Important features of the Erasmus+ Programme

The following features of the Programme deserve special attention. Some of them are presented in more detail on the Commission website.

**Recognition and validation of skills and qualifications**

Erasmus+ supports EU transparency and recognition tools for skills and qualifications – in particular

- Europass
- Youthpass
- the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)
- the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)
- the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)
- the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQAVET)
- the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)
- the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

as well as EU-wide networks in the field of education and training supporting these tools, in particular the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC), Euroguidance networks, the National Europass Centres and the EQF National Coordination Points.

A common purpose of these tools is to ensure that skills and qualifications can be more easily recognised and are better understood, within and across national borders, in all sub-systems of education and training as well as in the labour market, no matter whether these were acquired through formal education and training or through other learning experiences (e.g. work experience; volunteering, online learning). The tools also aim to ensure that education, training and youth policies further contribute to achieve the Europe 2020 objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and its education and employment headline targets through better labour market integration and mobility.

In order to fulfil these objectives, the tools available should be able to cater for new phenomena such as internationalisation of education and growing use of digital learning, and support the creation of flexible learning pathways in line with learners' needs and objectives. The tools may also need to evolve in the future, leading to enhanced coherence and simplification that allow learners and workers to move freely for learning or working.

More information available at:

**Dissemination and exploitation of project results**

Dissemination and exploitation of results are crucial areas of the Erasmus+ project lifecycle. They
give participating organisations the opportunity to communicate and share outcomes and deliverables, thus extending the impact of their projects, improving their sustainability and justifying the European added value of Erasmus+.

In order to successfully disseminate and exploit project results, organisations involved in Erasmus+ projects are asked to give the necessary thought to dissemination and exploitation activities when designing and implementing their project. The level and intensity of such activities should be proportional to the objectives, the scope and the targets of the different Actions of Erasmus+.

Results achieved in a particular project may be highly relevant and interesting also in fields not covered by the project and it is up to the individual projects to develop strategies and methods ensuring that others can easily access what has been developed and produced. Specific guidelines in this respect can be found in Annex II to this Programme Guide.

**Erasmus+ Open Access Requirement for Educational Materials**

Erasmus+ promotes the open access of project outputs to support learning, teaching, training, and youth work. In particular, Erasmus+ beneficiaries are committed to make any educational resources and tools which are produced in the context of projects supported by the Programme - documents, media, software or other materials freely available for the public under an open license. The materials should be easily accessible and retrievable without cost or limitations, and the open licence must allow the public to use, reuse, adapt and share the resource. Such materials are known as ‘Open Educational Resources’ (OER). To achieve this aim, the resources should be uploaded in an editable digital form, on a suitable and openly accessible platform. While Erasmus+ encourages beneficiaries to apply the most open licenses, beneficiaries may choose licenses that impose some limitations, e.g. restrict commercial use by others, or commit others to apply the same license on derivative works, if this is appropriate to the nature of the project and to the type of material, and if it still allows the public to use, reuse, adapt and share the resource. The open access requirement is obligatory and is without prejudice to the intellectual property rights of the grant beneficiaries.

**Erasmus+ Open Access for Research and Data**

Erasmus+ encourages beneficiaries to publish research output through open access pathways, i.e. in ways which are free of cost or other access restrictions. Beneficiaries are also encouraged to apply open licenses to this research output. Whenever possible, data collected by projects should be published as 'open data', i.e. with an open license, in a suitable format and on a suitable open data platform.

**International dimension**

Erasmus+ includes a strong international dimension (i.e. cooperation with Partner Countries) notably in the fields of higher education and youth.

In the field of higher education, Erasmus+ supports the following main Actions targeting cooperation with Partner Countries:

- **International credit mobility of individuals and Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees** (under Key Action 1) promoting the mobility of learners and staff from and to Partner Countries;
• **Capacity-building projects in higher education** (under Key Action 2) promoting cooperation and partnerships that have an impact on the modernisation and internationalisation of higher education institutions and systems in Partner Countries, with a special focus on Partner Countries neighbouring the EU;

• **Support to policy dialogue** (under Key Action 3) through the network of Higher Education Reform Experts in Partner Countries neighbouring the EU, the international alumni association, policy dialogue with Partner Countries and international attractiveness and promotion events;

• **Jean Monnet** activities with the aim of stimulating teaching, research and reflection in the field of European Union studies worldwide.

In the field of youth, Erasmus+ supports the following main Actions:

• **Mobility for young people and youth workers** (under Key Action 1) promoting Youth Exchanges and mobility of youth workers in cooperation with Partner Countries neighbouring the EU;

• **Capacity-building projects in the field of youth** (under Key Action 2) promoting cooperation and mobility activities that have a positive impact on the qualitative development of youth work, youth policies and youth systems as well as on the recognition of non-formal education in Partner Countries, notably in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP), Asian and Latin American countries;

• Involvement of young people and youth organisations from Partner Countries neighbouring the EU in the **Youth Dialogue Projects** (under Key Action 3) through their participation in international meetings, conferences and events that promote dialogue between young people and decision-makers.

In addition, other Actions of the Programme (Strategic Partnerships, Knowledge Alliances, Sectors Skills Alliances, Collaborative Partnerships) are also open to organisations from Partner Countries in so far as their participation brings an added value to the project (for more information, please consult Part B of this Guide).

**Multilingualism**

Multilingualism is one of the cornerstones of the European project and a powerful symbol of the EU's aspiration to be united in diversity. Foreign languages have a prominent role among the skills that will help equip people better for the labour market and make the most of available opportunities. The EU has set the goal that every citizen should have the opportunity to acquire at least two foreign languages, from an early age.

The promotion of language learning and linguistic diversity is one of the specific objectives of the Programme. The lack of language competences is one of the main barriers to participation in European education, training and youth programmes. The opportunities put in place to offer linguistic support are aimed to make mobility more efficient and effective, to improve learning performance and therefore contribute to the specific objective of the Programme.

Linguistic support is available for the language used by participants for studying or carrying out a traineeship abroad in the framework of long-term mobility activities supported under Key Action 1. Linguistic support will mainly be offered via the Erasmus+ Online Linguistic Support, as e-learning offers advantages for language learning in terms of access and flexibility.

The Erasmus+ Online Linguistic Support ([http://erasmusplusols.eu](http://erasmusplusols.eu)) includes a mandatory
assessment of language competences and voluntary language courses. Language assessment is a crucial aspect of the initiative in order to provide the right preparation for each participant and collect evidence on language skills of EU mobility participants. Therefore, a language assessment will be undertaken by participants before mobility and another assessment will be carried out at the end of the mobility period to monitor progress in language competences. The results of the language assessment test carried out by participants before their departure will not preclude them from taking part in the mobility activity, whatever the result is.

The online language assessment shall thus not be used to select Erasmus+ mobility participants, but to provide them with an opportunity to boost their level where needed. The provision of linguistic support shall be based on mutual trust between sending and receiving institutions: it is the responsibility of the sending institution to provide participants with the most appropriate linguistic support, to ensure that they reach the recommended level agreed with the receiving institution by the start of the mobility.

Before the capacity of the online tools can be developed to cover all languages, funding will be provided to beneficiaries of mobility projects with a view to provide linguistic support in the languages not available through the online service offered by the Commission.

Under Key Action 2, Strategic Partnerships in the area of language teaching and learning will be encouraged. Innovation and good practices aiming to promote language skills can include for example teaching and assessment methods, development of pedagogical material, research, computer assisted language learning and entrepreneurial ventures using foreign languages. Furthermore, funding for linguistic support can be provided when necessary to beneficiaries of Strategic Partnerships who organise long-term training and teaching activities for staff, youth workers and learners.

As regards the European Language Label (ELL) awards, National Agencies are encouraged to organise - on a voluntary basis - regular (annual or biennial) national competitions in the Programme Countries. The ELL award should function as a stimulus to exploit and disseminate the results of excellence in multilingualism, and promote public interest in language learning.

Under Key Action 3, and to support Member States' efforts to integrate refugees in Europe's education and training systems, the Erasmus+ Online Linguistic Support (OLS) provided to Erasmus+ participants is extended to the benefit of around 100,000 refugees under the 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 Calls and until the available budget has been spent free of charge for them.

The participation of Erasmus+ National Agencies and beneficiary institutions/organisations is fully voluntary. Under this Call, the beneficiaries of the Erasmus+ programme that wish to take part receive a number of additional OLS licences to be allocated specifically to refugees who intend to learn one of the languages available in the OLS. The beneficiary institutions/organisations will be responsible for allocating the licences to the refugees and for reporting on the use of these licences.

**Equity and Inclusion**

The Erasmus+ Programme aims at promoting equity and inclusion by facilitating the access to participants with disadvantaged backgrounds and fewer opportunities compared to their peers whenever disadvantage limits or prevents participation in transnational activities for reasons such as:

- disability (i.e. participants with special needs): people with mental (intellectual, cognitive,
learning), physical, sensory or other disabilities;
- educational difficulties: young people with learning difficulties; early school-leavers; low qualified adults; young people with poor school performance;
- economic obstacles: people with a low standard of living, low income, dependence on social welfare system or homeless; young people in long-term unemployment or poverty; people in debt or with financial problems;
- cultural differences: immigrants or refugees or descendants from immigrant or refugee families; people belonging to a national or ethnic minority; people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion difficulties;
- health problems: people with chronic health problems, severe illnesses or psychiatric conditions;
- social obstacles: people facing discrimination because of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc.; people with limited social skills or anti-social or risky behaviours; people in a precarious situation; (ex-)offenders, (ex-)drug or alcohol abusers; young and/or single parents; orphans;
- geographical obstacles: people from remote or rural areas; people living in small islands or in peripheral regions; people from urban problem zones; people from less serviced areas (limited public transport, poor facilities).

In the field of youth, an Inclusion and Diversity Strategy has been designed as a common framework to support the participation and inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in Erasmus+. The Strategy is available on the website of the European Commission.

**Protection and safety of participants**

Protection and safety of participants involved in the Erasmus+ projects are important principles of the Programme. All persons participating in the Erasmus+ Programme should have the opportunity to take full advantage of the possibilities for personal and professional development and learning. This should be assured in a safe environment which respects and protects the rights of all persons.

To this end each organisation participating in the Erasmus+ Programme must have in place effective procedures and arrangements to promote and guarantee the safety and protection of the participants in their activity. With this regard, all students, trainees, apprentices, pupils, adult learners, young people, staff and volunteers, involved in a mobility activity under all Key Actions of the Erasmus+ Programme, must be insured against the risks linked to their participation in these activities. Apart from the volunteering activities which foresee a specific insurance policy, the Erasmus+ Programme does not define a unique format of insurance, nor does it recommend specific insurance companies. The Programme leaves it up to project organisers to seek the most suitable insurance policy according to the type of project carried out and to the insurance formats available at national level. Furthermore, it is not necessary to subscribe to a project-specific insurance, if the participants are already covered by existing insurance policies of the project organisers.

In either case, the following areas must be covered:

- wherever relevant, travel insurance (including damage or loss of luggage);
- third party liability (including, wherever appropriate, professional indemnity or insurance for responsibility);
- accident and serious illness (including permanent or temporary incapacity);
- death (including repatriation in case of projects carried out abroad).

If applicable, it is strongly recommended that participants in transnational activities are in
possession of a European Health Insurance Card. This is a free card that gives access to medically necessary, state-provided healthcare during a temporary stay in any of the 27 EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and the UK under the same conditions and at the same cost (free in some countries) as people insured in that country. More information on the card and on how to obtain it is available at http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=559.

Finally, if projects involve young people under 18, participating organisations are required to obtain the prior authorisation of participation from their parents or those acting on their behalf.

1. E.g. the widely used Creative Commons Attribution or Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike licenses for creative works, the GNU Public License and GNU Lesser Public License for software, or the Open Database License for databases.