Erasmus+

WHAT’S IN IT FOR YOUTH?
Opportunities for young people, youth workers and organisations in the youth field

Changing lives,
opening minds
Are you?

A young person, aged 13-30 years old?

A young person seeking volunteering

A representative of a
opportunities?

A youth worker?
youth organisation or a youth council?

Have a look!

There may be something in it for you...
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Introduction

What is Erasmus+ and why do we need it?

Too many young people leave school prematurely, running the risk of being unemployed and socially excluded. Fighting rising levels of unemployment – particularly among young people – has become one of the most urgent tasks of the European Union. EU businesses need to become more competitive by harnessing young talent.

Well-performing education and training systems and youth policies can help to tackle these challenges by providing people with the skills required by the labour market and the economy, while allowing them to play an active role in society and to achieve personal fulfilment.

Another challenge relates to the empowerment of young people and their ability to participate actively in society. This issue can also be targeted through non-formal learning activities, which can enhance young people’s skills and competences and lead to active citizenship.

Moreover, there is a need to provide youth organisations and youth workers with training and cooperation opportunities, to develop their professionalism and to bring a European dimension to youth work.

Erasmus+ (2014-2020), the EU Programme for education, training, youth and sport, helps to address these needs. It aims to boost young people’s skills, job prospects and personal development and to modernise the education, training and youth work sectors.
Erasmus+ will fund more than 4 million people to study, train, gain work experience and volunteer abroad during 2014-2020.

The budget has increased by 40% compared to previous programmes.
What are the aims of Erasmus+ in the youth field?

- To increase the level of key competences and skills among young people, including those with fewer opportunities, and youth workers
- To promote active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, social inclusion and solidarity
- To empower young people to participate in democratic life and the labour market
- To foster quality improvements in youth work through enhancing cooperation between organisations in the youth field
- To complement policy reforms at local, regional and national level and to support the development of knowledge and evidence-based youth policy, as well as the recognition of non-formal and informal learning
- To enhance the international dimension of youth activities

Which countries can participate in Erasmus+?

The Erasmus+ Programme Countries are the 28 Member States of the European Union, as well as those countries having signed an agreement to participate in Erasmus+ (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey). Other countries are Erasmus+ Partner Countries which can participate in several Erasmus+ actions.

What’s in it for you?

This brochure will explain what opportunities are available under Erasmus+ in the youth field, and will show you how to get started.
Key Action 1:

Mobility projects for young people and youth workers

Erasmus+ supports mobility in the education, training and youth sectors and aims to bring long-lasting benefits to the participants and the organisations involved.

Organisations working with young people outside the formal education sector can apply to the youth strand. Funds are given to support an activity called learning mobility, which is a planned transnational learning activity.

Mobility projects for young people and youth workers last up to two years and can comprise one or more of the following activities:

- Youth Exchanges
- European Voluntary Service
- Mobility of youth workers
Youth Exchanges

What are they?

Youth Exchanges take place outside the school environment and enable groups of young people to undertake a structured programme of activities (e.g. a mix of workshops, exercises, debates and role plays) in another country, within or outside the EU.

Youth Exchanges help young people to:

■ Acquire important skills such as project management and teamwork
■ Develop certain competences and become aware of socially relevant topics
■ Discover new cultures, habits and lifestyles, mainly through peer-learning
■ Strengthen values like solidarity, democracy and friendship

The learning process in Youth Exchanges involves non-formal education methods. A mobility activity is transnational and requires at least two participating organisations (a sending and a receiving organisation) from different countries within and outside the European Union.

Youth Exchanges are open to all young people aged 13-30 years. Activities last 5-21 days.

Youth Exchanges participants’ learning experiences are recognised through a Youthpass.
Skills for meaningful lives

‘Skills for meaningful life 2’ was an international Youth Exchange for young people with special educational needs (SEN) and mainstream school students in four countries (Estonia, Poland, the Russian Federation and Georgia).

Its aim was to support young people to develop skills for further employment and independent life. The project promoted social inclusion for pupils with SEN and fostered a culture of tolerance among mainstream students by making them learn, work and communicate together in an international context.

During the exchange, young people learned about two occupations (gardening and agriculture). They participated in problem solving tasks, performances, group work, peer learning sessions, discussions, games, simulations, role plays and outdoor pursuits.

The programme was based on non-formal educational methods. Young people were actively involved at all stages from preparation (e.g. young people researched the development of gardening and agriculture in their respective countries) to dissemination activities after the project (sharing their experience with fellow pupils). Participants used Youthpass to record new competences.

Activity dates: 16-24 May 2014
Participants: 32 young people and 10 group leaders
National Agency: Estonia
How to take part?

If you are a young person seeking to participate in a Youth Exchange project, you need to get in touch with a participating organisation (either a sending or a receiving organisation). A participating organisation can be a non-profit organisation, association, NGO, social enterprise, or a public body at local, regional or national level. It will apply to the Erasmus+ National Agency (NA) in the country in which it is established.

If you need help in finding a suitable participating organisation, the NA in your country will assist you.

Alternatively, informal groups of young people who are active in youth work, but not necessarily in the context of a youth organisation, can apply for a grant.

If you represent an organisation willing to participate, don’t hesitate to contact your Erasmus+ NA to find out more about how to take part.
European Voluntary Service

What is it?

The European Voluntary Service offers an ideal opportunity for young people to develop skills by contributing to the daily work of organisations in areas such as social care, the environment, non-formal education programmes, ICT, culture and many others. It is an opportunity for participants to grow in self-confidence, feel more actively engaged as citizens and experience another way of life. A volunteering activity can last up to one year and participants can volunteer to support all kinds of causes, either within or outside the European Union.

Volunteers’ learning experiences are recognised through a Youthpass.

A mobility project can include between 1 and 30 volunteers who can do their voluntary service either individually or in a group.

Volunteers receive free board and lodging, insurance cover and pocket money for the duration of the project. They may also receive a contribution towards travel costs.

An EVS project requires close co-operation among sending and receiving organisations. One of the organisations involved plays the role of coordinator and applies for an EU grant on behalf of the partnership. Organisations perform a number of roles:

- They identify volunteering opportunities
- They develop projects that benefit the local community
- They recruit and prepare the volunteers, host them, and ensure follow-up

EVS is open to young people aged 17-30. An EVS activity lasts between 2 and 12 months (shorter term EVS activities from 2 weeks and up are possible in some cases).

Important: In general a volunteer can take part in only one European Voluntary Service. However, volunteers who carried out an EVS activity lasting two months or less can take part in an additional European Voluntary Service.
Volunteers lend a helping hand

The ‘Gentle2’ project took place at the Special Education Centre in Livadeia, Greece. The project invited volunteers to support people with intellectual disabilities at the education centre. Volunteers helped by promoting social inclusion and assisting service users in mastering their everyday routines.

Two volunteers, from Poland and Spain, spent nine months at the centre, where they:

- Provided creative activities for people with intellectual disabilities, such as handicrafts, painting, music, pottery, physical exercise, excursions, games and gardening
- Planned, organised and implemented youth activities with similar young people from abroad in order to build networks of voluntary organisations
- Created a webpage, designed a leaflet and organised an awareness raising event

Volunteers learned practical techniques in order to support people with special educational needs. They also learned how to act quickly and appropriately in a range of scenarios, and to organise their time effectively. Furthermore, they developed their personal communication and professional experience by living and working in a foreign country.

**Activity dates:** 3 September 2013 – 3 June 2014

**National Agency:** Greece
How to take part?

If you are a young person who wants to undertake a European Voluntary Service project, there are several ways to get involved:

- You can contact your Erasmus+ National Agency (NA). They will help you find a participating organisation.
- You can find sending or receiving organisations using the online EVS database on the European Youth Portal. Get in touch with them to check if they are offering placements.
- The volunteering database on the European Youth Portal lets you view dates, times, locations and application deadlines for volunteering projects on a range of searchable topics.

If you represent an organisation willing to develop an EVS project, the Erasmus+ Programme Guide provides detailed information about the conditions for participating. In most cases, the applications for funding and accreditation are submitted to NAs in Programme Countries. The NAs are the primary information sources for the users of the programme. Please contact them for information and advice.

Organisations interested in sending or hosting EVS volunteers, or coordinating an EVS project must be accredited first.
Mobility of youth workers

What is it?

This activity supports the professional development of youth workers, through the implementation of activities such as international seminars, training courses, contact-making events, study visits or job shadowing abroad in an organisation active in the youth field. All these activities are arranged by the organisations participating in the project.

Opportunities abroad allow youth workers to learn about cultural diversity and different practices in youth work in other countries. This experience helps youth workers to acquire new skills and to enhance their professional development.

Youth workers’ learning experiences are recognised through a Youthpass.

The organisations involved are developing new learning methods, as well as long-term cooperation with their counterparts abroad.

Opportunities are available for youth workers involved in the personal, educational and social development of young people.

Mobility activities last 2 days - 2 months.

How to take part?

If you are a youth worker willing to participate in this action, your organisation needs to apply for funding to the Erasmus+ National Agency in your country.
Taking education outdoors

‘Urban nature – inclusive learning through youth work and school work’ was a four-day seminar in Stockholm, Sweden.

In the context of expanding cities, the seminar highlighted educational and experiential possibilities in the shifting ‘grey-zone’ between nature and civilisation. The seminar brought together experts and practitioners to exchange good practice, to create new and more effective ways of working with young people in urban nature, and to develop new projects involving young people.

90 delegates, aged between 20 and 70 years old, were in attendance. They included leaders, practitioners, teachers and researchers in the field of outdoor education. A book was published after the seminar to summarise lessons learned.

The project evaluation found only very limited awareness of outdoor education in urban nature across the youth work and school sectors. Nevertheless, theorists and practitioners were shown to possess considerable knowledge about how to raise awareness. It is now urgent to harness this potential, for the sake of public health, social inclusion, sustainability and democracy.

Activity dates: 5-9 June 2013
National Agency: Sweden
Large-scale European Voluntary Service (EVS) events

What are they?

This action aims to support large-scale volunteering projects, involving at least 30 European Voluntary Service (EVS) volunteers. Projects involve European or worldwide events in the fields of youth, culture and sport (e.g. World Youth Summits, European Capitals of Culture; European Youth Capitals, European sport championships, etc.). In addition to the European Voluntary Service activities, a large-scale EVS event may also include complementary activities, such as conferences, seminars, meetings and workshops.

Large-scale EVS events projects last 3-12 months. Voluntary service lasts 14 days – 2 months.

How to take part?

Any public or private organisation established in an Erasmus+ Programme Country and directly involved in organising the European or international event in the fields of youth, culture or sport, or having concluded a formal written cooperation agreement with the event organisers, can apply to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, located in Brussels.
Youth Expo Ambassadors

The project promotes the participation of 60 young people aged between 18-30 years, from 25 countries at the 2015 World Expo in Milan, Italy.

The YEA!! Youth Expo Ambassadors project is structured in four main stages, spanning its 12 month implementation period. It involves 25 volunteers from European Member States, non-European Programme Countries and Partner Countries neighbouring the EU. The mobility activity structures are divided into three two-month flows (May-June; July-August; September-October). 20 volunteers participate in each flow.

Thanks to the experience, young people can have their say at this huge event, which can attract as many as 20 million visitors. A wide range of experts involved in reforming the global food system are present. They include government, NGO and multinational company representatives from around the world.

Young volunteers get involved in more than 6 000 events, forums, shows and food tastings during the 6 month exhibition. These activities are organised by participating states, international organisations and civil society representatives.

**Duration:** 1 year

**National Agency:** Italy
Key Action 2:

Cooperation for innovation and exchange of good practices

Erasmus+ supports partnership projects for organisations, institutions, companies and research organisations. These projects encourage collaboration across borders and sectors. Their aims include innovating and modernising practices, strengthening cooperation and transferring knowledge at organisational, local, regional, national and European levels. By becoming involved in partnership projects, organisations are expected to develop more modern, dynamic and professional environments, more innovative approaches to addressing their target groups, and an increased capacity to work at EU/international level.
Strategic Partnerships in the youth field

What is it?

Strategic Partnerships foster cooperation between organisations in different countries engaged in youth work and non-formal learning for young people.

By working together, organisations develop new approaches to youth work and encourage cooperation over longer periods.

Young people benefitting from the projects learn about social entrepreneurship and are encouraged to take a more active role in their local economy and society.

In the youth field, Strategic Partnerships should address the following priorities:

■ Promoting high-quality youth work
■ Promoting empowerment, participation and active citizenship among young people
■ Promoting entrepreneurship education and social entrepreneurship among young people

Strategic Partnerships in the youth field also support transnational youth initiatives, which are designed to inspire social commitment and an entrepreneurial spirit. These are jointly undertaken by two or more groups of young people from different countries.

Strategic Partnerships last 6-36 months.

How to take part?

Youth organisations and informal groups of young people based in and outside the EU, as well as other stakeholders, can apply to the National Agency in the applicant organisation’s country.
Civic engagement for marginalised young people

The overall aim of the two-year PACE (Progression through Active Civic Engagement) project is to work with young people from three core target groups (travellers, Roma and rurally isolated communities), to develop a civic engagement learning programme that reduces feelings of social exclusion.

The project will allow partners to develop and test a course and relevant teaching aids. Moreover it will result in organisational support to help local organisations deliver benefits to young people. Youth workers, policy- and decision-makers will be actively involved in ensuring outputs are widely adopted across the sector.

The project is producing a sustainability plan to engage with youth workers and policy makers, and to help ensure the new approaches and outputs enter mainstream thinking and practice. The results will be used to influence policy at national and European levels.

**Duration:** 2 years

**National Agency:** Ireland
Capacity Building in the youth field

What is it?

Erasmus+ supports cooperation projects between organisations active in the youth field around the world. These projects aim to improve the quality and recognition of youth work, non-formal learning and volunteering in different regions of the world (especially in developing countries) and to enhance how they complement formal education systems, the labour market and society.

Capacity Building projects eligible for funding can focus on, for example:

- Encouraging policy dialogue, cooperation, networking, and good practice exchange
- Large-scale youth events
- Developing information, communication, and media tools
- Developing youth work methods
Capacity Building projects may also organise mobility activities, as far as they assist the partners in meeting their declared objectives.

Mobility activities include:

- Youth Exchanges between Programme Countries and eligible Partner Countries
- European Voluntary Service from or to eligible Partner Countries
- Mobility of youth workers between Programme Countries and eligible Partner Countries

Capacity Building projects are transnational and involve at least three participating organisations from three different countries, of which at least one is a Programme Country and one is an eligible Partner Country.

Capacity Building projects last 9 months - 2 years.

**How to take part?**

Capacity Building projects and mobility activities are open to any:

- Non-profit organisation, association, NGO (including European Youth NGOs)
- National Youth Council
- Public body at local, regional or national level

Organisations based in and outside the EU can apply to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, located in Brussels.
Bringing EU youth work best practice to Asia

‘From Europe to Asia: capitalising on experience in youth work’ is a two year Capacity Building project that involves seven partners (including five Erasmus+ Programme Countries and two Partner Countries). It aims to share and disseminate youth work best practice from Europe to the Partner Countries involved.

Activities include:

- Research, data and best practice gathering
- Training sessions on matters fundamental for the management of youth organisations, and for fostering cooperation with public and private sector organisations
- Opportunities for trainees to put their learning into practice
- Job shadowing for trainees and youth workers to observe practitioners in their working environment
- European Voluntary Service (EVS) for Asian volunteers at European organisations

All this is complemented by a series of international meetings to plan, monitor and evaluate the project and its activities. The process of learning is accompanied by different education tools developed during the project, including an e-learning platform, a digital library and video tutorials. Important dissemination tools are also planned, in order to support campaigns promoting international youth mobility.

National Agency: Italy
Key Action 3:

Support for policy reform

Erasmus+ supports policy actions aimed at achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy, of the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020) and of the EU Youth Strategy.

By supporting dialogue and encouraging active participation by young people in policy discussion, the EU can help to develop more effective policies on youth.

Erasmus+ contributes to introducing, exchanging and promoting innovative practices in the youth field. Activities supporting policy dialogue and cooperation on youth issues can comprise:

- Policy dialogue and cooperation across the EU, to/from non-EU countries, and with international organisations (notably the Council of Europe)
- Structured Dialogue with young people
- Partnerships with European non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the youth field
Structured Dialogue: meetings between young people and decision-makers in the youth field

What is it?

Structured Dialogue promotes the active participation of young people in democratic life and facilitates discussions between young people and policy-makers; it allows young people to make their voice heard on how youth policies should be shaped and implemented in Europe.

Structured Dialogue projects can take the form of meetings, conferences, consultations and events. Activities could include:

- National meetings and transnational seminars that offer space for information, debate and active participation by young people in dialogue with decision makers
- National meetings and transnational seminars that prepare the ground for official Youth Conferences run by the Member State holding the Presidency of the European Union
- Any other meetings, events, seminars, consultations or debates between young people and decision-makers

Projects last 3-24 months. Participants can include young people aged 13-30 who live in the countries involved in the project. Decision-makers or experts in the youth policy field are eligible, regardless of their age and geographical provenance. At least 30 young participants must be involved in the project.

How to take part?

Projects can be initiated by youth organisations. They need to apply for funding to the National Agency of the country in which the organisation is established. The projects can also involve government ministries, practitioners, researchers, and other relevant stakeholders, working on policy themes of EU relevance in the youth sector.
A platform for Europe’s young people

‘Of Continuous Interest’ (De interés Continuo) is a Structured Dialogue project in which young people express their opinion and come up with actions to help create local youth policies and to provide useful tools and skills for spreading information, knowledge and training about European programmes.

110 young people between 16 and 30 years old participate in informative activities about the EU Youth Strategy and Erasmus+ programme. The project is especially focused on involving those who have fewer social or economic resources, or who have sensory disabilities.

**Duration:** 2 years

**National Agency:** Spain
Practical information

Participating countries

**Programme Countries** are those which can participate fully in all Erasmus+ opportunities. They include all EU Member States, as well as the following countries, if they have fulfilled the necessary conditions: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Turkey and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

**Partner Countries** are all other countries of the world. They can participate in some parts of the programme, as explained in the relevant sections of the Programme Guide.

Useful contacts

**National Agencies**
ec.europa.eu/youth/partners_networks/national_agencies_en.htm

**The Executive Agency (EACEA) in Brussels**
eacea.ec.europa.eu

**More info about Youth in Erasmus+**
ec.europa.eu/youth

**Programme Guide – your guidebook for applications!**
ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/discover/guide

**More information about youth mobility opportunities available on the European Youth Portal**
europa.eu/youth
Europe Direct is a service to help you find answers to your questions about the European Union.

Freephone number (*):

**00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11**

(*) The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).

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