proportion agrees that it **would increase the chances of a business’s success**. The corresponding percentages for young entrepreneurs are 78% and 81%. Focussing on the percentages of respondents who *strongly* agree with these two statements, it can be seen that young would-be entrepreneurs are more likely than young entrepreneurs to agree with each of these statements (40% vs. 32% for the statement about starting up a business, and 36% vs. 31% for the statement on business success).

The results for the negatively-formulated statement that taking part in the programme would have **no impact** on the start-up of a new undertaking show that less than one out of 10 respondents report to *strongly* agree with this. In total, only 27% of young would-be entrepreneurs and 30% of young entrepreneurs agree with this statement.

The individual country results only show a small variation in the percentage of respondents who agree that gaining business experience in another Member State could contribute to knowledge and inter-cultural understanding, make it easier to start up a business and increase the chances of business success.

### Impact of the programme: Staying in a company abroad...



B13/C15. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements about the impact of such a programme? Staying in a company abroad...  
 %, Base: young would-be entrepreneurs N=3425, young entrepreneurs N=2742

## 6. Respondents' views and suggestions about the planned Programme

At the end of the interview, respondents of both target groups were asked if they had other views or suggestions about the planned pilot programme *Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs*. Many respondents took the opportunity to express their interest in the programme, to formulate suggestions for it or to explain any concerns they had about the *Erasmus* programme.

### ***Positive attitude towards the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme***

Many respondents expressed positive opinions about the programme, such as it is *a good idea* and *an interesting initiative*, or *the programme should be developed as soon as possible*. Others saw the programme as a useful or interesting opportunity for themselves or for other young would-be and existing entrepreneurs. Examples included: *it's an opportunity for inter-cultural exchange; the possibility to learn a language and get more experienced; or it offers the possibility to find new markets to realise your ideas*.

### ***Requests for more information and suggestions for advertising***

Many respondents mentioned the need for more information about the *Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme*, and suggested the implementation of a wider information campaign and the use of different marketing channels to advertise the programme. In the more specific comments about advertising and marketing, some respondents mentioned that it would be *useful for university students to learn more about the Erasmus programme* and that there should be *a partnership with schools and universities*.

### ***Comments about the financial implications of participation***

There were many comments about the cost of participating in the programme. Some respondents clearly felt that all programme-related expenses should be covered (e.g., *100% financing, free of all costs, all costs should be covered, etc.*), others said there should be financial support to cover certain types of expenses (e.g., *financial help regarding accommodation, training and language courses, or covering the costs abroad for the partner, etc.*). A third group asked for *more financial support* but did not specify which costs or how much of the costs should be covered.

Other comments related to the need for greater government funding and more government support. The most common remarks included: more funds and support from governments, more resources for the programme, and more EU funds and support.

### ***Scope of the "Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs" programme***

Another topic that occurred regularly was the scope of the *Erasmus* programme. Here, two types of answers were most prominent. The first group of respondents wanted a similar programme in their own country, one that offered the opportunity to take part in a mobility programme between companies in different regions of that country (e.g., *there should also be "domestic" offers*). The second group, on the other hand, wanted the programme to include the possibility of visiting countries outside the EU (e.g., *the programme should not be limited to Europe*).

### ***Suggestions about the programme's organisation***

Respondents in both target groups also formulated suggestions about the mobility programme's organisation. Here, a number of recurrent patterns emerged in the answers. Overall, respondents said that the programme should:

- be accessible to everyone (e.g., women, minorities, students)
- have no age limit for the target groups

- allow the participation of both large and small business from all sectors
- provide training, and in particular cover language training
- have clear criteria so motivated and well-prepared participants were selected
- offer Professional guidance and support during the stay abroad
- offer the possibility of spending several shorter periods abroad
- focus on experienced host entrepreneurs operating in the same sector
- allow the continuation of the exchange of experiences after the time spent abroad
- give importance to follow-up and quality control

### ***Concerns about the programme***

A few respondents expressed concerns about the *Erasmus* programme. Some said that the programme was not feasible because some people had a *family with small children*, because some did *not have enough money*, there *would be insufficient funds* to make the programme work, they *could not imagine that experienced entrepreneurs would voluntarily share their know-how*, or that *smaller entrepreneurs have no time*. Other respondents were less optimistic about the programme because it offered no personal benefits, that it *would not be useful for them*, or that it would have *no impact on their business*.

The most pessimistic respondents stated, for example, that *the programme is stupid*; *the programme is a waste of EU resources*; or that there were *no foreign entrepreneurs in our country*.

### ***Other remarks – not directly related to the programme***

Some of the answers to the open-ended question did not directly relate to the *Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme*. Many respondents chose to stress the importance of support for young and young would-be entrepreneurs in their own country. Examples included requests for: *more help and subsidies for young people who want to set up a business*; *tax reductions for new companies*; or *more economic support so companies could survive*.