

# Midterm Evaluation Erasmus+

## National Report The Netherlands

Client: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science & Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

Rotterdam, 10 February 2017

Lisa van Beek  
Linda Dominguez Alvarez  
Ineke Litjens  
Saraï Sapulete  
Thijs Viertelhuizen





Executive summary	3
1 Introduction	5
1.1 Erasmus+ in the Netherlands	5
1.2 Aim of the midterm evaluation	6
1.3 Methodology	6
2 Evaluation results	8
2.1 Effectiveness	8
2.2 Efficiency	17
2.3 Relevance	22
2.4 Internal and external coherence and complementarity	24
2.5 European added value and sustainability	25
3 Conclusions and recommendations	27
3.1 Conclusions per evaluation criterion	27
3.2 Recommendations	29
Annex 1 List of Abbreviations	31
Annex 2 Evaluation framework and evaluation questions	33
Annex 3 List of references	37
Annex 4 List of interviewees	41
Annex 5 List of participants in the workshops	45
Annex 6 Specific objectives Erasmus+ (relevant for this midterm evaluation)	46
Annex 7 EU objectives	47
Annex 8 Needs per sector	49
Annex 9 Survey Results	51
Annex 10 Outcomes – number of applications and granted projects	65
Annex 11 List of alternative programmes	67



# Executive summary

The Erasmus+ programme was launched by the EU in 2014 in order to support internationalisation within the Education, Youth and Sport fields to stimulate lifelong learning through formal and informal learning. Erasmus+ integrated several predecessor programmes into a single programme for easy access, more user friendliness and increased flexibility as well as allow for better linkages between Education, Training and Youth. The key objective of Erasmus+ is to contribute to tackling socio-economic challenges that Europe is facing and to support the implementation of the European Commission's agenda for growth, jobs, equity and social inclusion.

This national midterm evaluation of Erasmus+ in the Netherlands has been prepared by order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports (VWS). The aim of this midterm evaluation is to gain insights into the implementation and impact of the Erasmus+ programme, based on findings regarding the decentralised actions funded through the Dutch National Agencies (NAs) under the current programme as well as its predecessors. The evaluation also proposes suggestions for the improvement of Erasmus+ in the future programming period. The results of this evaluation as well as the evaluations of the other Member States will feed into the final report to be submitted to the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions by the end of 2017.

This evaluation is based on a variety of methodologies: desk analysis of relevant documents from – among others – NAs as well as evaluations of predecessor programmes, 58 interviews with various stakeholders, such as NAs and education and youth institutions, an online- and a face-to-face workshop, as well as two surveys on students and youth participants.

## Main conclusions

- Erasmus+ is **a highly relevant programme**, contributing to the objectives of the Erasmus+ programme as well as the objectives of the broader EU policy agenda regarding education and skills development (Europe 2020 and ET2020).
- Erasmus+ is **effective in reaching its objectives**, mostly regarding individual outcomes such as development of skills and competences.
- The quality of the applications has increased and the high standards in turn lead to **quality improvements** within the applying institutions.
- There is (still) a **larger demand for funding** of high quality applications **than available**.
- Erasmus+ is expected to have a broader **societal impact in the long run**, as individual effects translate into societal effects.
- The **administrative burden did not decrease as a result of the integration** and is (still) regarded to be high.
- The extent to which **lower opportunity** students and youth, as well as participants with special needs, are reached, is **hard to assess**. The perception of participating institutions is that this group is **still hard to reach**, although **the set targets** in the Youth as well as Education and Training sector, **have been reached**.
- A substantial share of the interviewed institutions experience quality improvements due to participation in the Erasmus+ programme, indicating **sustainability of the programme**.

## Conclusions per evaluation criterion

**Effectiveness** – The way Erasmus+ is executed contributes to a large extent to the intended outcomes in the Netherlands, regarding achieving the programme's specific objectives. Erasmus+ contributes to participants' knowledge and skills, internationalisation, quality improvements and a more innovative culture at institutional level. The contribution of Erasmus+ to the objective of lifelong learning is least apparent, but participation of staff as well as adult education are in itself examples of lifelong learning.

Erasmus+ affects educational institutions' internal innovation, internationalisation and mobility policies. Erasmus+ is less likely to influence national or local policy developments unless policymakers or local authorities are involved. As Erasmus+ only commenced three years ago, the programme does not (yet) have a large societal impact, although it is expected to have a broader societal impact in the long run as individual effects translate into societal effects. Evaluations of predecessor programmes have pointed into this direction, too. Participation from disadvantaged students and youth could be further strengthened.

*Efficiency* – The intended outcomes were achieved against reasonable costs, although the administrative burden for applicants remains high. The integration of different programmes into Erasmus+ resulted in more project collaborations over KAs and sectors. The IT tools caused efficiency losses at the commencement of the programme and are still cause of a large administrative burden for applicants as well as the NAs. Applicants are satisfied with support provided by the NAs, although some would welcome more feedback on rejected applications. Equal application procedures apply to large and small organisations, which affects the accessibility of Erasmus+ for small (volunteer-led) organisations, as well as newcomers.

*Relevance* – Erasmus+ adequately links to the needs as identified in the Netherlands. It is a highly relevant programme, and caters to the needs of institutions as well as participants in the different sectors. The objective of lifelong learning is least salient to applicants and participants of Erasmus+. KA1 is the best-known strand of Erasmus+.

*Internal and external coherence and complementarity* – The activities within Erasmus+ are coherent and there are hardly overlaps or inconsistencies with other programmes. The KAs are perceived to connect to each other quite well and to complement each other. Since there are hardly any other programmes that offer similar activities as Erasmus+, institutions have become largely dependent on Erasmus+ as a basis for their internationalisation activities.

*European added value and sustainability* – Erasmus+ contributes to effects on the European level. The Dutch Erasmus+ programme contributes to a large extent to the Erasmus+ general objectives and is likely to contribute to the Europe 2020 and ET2020 objectives as well. Many projects would not have been possible without funding through Erasmus+, and the programme offers a solid financial basis for internationalisation projects subsidised by Dutch NA's. There is (still) a larger demand for funding of high quality applications than available. Sustainability requires continued attention, in particular because knowledge sharing regarding project results is often limited.

## Recommendations

- *Stimulating cross-sectoral projects* – Encouraging collaboration between different sectors and stakeholders is believed to increase the impact of Erasmus+ programmes. The NAs could more strongly promote the development and possibilities of cross-sectoral projects. Furthermore, a dedicated budget for cross-sectoral projects may generate more possibilities for these types of projects. Additionally, an increase in budget for KA2 is desirable for collaborations.
- *Increasing policy impact* – Building bridges between policymakers and organisations and institutions as well as participants should be stimulated to involve policymakers in Erasmus+, for example through dissemination of results with policymakers.
- *Reaching lower opportunity youth* – There should be an unambiguous definition for the registration of lower opportunity youth and students. In this way, measuring the extent to which these groups have been reached can be done in an unambiguous way. Increasing awareness among lower opportunity youth may be done by adjusting the way of approaching them. NAs can further encourage and support projects that include youth or students with fewer opportunities or special needs.
- *Increasing accessibility of the programme* – In order to make it more attractive for newcomers to apply, a separate "light" application procedure, taking into account proportionality regarding applications, may help reduce the administrative burden that discourages newcomers from applying.
- *Increasing visibility and knowledge sharing* – In order to increase the European added value of Erasmus+, institutions as well as local authorities and businesses, should be encouraged more to share knowledge regarding their own project results.

# 1 Introduction

The Erasmus+ programme was launched by the EU in 2014 to support internationalisation within the Education, Youth and Sport fields and stimulate lifelong learning through formal and informal learning. Erasmus+ integrated several predecessor programmes into a single programme for more user friendliness, increased flexibility and better linkages between Education, Training and Youth. The programme has a budget of €14.7 billion for the period 2014-2020. Compared to the budget of its predecessor programmes<sup>1</sup> this resembles a budget increase of 40 percent over the whole seven-year programme. A substantial part of the increase will be applied during the later years of the programme.

The key objective of Erasmus+ is to contribute to tackling socio-economic challenges that Europe is facing and to support the implementation of the European Commission's agenda for growth, jobs, equity and social inclusion. Erasmus+ is expected to contribute to the achievement of:

1. The objectives of Europe2020 (European growth strategy in the field of employments, social equality and inclusion) including the education objective;
2. The objectives of ET2020 (strategic framework education and training);
3. The sustainable development of partner countries in the field of higher education;
4. The overall objective of the European Youth Strategy 2010-2018;
5. The objective of developing an European dimension in sport, especially amateur sport, in line with the work plan of the European Union;
6. The promotion of European values in accordance with Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union.

The key challenges for Europe in the areas of youth, education, employment and inclusion are addressed in EU-wide strategies and policy frameworks. These initiatives are largely supported by the Erasmus+ grant programme.

## 1.1 Erasmus+ in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands, the Erasmus+ programme is executed by the National Agency Erasmus+ Education and Training (a collaboration of CINOP & EP-Nuffic) and the National Agency Erasmus+ Youth (Nederlands Jeugd Instituut). These NAs are supervised by the national authorities: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS).

Erasmus+ offers programmes through three key actions (KAs):

1. **KA1: Learning mobility of individuals.** Key Action 1 supports mobility in the education, training and youth sectors and aims to bring long lasting benefits to the participants and the organisations involved;
2. **KA2: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices.** The actions under KA2 make it possible for organisations from different participating countries to work together, to develop, share and transfer best practices and innovative approaches in the fields of education, training and youth.;
3. **KA3: Support for policy reform.** Key Action 3 provides grants for a wide variety of actions aimed at stimulating innovative policy development, policy dialogue and implementation, and the exchange of knowledge in the fields of education, training and youth.

KA1 and KA2 are used in both the education and training, and youth sector. The decentralised actions under KA3 are only open for the youth sector. For the education and training sector, these actions are organised centrally at the level of the European Commission and are therefore beyond the scope of this evaluation.

---

<sup>1</sup> These include: Life Long Learning; Youth in Action; Erasmus Mundus; ALFA III; Tempus; Edulink; Sport Pilots.

## 1.2 Aim of the midterm evaluation

The results of this evaluation and the evaluations of the other Member States, will feed into the final report to be submitted to the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions by the end of 2017. The aim of this midterm evaluation is to gain insights into the implementation and impact of the Erasmus+ programme and the results achieved in the Netherlands, based on findings regarding the current and predecessor programme(s) regarding the decentralised actions implemented in the Netherlands. The evaluation also proposes conclusions and suggestions for improvement of the Erasmus+ programme for the remaining and orientations for the future programming period, for the European Commission as well as the Netherlands.

The following five evaluation criteria are addressed in this review:

- **Effectiveness:** to what extent does the way Erasmus+ is executed contribute to the intended outcomes in the Netherlands?
- **Efficiency:** are the intended outcomes achieved against reasonable costs in the Netherlands?
- **Relevance:** does Erasmus+ adequately link to the needs as identified in the Netherlands?
- **Internal and external coherence and complementarity:** are activities within Erasmus+ coherent? Is there any overlap or are there inconsistencies with other programmes in the Netherlands?
- **European added value and sustainability:** to what extent did Erasmus+ in the Netherlands contribute to effects at the European level and to what extent are the effects sustainable?

The evaluation matrix presented in Figure 1 in Annex 2 provides an overview of the underlying relationship between these elements. A number of questions per evaluation criterion have been formulated by the European Commission. The ministry of OCW and the ministry of VWS added a number of additional questions. The questions are spelled out in Annex 2 and answered in Chapter 2.

## 1.3 Methodology

This research was conducted in five phases: the start-up phase, desk study phase, field study phase, analysis phase and reporting phase. The assessment is based on qualitative analysis and the use of survey data. The chosen mix of research methods enabled us to, within the available time path, answer the research questions as optimal and concrete as possible.

### 1.3.1 Desk study

The desk study was mainly used to get information on the implementation and impact of Erasmus+ (and previous programmes) and the degree to which the set objectives have been achieved. One of the main research elements of our study was the analysis of existing reports and documents, including:

- Evaluation of the Youth in Actions programme;
- Evaluation of the Life Long Learning programme;
- Programme Guides;
- Guides for the NAs implementing Erasmus+;
- Work programmes;
- Year reports;
- Applications overviews;
- Selection overviews and justifications;
- Business Meeting reports.

Other documents reviewed are policy letters and studies in the field of internationalisation. An overview of the analysed sources can be found in Annex 3.

### 1.3.2 Interviews

We have conducted 58 interviews with several stakeholders, such as individuals who are involved in the policy making around Erasmus+ or the implementation of the programme. During a (semi)structured interview the activities and the outcomes, efficiency, coherence and effectiveness of activities were discussed. The interviews contributed to information on the effects at the institutional level. In addition, stakeholders were interviewed who are not involved in policy making or the implementation of Erasmus+, but who make use (or could make use) of the available funding. They provided insights in the relevance and (EU) added value of Erasmus+ activities. The list of interviewees is presented in Annex 4.

### 1.3.3 Workshops

The involvement of the various groups of stakeholders is a crucial element in our study. Two workshops were organised to discuss preliminary outcomes and brainstorm about potential solutions and improvements. The first workshop was hosted by Synmind halfway the field study phase. Several topics were discussed online with a diverse group of stakeholders. The second workshop was organised at the end of the field study phase (5 December 2016) in a World Café setting. Several topics were discussed, issues identified and potential solutions explored. An overview of the workshop participants can be found in Annex 5.

### 1.3.4 Surveys

We know by experience that an online survey yields the best results in reaching youth. Two surveys were conducted: one targeted at youth participants<sup>2</sup> of Erasmus+ Youth projects and one targeted at student participants of Erasmus+ Education and Training projects. The (former) participants were invited via the participating institutions. These surveys have provided insights into the effects at the individual level. The survey results are presented in Annex 9. To stimulate students and youth participants to participate in the surveys, respondents could win an iPad (two iPads in total).

The **education and training** survey was completed by 2,144 respondents who are on average between 21 and 25 years old, and are enrolled or graduated mostly at higher education level. Table 1.1 provides an overview of the percentage division of the factual number of participants in Erasmus+ per educational level and the numbers per educational level in the survey. The students in vocational education are underrepresented while in post-secondary vocational education they are overrepresented. Hence, the survey results are not completely representative but as the number of respondents is quite high, the results provide valuable insights.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1.1 Overview of percentage participating students and percentage students in surveys**

	Participants 2015	Percentage population	Percentage survey
Vocational education (Mbo)	5,204	28%	17%
Post Secondary vocational education (Hbo)	6,790	37%	49%
University education (Wo)	6,505	35%	33%
Total	18,499	100%	100%

The **youth** survey was completed by 146 respondents who are on average between 16 and 20 years old and are enrolled or graduated mostly at secondary education (44%) and higher education (44%) level. The average labour market position of the respondents is “employed”. The survey results are complemented by results of the Youth survey that was conducted by the RAY-network (Research-based Analysis of Youth in action).

<sup>2</sup> We distinguish between beneficiaries (applicants, organisations, institutions, the ones receiving the funding directly) and participants (individual participants, such as students, teachers, and youth).

<sup>3</sup> The population figures (18,499) are taken from 2015, while the respondents can have participated in projects from 2014 up until now. Taking 2015 as a rough estimate of the population enables us to compare the response rates per sector.

## 2 Evaluation results

### 2.1 Effectiveness

Effectiveness refers to the extent to which expected effects have been obtained and objectives have been achieved. We assessed whether the Erasmus+ programme and its predecessor programmes contributed to reaching the objectives of the programme, which can be found in Annexes 6 and 7. As Erasmus+ consists of three KAs, we first discuss the outputs of the programme in terms of the number of applicants for each of the KAs since the start of the programme.

#### 2.1.1 Question 1 – Realisation of Erasmus+ specific objectives

Question 1	<i>To what extent have Erasmus+ and its predecessor programmes contributed to the realisation of the Erasmus+ specific objectives<sup>4</sup> in the Netherlands? Are there differences across fields?</i>
Conclusions	Most interviewed organisations and institutions (in both education and training and youth) indicate that Erasmus+ is an effective programme to reach its objectives: it contributes to students' and youth's knowledge and skills, internationalisation of youth and education institutions and organisations, quality improvements and a more innovative culture at organisational level. However, it remains challenging to reach special needs and fewer opportunity students and youth. The effects of Erasmus+ differ between education and training and youth, and sometimes per KA. KA1 and KA3 are generally believed to have a greater effect at the individual level as individuals develop their knowledge and skills, while KA2 has a larger impact at institutional or organisational level through partnerships.

#### Outputs: applications

##### KA1

At the start of Erasmus+ in 2014, KA1 applications for Youth have increased from 219 applications in 2014 to 233 in 2015 and higher education and VET remained stable while student and staff mobility in school and adult education saw a decline in comparison to its predecessor programmes, although the number of applicants exceeded the available funding.<sup>5</sup> The application forms for Erasmus+ became available quite late, as was mentioned by several stakeholders from the Education and Training field. Besides, educational institutions might have been hesitant to apply, not knowing what to expect from the new integrated programme. Furthermore, the quality of several applications was not up to the required standards. To ensure better quality applications were submitted, the NA Education and Training informed applicants of the revised quality standards under Erasmus+ and provided feedback to rejected applications.<sup>6</sup> This resulted in better quality applications the years after.<sup>7</sup>

With regard to Youth, half of the applications did not meet the quality threshold at the start of Erasmus+.<sup>8</sup> <sup>9</sup> The NA Youth has since improved their support to applicants in a similar manner as the NA for Education and Training, which resulted in an increase in the number of KA1 Youth applicants and better quality applications.<sup>10</sup>

##### KA2

The opportunities for KA2 funding have been well received by educational institutions and youth organisations, and KA2 is a popular KA with a higher number of applications compared to the available budget. Due to the limited budget, only high quality applications are granted funding.<sup>11</sup> Initially, in 2014, applicants were unfamiliar with the KA2 application procedure and its quality requirements. As a result, several applications were submitted to the wrong KA in Youth (i.e. KA2 instead of KA1 or vice versa), and many applications did not meet the quality threshold. Information meetings by the NAs, advising

<sup>4</sup> See Annex 6 for the Specific Objectives of Erasmus+.

<sup>5</sup> Year report 2014. National Agency Education and Training.

<sup>6</sup> Year report 2014. National Agency Education and Training.

<sup>7</sup> Workprogramme 2016. National Agency Education and Training.

<sup>8</sup> See Table 10.1 in Annex 10.

<sup>9</sup> Year report 2015. National Agency Youth

<sup>10</sup> Workprogramme 2015. National Agency Youth

<sup>11</sup> Year report 2014. National Agency Education and Training

applicants, and providing opportunities for applicants to receive feedback on applications before the deadline made education and youth organisations more familiar with KA2 and its quality requirements. From 2015, less projects were submitted to the wrong KA in Youth and the quality of applications improved.<sup>12 13</sup> The number of KA2 applications for cross-sectoral partnerships and strategic partnerships for all levels of education except higher and adult education, has decreased between 2014 and 2016. There have been, for instance, no applications for cross-sectoral partnerships in 2015 and 2015 while there were 14 applications in 2014. In addition, strategic partnership applications for school education dropped from 110 applications in 2014 to 19 in 2016.<sup>14</sup>

### KA3

The number of applications for KA3 for Youth increased in 2015 compared to 2014 although the available budget for KA3 on structured dialogue was not fully spent in 2014 and 2015.<sup>15</sup> This is mainly due to the limited number of applications and applications not meeting the quality threshold.<sup>16</sup>

## Effects

### Competences and skills

KA1 and KA3 of the Erasmus+ programme are found to contribute to the development of competences and skills, as did its predecessor programmes LLP and Youth in Action.<sup>17</sup> Almost all students (94%) and youth participants (93%) who completed our survey, rated their Erasmus+ experience as very useful.<sup>18</sup> A larger share of university students regarded Erasmus+ as useful (97%) compared to post-secondary VET (94%) and VET students (88%) although differences are small.<sup>19</sup> For students, KA1 contributed mostly to their cultural awareness (81%) with very small differences between different levels of education. It also enhanced content knowledge regarding their study (80%). This effect was largest for university students (86%), followed by VET students (79%) and post-secondary VET students (76%). Improvement of research knowledge was largest for university participants (36%) compared to post-secondary VET and VET students (29% and 24% respectively) as university programmes have a stronger research focus. Youth participants in KA1 or KA3 indicated that Erasmus+ had the largest impact on their personal development (72%) and cultural awareness (63%).<sup>20</sup> The RAY 2016 evaluations<sup>21 22</sup> confirm these findings and suggest that participation enhances youth's self-awareness and the ability to cope with new environments. In addition, a large majority of students (88%) and young people (89%) indicated Erasmus+ contributed to their skills development with limited differences between students in different levels of education.<sup>23</sup> For students, language skills were most frequently enhanced (87%) while for young people participating in youth activities, their social and civic skills were mostly strengthened (82%).<sup>24</sup> These skills stimulate participants to become more involved in society.<sup>25</sup> A noticeable difference between students is that collaborative skills are believed to be enhanced mostly by VET students (68% of VET students versus 49% of university participants), while writing skills improved according to 38% of university students compared to 17% of VET students.<sup>26</sup> A majority of students

<sup>12</sup> Workprogramme 2015. National Agency Youth.

<sup>13</sup> Year report 2015. National Agency Youth.

<sup>14</sup> See Table 10.2 in Annex 10. Also based on interviews with NAs conducted by Ecorys.

<sup>15</sup> 2016 data not available.

<sup>16</sup> See Table 10.3 in Annex 10.

<sup>17</sup> NJI (2011), De impact van Youth in Action.

<sup>18</sup> See Tables 9.6 and 9.8 and Figures 9.15 and 9.18 in Annex 9.

<sup>19</sup> Based on Ecorys survey among students who participated in Erasmus+. N=375 for VET, N=1054 for post-secondary VET and N=705 for higher university education.

<sup>20</sup> See Figures 9.3 and 9.8 in Annex 9.

<sup>21</sup> Boomkens, Awad & Metz (2016). Monitoren Impact Erasmus+ Jeugd – Nederland. *Rapportage over het onderzoek naar de impact van deelname aan het Erasmus+ Jeugd programma 2014-2015 (Concept)*. Hereafter: RAY findings 2016.

<sup>22</sup> RAY is the "The research-based analysis and monitoring of Erasmus+: Youth in Action" programme and monitors the effects of the Youth sector of Erasmus+. The results of the RAY participants' survey and our survey partly overlap, but our evaluation more broadly assesses the Youth branch of the Erasmus+ programme. We use the results of the RAY evaluations of 2016 to answer questions regarding participation in Youth programmes under Erasmus+.

<sup>23</sup> See Figures 9.1 and 9.6 and Tables 9.1 and 9.4 in Annex 9.

<sup>24</sup> See Figures 9.2 and 9.7 in Annex 9.

<sup>25</sup> Workprogramme 2015, National Agency Youth.

<sup>26</sup> Based on Ecorys survey among students who participated in Erasmus+. N=375 for VET, N=1054 for post-secondary VET and N=705 for higher university education.

(89% on average with over 90% of university and post-secondary VET students indicating this and 83% of VET students) and youth (72%) believed that their gained knowledge and skills adds value to their CV. Respondents also believe that their career prospects benefit from their Erasmus+ experience<sup>27</sup> with over 80% of university and post-secondary VET participants believing so, and 75% of VET students.

### *Language learning and development*

As indicated above, 87% of students at different education levels surveyed mentioned that their language skills have improved.<sup>28</sup> Additionally for youth participants, Erasmus+ has a positive effect on their language skills as 61% found that they are better able to communicate in a different language. The effects on language learning are in line with predecessor programmes such as Youth in Action where a majority indicated they improved their foreign language (66%) and communication skills (56%).<sup>29</sup>

### *Non-formal learning*

The contribution of the programme to the recognition of non-formal learning is assessed by looking at the use of the Youthpass by participants. The impact of the Youthpass on non-formal learning under Erasmus+ improved in comparison to its predecessor Youth in Action Programme. The Youth in Action programme<sup>30</sup> found that the Youthpass was not used very much by young people in finding a job (20%), and that only 17% indicated they received the Youthpass. However, under Erasmus+, the majority of youth participants received the Youthpass (66%) and 56% of them indicated they used their Youthpass in job application procedures.<sup>31</sup>

### *Students and youth with special needs and fewer opportunities<sup>32</sup>*

Interviewed education and youth organisations stated that Erasmus+ mainly reaches the average or well-off ('advantaged') students and young people. In the Youth sector, in 2015, 33% of the participants in youth projects were youth with fewer opportunities, which is higher than the 2015 target of 30%. In addition, the target for 2015 was to have 2% special needs participants while the youth sector achieved 8% in 2015.<sup>33</sup> For Education and Training, registration of lower opportunity and special needs students is only required for VET institutions. For these institutions, the percentage of participants with special needs or lower opportunities was 3.62%, substantially higher than the target of 0.5%.<sup>34</sup> For both youth and VET, the figures are based on self-registration. The European Commission's definition of lower opportunity and special needs youth/students is quite broad (see footnote 32), making it difficult to monitor what applicants register to be lower opportunity and special needs participants. Hence, figures for these sectors may be inaccurate due to misinterpretation of the definition and, for instance, underestimated. In addition, higher and school education are not required to register such participants. While no data are available, higher educational institutions believe not many students with special needs or disadvantaged backgrounds participate in Erasmus+.<sup>35</sup> A complete picture on the extent to which Erasmus+ is successful in reaching target groups can thus not be made.

Youth organisations and educational institutions stated that it is more difficult to reach lower opportunity or special needs youth/students as the awareness of Erasmus+ is smaller in these groups, and they have difficulties in reaching these target groups. Youth organisations believe the language used in communication with these groups is not sufficiently adapted to the target groups. Educational institutions add that arranging insurance and health care needs and providing suitable support for

<sup>27</sup> See Tables 9.1 and 9.4 and Figures 9.1 and 9.6 in Annex 9.

<sup>28</sup> See Figure 9.2 Annex 9. Differences between education levels: at VET and post-secondary VET level, 87% indicated it improved their language skills, and 88% of university students indicated this.

<sup>29</sup> NJI (2011), De impact van Youth in Action.

<sup>30</sup> Ernst and Young (2010), Interim evaluation Youth in Action.

<sup>31</sup> Based on RAY findings 2016.

<sup>32</sup> Young people and students with fewer opportunities are defined by the European Commission as those with social obstacles (e.g. limited social skills, from broken families and people facing discrimination because of gender), economic obstacles (e.g. low income background, living in poverty, homeless or with financial problems), disability, educational difficulties (e.g. early school leavers, people with learning problem, poor school performers), cultural differences (e.g. immigrants, refugees, those with cultural inclusion problems or belonging to an ethnic minority), health problems, and geographical obstacles (e.g. remote or rural areas, from islands or urban problem zones and less serviced areas).

<sup>33</sup> Year report 2015, National Agency Youth.

<sup>34</sup> Year report 2015, National Agency Education and Training.

<sup>35</sup> Based on interviews with higher educational institutions conducted by Ecorys.

special needs students is an obstacle for them to include these students. This while additional funding is available for special needs participants in Erasmus+.

For KA2 in education, there is a growing interest of special schools at primary and secondary level to participate in the programme.<sup>36</sup> The NAs for Education and Training and Youth continue to stimulate and support projects in improving inclusion of disadvantaged and special needs people. However, as reaching students and youth with special needs and fewer opportunity is an important objective for the Erasmus+ programme, the programme could benefit from a clear definition and rules regarding registration of these participants in the future programming period.

#### *Internationalisation of Education and Training and Youth*

All interviewed youth organisations and educational and training institutions stated that Erasmus+ contributes to their internationalisation as the programme enables them to establish strategic partnerships with institutions abroad, expand their international collaborations and enable staff, students or young people to cross borders. These effects were also found for the LLP and Youth in Action Programmes.<sup>37</sup>

#### *Quality improvements*

Several interviewed higher education and adult education institutions believe that Erasmus+, in comparison to its predecessor programmes, focuses more on quality instead of quantity and a high number of participating students and young people. The current application procedure encourages applicants to write better-quality applications and stimulates them to deliver high quality projects. For instance, the requirement for submitting a development plan for KA1 applications encourages organisations to think about a strategic long-term quality approach towards Erasmus+ projects according to both education and youth organisations. Education and youth organisations believe the increased focus on quality has benefitted their applications as well as the quality of their projects. Several youth organisations believe this has positively affected the quality of youth work, while most interviewed education institutions indicated Erasmus+ contributed to a more innovative culture in their institutions. The NAs confirmed that the quality of most applications improved.

#### *Lifelong learning*

Survey results of student participants in KA1 show that Erasmus+ is perceived to have little direct impact on their awareness of lifelong learning, as just under one-third of students (31%) indicated that Erasmus+ contributed to this.<sup>38</sup> As students are still in initial education, it is also not expected that Erasmus+ increases their awareness of lifelong learning. However, Erasmus+ contributes to the awareness of lifelong learning of staff according to secondary education and post-secondary VET institutions. Even if there is no direct effect noticeable effect of Erasmus+ on the awareness of lifelong learning as indicated by participants, participation in itself contributes to lifelong learning as was noted in the mid-term evaluation of the predecessor LLP programme.<sup>39</sup> The topic of lifelong learning will continue to be promoted amongst others in VET by the NA for Education and Training through the use of lifelong learning experts and networking with VET schools.<sup>40</sup>

#### *Participation in democratic life*

Erasmus+ seems to have little direct impact on youth's participation in democratic life. While Erasmus+ increased young people's awareness of what is happening in Europe, less than half of the youth participants (48%) indicated they became a more active citizen after participation in Erasmus+. According to a majority of youth participants, Erasmus+ did not greatly impact their political interest, political activity, or their participation in volunteer work, as Erasmus+ did not increase their interest or activities on these parts.<sup>41</sup> The RAY findings also highlight that Erasmus+ did not have an impact on youth participants' opinion or attitude towards democracy. These results could, however, be biased as

<sup>36</sup> Work programmes National Agency Education and Training; National Agency Youth.

<sup>37</sup> Ernst and Young (2010), Interim evaluation Youth in Action; Panteia (2010), Interim Evaluation LLP in the Netherlands.

<sup>38</sup> See Figure 9.8 in Annex 9.

<sup>39</sup> Panteia (2010), Interim Evaluation LLP in the Netherlands.

<sup>40</sup> Workprogramme 2016, National Agency Education and Training.

<sup>41</sup> See Table 9.2 and Figures 9.3 and 9.4 in Annex 9. Also based on RAY findings, 2016.

the youth participants in Erasmus+ are already democratically engaged before starting Erasmus+ and therefore, choose to enrol. Consequently, Erasmus+ did not *further* increase their participation in democratic life. However, it is expected that Erasmus+ can have a broader societal impact in the long run as cultural and linguistic awareness improve and internationalisation increases and therefore, it may change the way people deal with e.g. racism and prejudices and enhance thinking of equality as was found in the LLP evaluation.<sup>42</sup>

### Policy reforms

Erasmus+ projects for KA1 and KA2 are believed to have little policy impact at the national or regional level as the projects are implemented at institutional or organisational level. The objective of Erasmus+ projects is to complement national and regional policies in enhancing the development and skills of individuals and improve quality at an institutional level. Collaborations with local authorities in KA1 or KA3 are more common for youth projects in Erasmus+ compared to education projects in Erasmus+. Under KA3 for instance, youth organisations often collaborate with local or national authorities as they organise debates with policymakers. KA3 however is not available at a decentralised level for educational and training institutions, while opportunities for this could strengthen the policy link for education and training according to the NA. Question 3 addresses the topic of policy influence further, including the impact of Erasmus+ on organisations' and institutions' internal policies.

## 2.1.2 Question 2 – Realisation of the EU objectives in the Netherlands

<b>Question 2</b>	<i>To what extent has the progress on the realisation of the specific objectives contributed to the realisation of the Erasmus+ general objectives in your country, regarding the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy, including the headline education target (employment; research and development; climate/energy; education; social inclusion and poverty reduction) and regarding the objectives of the ET2020 strategic framework, including the corresponding benchmark?</i>
<b>Conclusions</b>	The Dutch Erasmus+ programme contributes to a large extent to the Erasmus+ general objectives. With regard to the Europe 2020 targets, the Netherlands is on track regarding its education and poverty reduction targets. The Netherlands is ahead of almost all of its ET2020 objectives. The Dutch Erasmus+ programme contributes to the mobility objective of ET 2020 and its other objectives, and can also contribute towards some of the Europe 2020 objectives even though the strategic objectives of both programmes differ.

### Erasmus+ general objectives

The Dutch Erasmus+ programme and projects contribute to a large extent to the Erasmus+ general objectives, as represented in Annex 7. As discussed under Question 1, the Erasmus+ programme in the Netherlands contributes to the general objectives of improving knowledge and skills of students and youth, enhancing labour market opportunities and improving language skills. Quality or innovation in both education and training institutions and youth work have been enhanced, and the Dutch Erasmus+ programme made the education and youth sector more internationally oriented. Erasmus+ projects have limited possibility to impact national or regional policies.

### Europe 2020

The Netherlands are on track for most of the targets of the Europe 2020 objectives.<sup>43</sup> The employment rate of 20-64-year-olds was 76.4% in 2015 (target 80%).<sup>44</sup> Just over 2% of the GDP was spent on research and development in 2015,<sup>45</sup> which is below the target. The Netherlands is on track with regard to the education objectives: in 2015 8.2% of students left school before obtaining a diploma,<sup>46</sup> which is just above the target of maximum 8%. In addition, 46.3% of all 30-34-year-olds obtained a tertiary education degree and with this, the Netherlands already reached its 2020 target. Since 2005, 381,000 people have been lifted out of poverty in the Netherlands in 2015,<sup>47</sup> also reaching its 2020 target in advance.

<sup>42</sup> Panteia (2010), Interim Evaluation LLP in the Netherlands.

<sup>43</sup> See Annex 7.

<sup>44</sup> Eurostat data, 2016.

<sup>45</sup> Eurostat data, 2015.

<sup>46</sup> Eurostat data.

<sup>47</sup> Eurostat data.

Due to the different objectives of the Europe 2020 and Erasmus+ programmes, it is difficult to link the Erasmus+ objectives to the intended outcomes of Europe 2020. The evaluation of LLP also indicated that it is ambitious to assess whether LLP contributes substantially to broader EU priorities, such as the objectives of the Education and Training 2010 work programme, as LLP was not based on operationalisation of such broader priorities.<sup>48</sup> Erasmus+ is most likely to contribute to the Europe 2020 objectives regarding education. Erasmus+ can, for instance, be a means of contributing towards the number of people obtaining a tertiary education degree,<sup>49</sup> the number of early school leavers, or employment in the long run as it equips people with knowledge and skills relevant for their study or for the labour market. Former research for example reveals that developing international and intercultural competences are increasingly important indicators for labour market success.<sup>50</sup>

While Erasmus+ can contribute to some of the Europe 2020 objectives, education and labour market outcomes are influenced by a combination of personal, societal, economic and political factors.

### ET 2020

The Netherlands is well on its way to meet the benchmarks<sup>51</sup> of the ET 2020 programme: 97,6% of children between 4 and compulsory schooling age attended some form of early childhood education in 2015; less than 15% of 15-year-olds were under-skilled in reading, mathematics and science; 8,2% of 18-24-year-olds were early school leavers in 2015; 46,3% of 30-34-year-olds obtained a tertiary degree; 18,9% of adults participated in lifelong learning; over 82% of graduates were employed,<sup>52</sup> and 22% of higher education students spent a part of their study abroad.<sup>53</sup> On all indicators except for early school leaving the Netherlands had already reached its 2020 objectives in 2015.

The objectives of the Erasmus+ programme are more aligned with the ET 2020 programme than the Europe 2020 objectives. Both Erasmus+ and ET 2020 aim to improve knowledge and skills, stimulate lifelong learning, stimulate the mobility of students, encourage equity, and improve quality of education and training. Therefore, Erasmus+ can be a means, together with other policies and programmes, to contribute towards the strategic objectives of ET 2020.<sup>54</sup> The Dutch government indicated that it uses Erasmus+ where possible in order to increase its impact on the ET 2020 objectives by, for instance, sharing best project examples and outcomes to be able to strengthen other Erasmus+ projects and outcomes.<sup>55</sup> As a large part of Erasmus+ includes the mobility of students and youth, Erasmus+ contributes to achieving this goal. The magnitude of the effects of the Dutch Erasmus+ programme on the achieving of the ET 2020 objectives is challenging to assess, as education and training outcomes are influenced by a range of policies and it takes time for the effects of Erasmus+ on the ET 2020 objectives to materialise but it contributes to the objectives.

#### 2.1.3 Question 3 – Influence on policy developments

Question 3	<i>To what extent have Erasmus+ actions in your country influenced policy developments in the domains of education and training and influenced policy developments in the domain of youth?</i>
Conclusions	The Erasmus+ programme complements the objectives of the Dutch government regarding internationalisation and mobility in education, as well as the need to collaborate more on the topic of youth and develop local initiatives to support youth. Erasmus+ projects however hardly impact national or local policy developments, unless policymakers or local authorities are involved. Erasmus+ affects educational institutions' and organisations' internal innovation, quality, internationalisation and mobility policies.

<sup>48</sup> Panteia (2010), Interim Evaluation LLP in the Netherlands.

<sup>49</sup> Work programme 2014. National Agency Education and Training.

<sup>50</sup> Researchcentrum voor Onderwijs en Arbeidsmarkt (ROA). 2013. De arbeidsmarkt naar opleiding en beroep tot 2018.

<sup>51</sup> See Annex 7.

<sup>52</sup> Eurostat data.

<sup>53</sup> EP Nuffic (2016), Uitgaande studentenmobiliteit.

<sup>54</sup> Year report 2015. National Agency Education and Training.

<sup>55</sup> Joint Report ET 2020, 2015.

### Influence on policy developments in the domain of education and training

Erasmus+ is found to affect institution's internal policies regarding internationalisation, mobility and innovation.<sup>56</sup> Especially among non-higher education institutions, it was mentioned that Erasmus+ contributes to a more strategic internationalisation and mobility approach. Most educational institutions also indicate that Erasmus+ contributed to a more innovative culture within their institution as they think in new directions. It also provides them with opportunities to learn from other institutions, which can further stimulate innovation and improve internal internationalisation policies.

Individual Erasmus+ projects in the sector of education and training are not believed to have a large impact on national or regional education policy developments.<sup>57</sup> Educational institutions mostly implement projects at institutional level and most educational institutions, except for VET institutions, do not collaborate with local authorities to implement their projects and oftentimes do not need to. In addition, education and training institutions do not have the possibility to apply to KA3 projects at a decentralised level unlike the youth sector. Hence, collaborations with local authorities in the education and training sector are not very common. However in projects where a municipality is involved, Erasmus+ is believed to influence local policy developments. In the city of Den Bosch for example, the municipality's collaboration with educational institutions in KA2, affected the local policy agenda by highlighting educational issues and prioritising topics.

### Influence on policy developments in the domain of youth

With the decentralisation of responsibilities for youth policies to local authorities in the Netherlands in 2015, youth policies are designed and implemented at local level. As part of this trend, youth organisations and municipalities as well as youth services and schools are expected to collaborate more in the future.<sup>58</sup> Erasmus+ complements these current developments in the Netherlands as it offers possibilities through which collaborations between different actors, such as municipalities, in the youth sector can be established. This happens for example through KA3 projects for Youth to strengthen their debating skills or stimulate their political interest involving local authorities or policymakers. Due to the engagement of policymakers in this KA, it is commonly believed that KA3 can impact local policy development. Youth participants for instance, mentioned that they believe that they were taken seriously by policymakers and that their ideas will be taken into account.<sup>59</sup>

Several youth organisations mention that Erasmus+ professionalised their work as it supported them in developing a strategic, long-term approach towards quality and internationalisation. This provided learning opportunities throughout the application and implementation process, which benefitted the quality of their work.<sup>60</sup>

#### 2.1.4 Question 4 – Approaches to enhance the effects of Erasmus+

Question 4	<i>What specific approaches (such as co-financing, promotion or others) have you taken in order to try to enhance the effects of Erasmus+ in the Netherlands? To what extent have these approaches been effective? Can any particular points for improvement be identified? Differences between KAs?</i>
Conclusions	A majority of institutions and organisations in both education and youth use co-financing for their project(s) to ensure higher participation rates and promote Erasmus+. Several promotion methods are used to raise awareness of Erasmus+, such as information events and making use of websites and social media. They aim to boost participation and through this, enhance the effects, which seems to be effective.

Most interviewed institutions and organisations indicated that they use additional financial sources (co-financing) for KA1 and KA3 to implement their projects, increase participation rates and promote their project. Additional sources of funding can be either internal (such as scholarships in higher education for students to cover costs of going abroad or a dedicated budget for internationalisation) or external (such

<sup>56</sup> Based on interviews among education and training institutions conducted by Ecorys.

<sup>57</sup> Based on interviews among education and training institutions conducted by Ecorys.

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.nji.nl/Verbinding-onderwijs-en-jeugdhulp>

<sup>59</sup> See Figure 9.15 and Table 9.6 in Annex 9.

<sup>60</sup> Based on results from interviews among youth organisations conducted by Ecorys.

as sponsorships, which are more frequently used in the youth sector). The funding for strategic partnerships in KA2 is higher and therefore, there is less need for co-financing in KA2 projects.

Additionally, the promotion of projects is done by all educational institutions and youth organisations to encourage participation. It is common to organise information sessions for students, young people, staff or parents where former participants share their experiences. Online websites and social media also play a large role in promoting Erasmus+. A few educational institutions share their best practices in promoting Erasmus+ with other schools, which is found to be an effective method to enhance participation and project effects.

### 2.1.5 Question 5 – Effectiveness of KAs

<b>Question 5</b>	<i>Do you consider that certain KAs of the programme are more effective than others? Are there differences across fields? What are the determining factors for making these actions of the programme more effective?</i>
Conclusions	There are differences in effects across KAs. This is most likely to be determined by the different objectives of the KAs rather than one KA being more effective than the other. In general, KA1 and KA3 are found to have more effects on individuals, and KA2 more on organisational or sectoral level.

It is difficult to assess which key action is the most *effective* in addressing the national and EU Erasmus+ objectives. The various KAs contribute to different effects as they have different objectives, as was explained under Question 1. The difference in impact of Erasmus+ compared to its predecessor LLP and Youth in Action programme is not very clear as both Erasmus+ and the predecessor programmes had similar impacts such as internationalisation and the development of language skills. In the long run, the individual and institutional effects combined can lead to some impact at a more societal level.

Staying abroad for a longer period is believed to have a larger impact than staying abroad for a short period, according to youth organisations who worked with volunteers in EVS and several universities. Hence, educational institutions at different levels believe that the effects for staff are less obvious as they usually go abroad for a short period of time.

### 2.1.6 Question 6 – Effectiveness of programme integration

<b>Question 6</b>	<i>To what extent has the integration of several programmes into Erasmus+ made the programme more effective in the Netherlands? Do you see scope for changes to the structure of Erasmus+ or its successor programme that could increase effectiveness?</i>
Conclusions	The integration of Erasmus+ increased the visibility and familiarity of Erasmus+ in the Netherlands. The revised application procedure for Erasmus+ with a larger focus on quality resulted in better quality applications and projects. The opportunities for collaborations between sectors of education and between education and training and youth under KA2 are welcomed although there is limited awareness regarding possibilities of sectoral partnerships. It is also felt that the integration resulted in fewer opportunities for lifelong learning for adults.

#### Increasing visibility

Interviews and workshops with education and youth organisations revealed that the familiarity and visibility of the programme increased because of the integration in Erasmus+ as both youth and education and training projects are under the same umbrella now. Besides, the brand name of ‘Erasmus’ is well known and it is believed that therefore, more people and organisations are familiar with Erasmus+ now. It is found to be challenging to reach special needs and fewer opportunities youth and students (see Question 1).<sup>61</sup> The youth sector indicates it is important that youth and education and training remain separate sectors as the separation between the sectors gives more visibility to youth.

<sup>61</sup> Based on interviews with Ministry of VWS, NA youth, youth organisations, education and training institutions, and Ernst and Young (2010), Interim evaluation Youth in Action.

### Better quality projects

Stakeholders in both Education and Training and Youth believe that the integration of predecessor programmes into Erasmus+ contributed to better quality applications and project implementation, as the current application procedure has a stronger focus on quality than previous application procedures.

### Increasing opportunities for collaborations

Stakeholders from both Education and Training and Youth stated that Erasmus+ provides opportunities for collaborations that were not possible under its predecessor programmes, such as the possibility to apply for funding for strategic or sectoral partnerships under KA2. These opportunities are very much appreciated. There is a widespread belief that cooperation between sectors and institutions or organisations can enlarge the effectiveness of Erasmus+, although there are currently a limited number of KA2 projects set up due to budget limitations.<sup>62</sup> Besides, while institutions seem to know about possibilities for partnerships with schools or youth organisations abroad, several education institutions at VET level and youth organisations are not aware of the possibilities for collaboration between the different sectors (education and youth).

### Limited budget and knowledge on opportunities for adult education

While the integration of Youth in Action and LLP into Erasmus+ is generally regarded as a positive development, some training organisations noted that with the integration the budget distribution towards adult education is comparatively small. In addition, many education and training institutions do not seem to be aware of opportunities for adult education projects, the definition of adult education is not well known among applicants, and the target group for adult education seems to be unclear as well. Increased awareness of adult education possibilities for education and training institutions and businesses, and what adult education comprises, may increase the visibility of this specific sector and can stimulate lifelong learning among adults.

#### 2.1.7 Question 7 – Size of the budget

<b>Question 7</b> <i>Is the size of the budget appropriate and proportionate to what Erasmus+ is set out to achieve? Differences between KAs? Is the distribution of funds across the programme's fields and actions appropriate in relation to their level of effectiveness and utility?</i>	
Conclusions	Funding possibilities for Erasmus+ are widely appreciated by both the education and youth sector. The number of applications exceeds the available funds for KA1 as this is a very popular key action. The funding for KA2 is regarded as too small as the success rate for KA2 applications is limited, while the funding for KA3 is found to be appropriate as the budget is not yet fully exhausted.

In general, education institutions and youth organisations are very happy with the funding they can obtain via Erasmus+ as the current budget for Erasmus+ is higher for most sectors than its predecessor programmes. Although budgets for Erasmus+ have increased, the number of good quality applications exceeds the available funds for KA1 and KA2. The budget for KA3 has not yet been fully exhausted due to a lower number of good quality applications than budget available. For KA2, it is believed by educational institutions at different levels and youth organisations that the budget is insufficient as the number of applications far exceeds the available budget. Hence, applicants have a small chance of being awarded funding.<sup>63</sup> NAs add that not all KA3 applications meet the quality standards. Furthermore, while increasing the awareness of lifelong learning is one of the programme's objectives, training institutions noted that there is limited funding available for adult learning (see Question 6).

#### 2.1.8 Question 8 - Challenges in implementation of KAs

<b>Question 8</b> <i>What challenges and difficulties do you encounter while implementing the various actions of Erasmus+? What changes would need to be introduced in Erasmus+ or its successor programme to remedy these? Differences between KAs?</i>	
Conclusions	The current application procedure includes a few obstacles for project implementation, including forecasting the number of participants, defining effects beforehand, and disseminating results,

<sup>62</sup> See Table 10.2 in Annex 10.

<sup>63</sup> See Table 10.2 in Annex 10.

When implementing projects, a few obstacles can be observed. Education institutions and youth organisations find it difficult to establish far in advance how many people will participate, while they need to indicate this in the application. Additionally, institutions and organisations find it challenging to define in advance what the expected outcomes and impacts of a project are, especially for KA2 projects as the outcomes of partnerships are more difficult to assess. In addition, primary and secondary education schools and youth organisations have limited possibilities to disseminate the effects (see Question 9).

### 2.1.9 Question 9 – Dissemination of Erasmus+ results

Question 9	<i>To what extent are the approaches and tools that are used for disseminating and exploiting the results of Erasmus+ in the Netherlands effective? Where do you see possibilities for improvement?</i>
Conclusions	Higher and VET education institutions have more financial and human resources available to disseminate Erasmus+ results. Youth organisations and primary and secondary schools indicate they have insufficient possibilities to disseminate Erasmus+ results. The NAs provide support to institutions and organisations in disseminating results.

The budgets for Erasmus+ projects do not include separate funding to promote the results of a project, nor are there specific dissemination tools that projects are required to use. Instead, costs for dissemination are covered by the programme management costs which are part of the lumpsum funding projects receive. But some educational institutions and youth organisations mentioned this funding is not sufficient for them to cover costs of dissemination of results. Due to fewer available financial and human resources available in primary and secondary schools and youth organisations, many of them experience more difficulties in disseminating their project results than higher education and VET institutions who have more resources available for this. In most higher education and VET institutions, results of internal institutional surveys about the effects of Erasmus+ are used to disseminate the effects of Erasmus+ during information meetings and events. A few of them mentioned they are working on videos where experiences and results are shared to inform (new) students of the benefits of participation in Erasmus+. These methods work well in promoting Erasmus+ effects, according to these institutions.<sup>64</sup>

The NAs support institutions and organisations in this in several ways. For instance, the NA for Education and Training invited an impact expert at the 2015 kick-off meeting to inform project managers on how to create a lasting impact with project outcomes and how these can be disseminated. Both NAs also provide advice to institutions and organisations during meetings in the NA offices, over Skype, by phone, or by email.<sup>65</sup>

## 2.2 Efficiency

Efficiency refers to the extent to which the intended outcomes are achieved against reasonable costs in the Netherlands. The execution and organisation of the programme, as well as flexibility and obstacles for beneficiaries and participants were assessed.

### 2.2.1 Question 10 – Organisation of execution of the programme

Question 10	<i>To what extent is the system of cooperation and the division of tasks between the Commission, Executive Agency, Nationaal Agentschap Jeugd and Nationaal Agentschap Onderwijs en Training, European Investment Fund, National Authorities, Independent Audit Bodies and Erasmus+ Committee efficient and well-functioning from the point of view of the Netherlands? What are the areas for possible improvement or simplification in the implementation of Erasmus+ or a successor programme?</i>
Conclusions	In general, collaborations between the national authorities, NAs, educational institutions, youth organisations and other stakeholders are found to be efficient. National Authorities and NAs are in regular contact to discuss challenges and improve their practices. The Dutch NAs also frequently discuss with NAs in other countries on what they can learn from each other. The NAs and national authorities plan to further strengthen their cooperation in 2017 to create even better synergies between programmes.

<sup>64</sup> Findings based on interviews with educational institutions and youth organisations conducted by Ecorys.

<sup>65</sup> Year report 2015, NA for Education and Training; Year report 2015, NA for Youth.

In general, collaboration between the National Authorities, NAs, the European Commission, and between the NAs and project stakeholders (such as educational institutions and youth organisations) operates well. The work programmes of the NA Youth and NA Education and Training state that an effective cooperation with the national authorities and stakeholders in the field are a main objective of the NAs. The Ministries involved in Erasmus+ and the NAs indicate they have a good working collaboration with at least two regular meetings a year and more frequent contact via phone or email when needed. The NAs also meet regularly without the national authorities to discuss issues, challenges, and how they can improve their work. In addition, the NAs meet with NAs of other countries to learn from each other. National authorities and NAs plan to intensify their cooperation in 2017 to create even better synergies between programmes. The communication and cooperation with relevant stakeholders is being strengthened and is efficient, such as collaborations with NAs in other countries. The collaboration with the European Commission is also well appreciated by the national authorities and national agencies as feedback is, when possible, taken into account.

At least two times per year, an evaluation of the financial audit of the Erasmus+ programme is carried out by the Audit Dienst Rijk (ADR)<sup>66</sup> in collaboration with the NAs and the National Authorities. The collaboration between these parties is a central theme in the evaluations. The collaboration between the ADR and the NAs is regarded positive<sup>67</sup> and the feedback is regarded useful.<sup>68</sup>

### 2.2.2 Question 11 – Efficiency of programme integration

<b>Question 11</b>	<i>To what extent has the integration of several programmes into Erasmus+ resulted in efficiency gains or losses for the implementation of the programme in the Netherlands, at the level of the NAs and on the beneficiaries' and participants' level? Do you see scope for changes to the structure of Erasmus+ or its successor programme that could increase efficiency? Are there differences between levels of education?</i>
<b>Conclusions</b>	Erasmus+ did not (yet) lead to many efficiency gains for NAs as application procedures require a lot of support and feedback from NAs to applicants. The reduction of KAs to the current 3 is believed to be an improvement, as is the increased collaboration between NAs. Beneficiaries (institutions and organisations) find it easier to look up information and the digitalised application procedure is welcomed. Applying by institution instead of per participant has resulted in efficiency gains, as has the lump sum funding. However, the application procedure remains overly complex and time-consuming. The questions in surveys for individual participants are found to be difficult to understand.

The integration of different programmes into Erasmus+ is mainly perceived to have been a good development. But while one of the key objectives of the integration of Youth in Action and LLP was to increase efficiency, NAs, youth organisations and educational institutions do not feel the integration has led to more efficiency.

NAs have intensified their collaboration as was described in Question 10, which is found to be an improvement of their operation procedure as they can learn from each other and constructively solve common challenges. In addition, it was mentioned that the current number of KAs (3) is an improvement from before, when there were 7 KAs. However, NAs indicate other challenges they experience did not lead to efficiency gains. Firstly, there are several issues with IT tools for institutions and organisations (further described in Question 14) and the application procedure is, as with predecessor programmes, experienced as a large administrative burden for applicants (see Question 13 for further details). As a result, NAs need to spend a lot of time and effort in explaining both the IT tools and the application procedure.

Applicants (beneficiaries) find that the integration of LLP and Youth in Action into Erasmus+ has several benefits in comparison to before. They mention as it is an integrated programme with one website, it is easier to find information for applicants online. They are pleased with the possibility to apply per institution or organisation instead of per participant, and that the application procedure has mostly been

<sup>66</sup> ADR is the audit agency for the Dutch Ministries.

<sup>67</sup> Input of the ADR on the concept report of this evaluation.

<sup>68</sup> Workprogramme 2015. National Agency Youth; National Agency Education and Training.

digitalised. This is regarded as an efficiency gain. In addition, funding by lump sum is also regarded as a positive development as there is less hassle for beneficiaries with justification of expenses in the form of receipts. The VET sector received the VET mobility charter positively as a charter leads to simplified applications and hence, efficiency gains.<sup>69</sup> However, in comparison to LLP and Youth in Action, the application procedure remains overly complex and time-consuming (see Question 13). This is believed to put off newcomers on the Erasmus+ ‘market’ and has neither lowered the workload for applicants nor for NAs. The deadline for KA1 Education and Training applications that has been put forward is not found to be very positive either as institutions and organisations have less time to prepare a high quality application. Finally, for participants, completing the participants’ report can be regarded as complicated as the questions are often difficult to understand.<sup>70</sup>

### 2.2.3 Question 12 – Efficiency of implementation of KAs

<b>Question 12</b>	<b><i>Do you consider that the implementation for certain KAs of the programme is more efficient than for others? Are there differences across fields?</i></b>
Conclusions	Institutions and organisations did not indicate many differences in efficiency of implementation between the different KAs. KA2 is perceived to involve higher administrative costs.

Both educational institutions and youth organisations did not indicate any explicit differences in efficiency of implementation of KAs. KA2 is regarded to be more difficult to implement and less flexible.<sup>71</sup> Also, the financial responsibility for foreign partners leads to higher administrative burden than for other KAs. Regarding KA2 applications, several institutions mention that they strategically consider in which country to submit their application as to increase their chance of being awarded funding.

### 2.2.4 Question 13 – Administrative burden

<b>Question 13</b>	<b><i>To what extent has the system of simplified grants resulted in a reduction of the administrative burden for NAs and for beneficiaries and participants? Are there differences across KAs or fields? What elements of the programme could be changed to further reduce the administrative burden, without unduly compromising its results and impact? Differences between levels of education?</i></b>
Conclusions	Most educational institutions and youth organisations do not experience a reduction in administrative burden of application and justification of funding procedures. The complexity of the application and justification procedure is believed to have a negative effect on the accessibility of Erasmus+ among small(er) organisations and institutions, or newcomers. The administrative burden is also large for individual participants.

The administrative burden has not been lowered for both NAs and the applicants since the integration of LLP and Youth in Action. KA2 is mentioned to be particularly time-consuming to complete for applicants and to assess for NAs.<sup>72</sup> While both education and youth applicants understand applications must maintain a high level of quality to ensure bigger impact and to try to prevent fraud, they indicate the user-friendliness of applications could be improved as currently there is an overlap in requested information and data cannot be copy-pasted. Additionally, the ADR indicates that the European Commission adds requirements to the audit of the Erasmus+ programme yearly, increasing the administrative burden regarding the audit.

The administrative burden is also large for individual participants. Over half of the students surveyed (51%) find the enrolment procedure too time-consuming, and 60% find the instructions unclear.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Year report 2015, National Agency for Education and Training.

<sup>70</sup> Year report 2015, National Agency for Education and Training.

<sup>71</sup> Based on interviews with educational institutions and youth organisations conducted by Ecorys.

<sup>72</sup> Source: visit to Nuffic.

<sup>73</sup> See Tables 9.3 and 9.5 and Figures 9.5 and 9.10 in Annex 9.

### 2.2.5 Question 14 – Adequacy of IT tools

<b>Question 14</b>	<i>To what extent are the IT tools provided by the Commission adequate for the efficient management and implementation of the programme in the Netherlands? Do they answer to your needs? Give specific examples where they can be improved. Is the set of IT tools appropriate or should it cover more/less elements of the programme implementation? Are they sufficient and did they arrive in time?</i>
Conclusions	Issues that occurred with the IT tools at the start of the programme have been resolved. However, the IT tools are still experienced to cause a large administrative burden.

The NAs and educational institutions and youth organisations mentioned there were significant problems with the IT tools at the start of Erasmus+ as the tools were not available in time and had many bugs and therefore did not work properly. NAs provide training to applicants in how to work with the different tools, and with improvements implemented in the tools since 2014, most educational institutions and youth organisations indicated the tools function well now, although some obstacles still occur.

Firstly, there is a lack of links between the different tools such as the Mobility Tool, OLS, and Europass Mobility Pass and similar data therefore needs to be entered multiple times. Hence, the user-friendliness could be improved as mentioned under Question 13 by reducing redundancies between tools or making it possible to copy-paste information. Secondly, the forms in different tools to complete are lengthy, and the tools work slowly. Reducing overlaps would make the tools less time-consuming.<sup>74</sup> Thirdly, the language used in different tools is not always clear, can be misunderstood and result in mistakes while a simplification of language can help applicants, participants as well as NAs. Lastly, VET institutions mentioned that the budget allocated to students participating in KA1 cannot be adjusted in the Mobility Tool. As some institutions do not allocate the maximum grants to participants, as this is not needed to cover costs of living abroad and more students can then participate, data in the mobility tool does not reflect the actual situation. Hence, the implementation of KA1 can differ in such instances from what is registered in the Mobility Tool.<sup>75</sup>

### 2.2.6 Question 15 – Availability of resources for implementation

<b>Question 15</b>	<i>To what extent is the level of human and financial resources that is available for the implementation of the programme in the Netherlands adequate? What steps did you take to optimise the efficiency of the resources deployed for the Erasmus+ implementation in the Netherlands? Differences between KAs and levels of education?</i>
Conclusions	The application procedure is regarded to be very time-consuming to complete, which causes challenges for small or volunteering organisations. NAs also face challenges in finishing all assessments of applications in time with the resources available. The support provided by NAs in the application phase is much appreciated although some institutions have a need for more detailed feedback on turned down applications, to improve their future application.

In general, the level of financial resources for educational institutions and youth organisations is regarded to be sufficient although many make use of co-financing (see Questions 4 and 7). The administrative burden of completing the complex application procedure can result in challenges for non-higher education institutions and youth organisations, especially those that are small and do not have many employees or rely on volunteers. In several youth organisations, primary and secondary schools, as well as adult education institutions, applications are completed during after office hours or by volunteers. Higher educational institutions are more professionalised in this respect and have one or more (external) people working specifically on applications for funding. The NAs provide support to all organisations and institutions that need advice, guidance or feedback to their application. This available support is highly appreciated by all. Only a few points for improvement were mentioned. A few youth organisations, VET schools and universities would like to receive more detailed feedback on turned down applications to be able to improve their future application as they feel the feedback is not always helpful in improving their writing, although this need was not shared by all institutions and organisations. Some primary and secondary schools expressed the wish for more individualised communication with

<sup>74</sup> Year report 2015, National Agency Education and Training; Year report 2015, National Agency Youth.

<sup>75</sup> Year report 2015, National Agency for Education and Training.

the NAs with having just one contact person in the NA because they believe this led to greater efficiency although they are aware NAs have limited financial and human resources to expand their assistance.<sup>76</sup>

### 2.2.7 Question NL1 – Flexibility after integration

<b>Question NL1</b>	<b><i>What are the effects of the integration of the different Erasmus+ programmes for the flexibility of these programmes, related to the different sectors?</i></b>
Conclusions	A majority of both educational and youth institutions believe the integrated Erasmus+ programme provides them with sufficient flexibility to implement their projects.

In general, educational institutions at different levels and youth organisations believe they have sufficient flexibility in the integrated Erasmus+ programme to implement their projects according to their needs. They indicate there is the possibility to form partnerships and they believe it is easier to form collaborations with other stakeholders although cross-sectoral collaborations are not very common in Erasmus+ in the Netherlands.<sup>77</sup> It was also mentioned by educational institutions that the integrated programme provides more possibilities for staff mobility as with the predecessor LLP, staff needed to be abroad for a minimum of 5 days while this has been lowered to 3 days in Erasmus+, making it easier for institutions to arrange mobility opportunities for their staff.

### 2.2.8 Question NL2 – Flexibility regarding national priorities

<b>Question NL2</b>	<b><i>To what extent is Erasmus+ flexible enough to do right to national priorities?</i></b>
Conclusions	The Erasmus+ programme is deemed flexible enough to do right to national priorities and respond to societal issues, because of the broad formulation of objectives.

It is generally agreed that a topic of national priority in the Netherlands, such as refugees or radicalisation, can be addressed in an Erasmus+ project as the objectives of Erasmus+ are believed to be broad enough to be able to incorporate contemporary societal issues. Topics of national priority can be fit under the broader objectives of Erasmus+.<sup>78</sup>

### 2.2.9 Question NL3 – Obstacles for participants

<b>Question NL3</b>	<b><i>In which way can obstacles for: young people with fewer opportunities; young people who are not registered for the mandatory insurance (EVS); students who live in the border region of the Netherlands and study or fulfil a traineeship abroad; and teachers, who live in the border region of the Netherlands but work abroad be removed from the procedures?</i></b>
Conclusions	The possibilities of inclusion of participants with special needs or fewer opportunities can be promoted further by NAs through informing institutions of best practice examples and providing information on the support that can be received for inclusion of these groups. The mandatory Dutch health insurance for EVS volunteers is an additional cost for participants, and can therefore be an obstacle for them to participate. The fact that students and teachers who live in the border region and do not meet the KA1 requirements for mobility cannot benefit from Erasmus+ was not found to be a major issue.

Young people and students with fewer opportunities or special needs are found to be more difficult to reach and they seem to be less familiar with the programme (see Question 1). As explained in Question 1, NAs already encourage institutions and organisations to improve the inclusion of these groups of people. While some information on inclusion of these target groups and applying for additional funding for special needs participants can be found on the Dutch Erasmus+ website, it seems many educational applicants are not aware of this information as they find it challenging to provide suitable support and health care needs for, for instance, special needs students (see Question 1). The information could maybe be more prominent on the website as not everyone seems to be aware of this information. In addition, current initiatives such as a workshop on this topic for VET institutions organised by the NA for education and training, could be expanded to other levels of education as well.

<sup>76</sup> Based on interviews with educational institutions and youth organisations conducted by Ecorys.

<sup>77</sup> See Table 10.2 in Annex 10.

<sup>78</sup> Based on interviews with educational institutions and youth organisations, national authorities and NAs conducted by Ecorys.

An obstacle for foreign European Volunteer Service (EVS) volunteers and Dutch host organisations, is the obligation to sign up (and pay) for Dutch health insurance, next to the health insurance that has already been arranged for participants by the European Commission. Dutch host organisations are subject to large fines when they do not comply with the rules regarding Dutch health insurance. But the mandatory Dutch health insurance leads to extra costs for participants when they are not covered by the volunteering organisation. Over the past years discussions have taken place with the involved Ministries and institutions, and the problem is being acknowledged. While no solution has been offered so far, it remains important to discuss this issue and keep the dialogue open to jointly arrive at a solution that is beneficial for all.

In addition, students and teachers who live in the border region of the Netherlands but work or study in a neighbouring country, cannot always benefit from Erasmus+ KA1 projects as they cannot justify that they live abroad 7 days per week (a requirement of KA1 in the Erasmus+ programme). However, this was not indicated as a major problem as it is not believed to prevent these students and teachers from studying or working abroad. If there is the opportunity for such border region students and staff to benefit from Erasmus+ funding, it might increase the popularity of working or studying in a neighbouring country. However, a case study of the Achterhoek regarding international mobility of students reveals that obstacles for mobility in the border region are mostly found in a lack of knowledge on the good reputation of – in this case – German universities, a lack of interest in studying in Germany, and a lack of good public transport connections crossing borders.<sup>79</sup> We thus believe that the extent to which Erasmus+ can increase mobility in the border regions to be limited.

#### 2.2.10 Question NL4 – Obstacles for (small) volunteer-led institutions

Question NL4	<i>In which way can obstacles for (small) volunteer-led organizations, be removed from the procedures?</i>
Conclusions	The heavy application procedure for Erasmus+ projects negatively affects the accessibility of the programme for smaller (volunteer-led) organisations. A 'light' version of the application procedure for smaller organisations and newcomers can improve the accessibility of the programme for them.

Equal application procedures apply to large and small organisations, which affects the accessibility of Erasmus+ for small (volunteer-led) organisations, as well as newcomers.<sup>80</sup> To ensure that small and newly applying organisations can also benefit from Erasmus+ funding, and to ensure a wider audience can be reached, the application procedure needs revision. The 'rules of the game' should remain equal for all, but a 'light' version of the application procedure could be developed for smaller organisations and institutions and newcomers. In this way, proportionality in applications can be taken into account to a larger extent than currently possible:

*"To ensure that the Erasmus+ Programme fully reaches its objectives, experts shall assess the qualitative level of the planned activities, intended goals, expected impact and results of the project in a proportional way, in relation to the size and profile of the applicant organisations and, if applicable, project partners. Quantity (of activities planned, of priorities met or results produced, etc.) will not be judged in absolute terms but in relation to the capacities and potential of the applicants and partners."*<sup>81</sup>

## 2.3 Relevance

Relevance refers to the extent to which Erasmus+ adequately links to the needs as identified in the Netherlands. The relevance of the Erasmus+ objectives is assessed, as a whole as well as for specific sectors and target groups.

<sup>79</sup> Euregio. 2014. Studeren in Duitsland: belemmeringen en kansen voor grensoverschrijdend vervolgonderwijs (HBO / WO): Regio Achterhoek als casestudy.

<sup>80</sup> From the results of the business meeting of National Agency for Youth; annual business meeting for the common input for the mid-term evaluation 2017.

<sup>81</sup> European Commission. 2016. Erasmus+ Guide for Experts on Quality Assessment.

### 2.3.1 Question 16 – Relevance of objectives

<b>Question 16</b>	<i>To what extent do the Erasmus+ objectives continue to address the needs or problems they are meant to solve? Are these problems still relevant in the context of the Netherlands? Have the needs or problems evolved in such a way that the objectives of Erasmus+ or its successor programme need to be adjusted?</i>
Conclusions	The objectives are regarded as relevant, and relevant to the Dutch context. Organisations' and institutions' objectives of their projects are well aligned with the Erasmus+ objectives and in certain cases; Erasmus+ supported them in developing more strategic approaches or innovative practices.

The objectives of Erasmus+ are attached in Annex 6 to this report. In general, interviewees indicate that the Erasmus+ objectives are very relevant for institutions working with them. In fact, many interviewees indicate that the relevance is straightforward, because some of the institutions helped formulate them, and because the objectives of Erasmus+ are so broadly formulated. Consequently, the objectives of institutions and projects are usually well aligned with the Erasmus+ objectives. In several cases, Erasmus+ and its objectives stimulated institutions and organisations to (re-)think their own objectives and policies, resulting in more strategic approaches towards the Erasmus+ objectives, such as internationalisation, or more innovative practices.

The education and training objectives are more focused on employability and gaining knowledge and developing skills for the labour market, while the youth sector is more focussed towards inclusion, diversity and citizenship. While inclusion and societal competences are important for education and training as well, the education and training objectives focus less on these aspects than the objectives for youth.

### 2.3.2 Question 17 – Relevance of objectives for specific target groups

<b>Question 17</b>	<i>To what extent are needs of different stakeholders and sectors addressed by the Erasmus+ objectives? How successful is the programme in attracting and reaching target audiences and groups within different fields of the programme's scope? Is the Erasmus+ programme well known to the education and training, and youth communities? In case some target groups are not sufficiently reached, what factors are limiting their access and what actions could be taken to remedy this?</i>
Conclusions	Erasmus+ is able to respond well to the needs of the different sectors. While students and young people are generally well reached through Erasmus+, challenges remain in reaching lower opportunity and special needs students and youth.

#### Needs of different stakeholders and sectors

In the Erasmus+ work programmes several needs are defined with regards to Youth and Education and Training that Erasmus+ is expected to address.<sup>82</sup> These needs are defined by the National Authorities, together with the NAs, and are outlined in Annex 8. Erasmus+ does a fair job in responding to the needs of the different sectors.

The identified needs of school education, higher education and adult education remained the same in 2014, 2015 and 2016. The defined national priorities for Youth have not changed over the course of 2014 to 2016. For vocational education in 2015 and 2016, further needs were added to the list. As revealed in the answers to Questions 16 and NL2, Erasmus+ offers enough flexibility to respond to these issues, although continuous learning remains an issue that needs extra attention.

#### Visibility of Erasmus+ to specific target groups

Erasmus+, as did the predecessor programmes LLP and Youth in Action, reaches students and young people in general well. But students and youth with fewer opportunities or special needs are found to be more difficult to reach.<sup>83</sup> The programme is mainly known amongst highly educated youth (higher education), and less so amongst students in VET or secondary education and lower opportunity youth, as was revealed in the interviews we held with education and youth institutions. More information on the

<sup>82</sup> Workprogrammes NAs.

<sup>83</sup> Based on interviews with educational institutions and youth organisations conducted by Ecorys,

extent to which Erasmus+ is able to reach lower opportunity youth and students, as well as those with special needs, can be found in the answer to Question 1.

Sectoral collaborations can increase the reach of the programme to, for instance, less advantaged young people. At this moment, sectoral collaborations already exist, but not always within the Erasmus+ programme, as the possibilities are not well-known and the number of applications for cross-sectorial partnerships decreased to zero applications after 2014.<sup>84</sup>

### 2.3.3 Question NL5 – Profit for the primary and secondary education sectors

<b>Question NL5</b>	<i>To what extent do the primary and secondary education sectors profit from the Erasmus+ programme? Which factors play a role in this and which recommendations can be made regarding this issue?</i>
<b>Conclusions</b>	Erasmus+ is regarded as relevant for the primary and secondary education sectors. However, problems regarding budgets, application and implementation of projects restrain institutions from participating.

#### Relevance

Erasmus+ is less widely known in the primary and secondary education sectors than among VET and higher educational institutions.<sup>85</sup> Within the secondary education sector, especially participants in lower secondary education are harder to reach. This while internationalisation is considered to be of substantive importance for the primary and secondary education sectors by institutions in these sectors, considering that these are the largest education sectors in the Netherlands and offer the foundation for future development. Adding an international dimension to teaching in primary and secondary education is therefore highly welcome. This does not necessarily have to be done through student and teacher mobility, but can also be stimulated by adding an international component to courses that are already taught in schools ('internationalisation at home'). This stimulates teacher professionalisation at the same time.

#### Budgets

Success rates for school education applications were low at the beginning of Erasmus+, but have increased substantially over the course of the programme as quality of applications improved and school education became more familiar with the programme and its requirements. In 2014, 25% of KA1 applications for school education staff mobility were granted funding. This increased to 93% in 2016. And the success rate of KA2 applications of schools changed from 10% in 2014 to 53% in 2016,<sup>86</sup> But most respondents in the primary and secondary education sectors feel that the budget for their sector is not sufficient and should be increased, as they receive less funding than the higher education sector while primary and secondary education is larger in the Netherlands,

#### Difficulties in application procedure and implementation of projects

The administrative burden of completing an application is one of the main difficulties encountered by the primary and secondary education sectors. However, the burden is believed to be less high for the secondary education sector, because there are more opportunities to reserve time for writing an application: secondary education schools are usually larger, have more teachers and more specific knowledge in-house. Erasmus+ projects are more difficult to *implement* in the primary education sector as well. Having the responsibility over your own class as well as the requirement that classroom mobility should last for at least a week, makes it difficult to embed Erasmus+ in the curriculum.

## 2.4 Internal and external coherence and complementarity

Internal and external coherence and complementarity refers to the extent to which Erasmus+ offers a coherent programme regarding its different KAs and whether there is overlap between Erasmus+ and other programmes in the Netherlands.

<sup>84</sup> See Table 10.2 in Annex 10.

<sup>85</sup> Based on interviews with primary and secondary education institutions as well as one of the umbrella organisations conducted by Ecorys.

<sup>86</sup> See Tables 10.1 and 10.2 in Annex 10.

### 2.4.1 Question 18 – Coherence of KAs

<b>Question 18</b>	<i>To what extent are the various KAs that have been brought together in Erasmus+ coherent? Can you identify any existing or potential synergies between actions within Erasmus+? Can you identify any tensions, inconsistencies or overlaps between actions within Erasmus+?</i>
Conclusions	The coherence of the Erasmus+ programme is clear and logical. Inconsistencies in KAs exist regarding length of training programmes and budget differences.

The coherence between the KAs is considered to be clear and logical; differences between KAs are clear as well. The KAs are perceived to connect to each other quite well and to complement each other. The way in which KA1 and KA2 complement each other, leads to opportunities for cooperation between long-term network partners. It is not always feasible for institutions that implement projects within several KAs, to optimally reflect the coherence of the programme within their own institutions. This is in some cases due to a lack of knowledge on possibilities of the programme. The main reason however, seems to be that institutions have different account holders in place for the different KAs. This is mainly the case for higher education institutions.

#### Inconsistencies

Inconsistencies are mainly found in details between KA1 and KA2. One of the examples that was mentioned several times, is the length of training programmes. In KA1, training programmes should last at least two days, whereas in KA2, they should last at least five days. Other inconsistencies arise from budget differences between different parts of a programme, while it is often not clear to institutions or organisations what these differences are based. The budget for internships abroad is lower than for studying abroad while this is not always justified as internships are not always paid. While for youth, the budget for training is higher than the budget for exchanges. In addition, the reimbursement for travel costs varies between KA1 and KA2, without a clear rationale.

### 2.4.2 Question 19 – Complementarity with other programmes

<b>Question 19</b>	<i>To what extent does Erasmus+ complement other national and international programmes available in the Netherlands? Can you identify any tensions, inconsistencies or overlaps with other programmes?</i>
Conclusions	There are hardly any alternatives for Erasmus+. The alternatives mentioned are usually more specific or have a different target group. Erasmus+ is perceived to be more accessible.

Many institutions mention that they do not know about alternatives for Erasmus+ that offer similar possibilities. Most other funding programmes are more specific than Erasmus+, for example restricted to collaboration with a limited number of countries. Annex 11 lists alternative programmes mentioned by interviewees. The Erasmus+ programme is the largest and most well-known programme for international mobility. Being able to go abroad and opportunities to set up strategic international collaborations and partnerships is what mainly distinguishes the Erasmus+ programme from other programmes.

## 2.5 European added value and sustainability

### 2.5.1 Question 20 – Additionality

<b>Question 20</b>	<i>To what extent do Erasmus+ and its predecessor programmes produce effects that are additional to the effects that would have resulted from similar actions initiated only at regional or national levels in the Netherlands? What possibilities do you see to adjust Erasmus+ or its successor programme in order to increase its European value added?</i>
Conclusions	The added value of Erasmus+ is the international collaboration opportunities that it offers, which stimulates internationalisation, innovation and quality improvements. Too little attention is paid to long-term effects of projects in the application phase and to knowledge sharing of project results.

#### Added value of Erasmus+

Erasmus+ provides youth organisations and educational institutions opportunities to learn from foreign organisations and institutions, contributing to internationalisation of institutions and organisations. Learning from others' best practices stimulates innovation and quality improvements. According to

education institutions, Erasmus+ enables collaborations between institutions and organisations at the European level, which would be more complex or difficult to realise without Erasmus+ and would be much more of a bureaucratic burden for institutions as well as participants.

In addition, due to Erasmus+, projects have a much broader and more international audience. The projects reach a wide variety of cultural backgrounds; something that is not possible without the support of Erasmus+. Because of the programme's international character, organisations and institutions can set up projects that cross borders and cultures and contribute to cultural awareness. It was mentioned that this is more difficult to achieve when conducting projects within the borders of a country. As a result, stakeholders believe it is important for Erasmus+ to continue beyond 2020 as it provides them with opportunities for internationalisation and innovation they feel they otherwise cannot have, or can have at a smaller scale as organisations are not able to implement the same (number of) projects without Erasmus+ funding.

### Sustainability

Stakeholders from both the Youth and the Education and Training fields indicate that applications focus more on the project period and less on the long-term idea behind the project and how it can continue afterwards. This while institutions and organisations mention that continuity is key in ensuring that projects have a broader effect. It was indicated that the NAs should challenge applicants more to think about the desired long term effects. Furthermore, there is little attention to knowledge sharing of project results, negatively affecting sustainability of the programme's effects. However, the mentioned quality improvements for institutions and organisations occurring as a result of participation in Erasmus+ projects (see Questions 1 and 6), offer a clear indication of sustainability of the effects of Erasmus+ programme, because the effects of finished projects remain to affect institutional quality and internationalisation policies.

#### 2.5.2 Question 21 – Budget increase

<b>Question 21</b>	<i>To what extent will Erasmus+ be able to absorb the sharp increase in the budget that is foreseen in the coming years up to 2020 in the Netherlands in an effective way? Could the programme use even higher budgets in an effective way? Do you see challenges to effectively use more money for particular actions or fields of the programme?</i>
Conclusions	Stakeholders in both the youth and education and training sectors would welcome a budget increase and indicate they believe an increase in budget can be effectively absorbed as the number of good quality applications exceeds the budget possibilities. A matter of concern following a budget increase would be the lack of sufficient manpower to handle the extra work resulting from an increase in applications.

A sharp budget increase could be absorbed as the number of good quality applications is high. For applicants a budget increase could first mean an increase in approved projects. Most important here is to ensure that applications continue to meet the quality thresholds. In general the number of good quality projects that are rejected due to budget constraints is high so no issues of a decrease in quality are expected.

Stakeholders (NAs as well as beneficiaries) foresee obstacles in manpower, because of an increase in workload for writing and assessing applications. As the NA Youth points out:<sup>87</sup> an increase in workload may mean that less time can be spent on supportive measures and policy reform.

Stakeholders indicate that a budget increase needs to go hand in hand with a clear objective to make the spending more effective. For example, it was suggested in interviews that the additional budget can be deployed for specific purposes such as dissemination and increasing the impact of a project, or offering opportunities for participation to a larger number of participants.

<sup>87</sup> Work programme 2016, National Agency Youth.

## 3 Conclusions and recommendations

In this national midterm evaluation of Erasmus+ we have applied a variety of methodologies in order to gain insights into the implementation and impact of the Erasmus+ programme as well as offer recommendations for improvement for the remainder of the programme and the future programming period.

We have evaluated the programme along five evaluation criteria:

- **Effectiveness:** to what extent does the way Erasmus+ is executed contribute to the intended outcomes in the Netherlands?
- **Efficiency:** are the intended outcomes achieved against reasonable costs in the Netherlands?
- **Relevance:** does Erasmus+ adequately link to the needs as identified in the Netherlands?
- **Internal and external coherence and complementarity:** are activities within Erasmus+ coherent? Is there any overlap or are there inconsistencies with other programmes in the Netherlands?
- **European added value and sustainability:** to what extent did Erasmus+ in the Netherlands contribute to effects on European level and to what extent are the effects sustainable?

Overall we conclude that Erasmus+ is a highly relevant programme in relation to responding to the Dutch needs. It is effective in reaching its objectives, both for Education and Training and Youth, mostly regarding individual outcomes such as development of skills and competences. It also contributes to the implementation of the broader EU policy agenda regarding education and skills development (Europe 2020 and ET2020) in the Netherlands. Erasmus+ is expected to have a broader societal impact in the long run, as individual effects translate into societal effects. Integration of the predecessor programmes has led to some efficiency gains, mainly on the level of execution of the programme and visibility. The integration of predecessor programmes into Erasmus+ did not help reduce the administrative burden for applicants and NAs. The administrative burden is still experienced to be high. The quality of the applications has increased and the high standards in turn lead to quality improvements within the applying institutions. It is hard to assess the extent to which lower opportunity youth, as well as participants with special needs have been reached, as definitions and registration procedures are ambiguous between sectors. Sustainability of the programme could be improved, because there is limited focus on long term effects of projects. The budget increase for the remainder of the programme period is welcomed by all parties, and is expected to result in more project applications.

### 3.1 Conclusions per evaluation criterion

#### 3.1.1 Effectiveness

Since the start of the programme in 2014, the number of applications has increased as well as the quality of most applications. This is mainly due to efforts from the NAs in supporting applicants to write good quality applications. KA2 is perceived as a valuable and effective addition to the new programme. However, the programme budget for this KA is relatively low.

#### Achievement of specific objectives

Erasmus+ is effective in achieving its specific objectives: it contributes to students' and youth's knowledge and skills, internationalisation of youth and education institutions and organisations, quality improvements and a more innovative culture at organisational level. The awareness of lifelong learning is greater among staff than among students. Even though there is no direct effect noticeable of Erasmus+ on the awareness of lifelong learning as indicated by participants, participation of staff in Erasmus+ as well as participation in adult education in itself are examples of lifelong learning.

Erasmus+ is found to affect institutions' internal innovation, internationalisation and mobility policies. Erasmus+ is less likely to influence national or local policy developments unless policymakers or local authorities are involved in Erasmus+. In the youth sector, this is more often the case (KA3) and hence, projects under this KA are believed to be able to contribute more to policy development.

Societal impact is hard to assess at this point in the programme as Erasmus+ only commenced three years ago, but Erasmus+ is expected to have a broader societal impact in the long run as individual effects translate into societal effects. Evaluations of predecessor programmes have pointed in this direction, too.

A complete picture of the extent to which Erasmus+ is successful in reaching target groups cannot be drawn, because the definition of what this group entails is quite broad and the given numbers rely on self-registration, which is only required for some of the sectors.

#### *Individual effects – Knowledge and skills development*

Erasmus+ affects the cultural awareness, subject matter knowledge and language skills of students and the personal development, cultural awareness and social and civic skills of youth participants. Most participants believe that the knowledge and skills gained under the Erasmus+ programme add value to their CVs and increases their career prospects.

#### *Institutional effects – Improved quality and internationalisation*

Erasmus+, in comparison to its predecessor programmes, focuses more on quality instead of quantity and reaches a higher number of participating students and young people. The revised application procedure for Erasmus+ with a larger focus on quality resulted, in general, in better quality applications and projects. In Youth this has positively affected the quality of youth work, while in Education and Training institutions Erasmus+ fostered a more innovative culture.

#### **Contribution to general objectives**

The Dutch Erasmus+ programme contributes significantly to the Erasmus+ general objectives. With regard to the Europe 2020 targets, the Netherlands is on track regarding its education and poverty reduction targets. The Netherlands is ahead of its ET2020 objectives as these have been reached in 2015 already. The Dutch Erasmus+ programme is likely to contribute to some of the Europe 2020 objectives as well as ET2020 objectives. Erasmus+ can, for instance, be a means of contributing towards the Europe 2020 objectives regarding the number of people obtaining a tertiary education degree, the number of early school leavers, or employment in the long term, as it equips people with knowledge and skills relevant for their study or for the labour market. As a large part of Erasmus+ includes the mobility of students and youth, Erasmus+ is highly likely to contribute towards the ET2020 objective regarding mobility. However, it is difficult to assess *to what extent* Erasmus+ influences Europe 2020 and ET 2020 as other factors impact these outcomes.

### 3.1.2 *Efficiency*

#### **Programme level**

The integration of different programmes into Erasmus+ is mainly perceived to have been a good development. The collaboration between NAs, as well as between NAs and other stakeholders, is good. But while one of the key objectives of the integration of Youth in Action and LLP was to increase efficiency, NAs, youth and educational institutions believe the administrative burden for NAs, applicants and participants is still high. The increased visibility of an integrated programme, the lumpsum funding and the application by institution instead of per individual are regarded as efficiency gains.

#### **Project level**

The financial resources that educational institutions and youth organisations receive from Erasmus+ are generally found to be sufficient to reach the programme's objectives although most institutions and youth organisations use internal funding or seek additional external funding opportunities. Most organisations and institutions have sufficient human resources to implement a project, but not for the application procedure (especially non-higher educational institutions and youth organisations). Equal application procedures apply to large and small organisations, which affects the accessibility of Erasmus+ for small (volunteer-led) organisations, as well as newcomers. KA2 is regarded to have the largest administrative burden in terms of application and also brings forth higher administrative costs in the implementation phase.

NAs as well as applicants experienced many problems with the IT tools at the start of the programme (including late availability, and tools that did not work). These problems have been tackled, but the IT tools are still cause of a large administrative burden. Institutions and organisations mention that the user-friendliness of the application procedure would enhance the accessibility of Erasmus+ and lower the administrative burden.

### 3.1.3 *Relevance*

The objectives of Erasmus+ are regarded as relevant by all stakeholders. It is felt that the objective of lifelong learning is least addressed by Erasmus+. Organisations' and institutions' project objectives are well aligned with the Erasmus+ objectives and in certain cases; Erasmus+ supported institutions in developing more strategic approaches or innovative practices. Erasmus+ is able to respond well to the needs of the different sectors. However, it remains more difficult to reach certain target groups, such as lower opportunity youth. Additionally, Erasmus+ is not widely known within the primary and secondary education sectors, while internationalisation is considered to be of large importance for these sectors, considering that they are the largest education sectors, offering the foundation for future education.

### 3.1.4 *Internal and external coherence and complementarity*

The coherence between the KAs is considered to be clear and logical, with little overlap between the KAs. The KAs are perceived to connect to each other quite well and to complement each other. The way in which KA1 and KA2 complement each other provides opportunities for cooperation between long-term network partners. It is not always feasible for institutions that implement projects within several KAs, to optimally reflect the coherence of the programme within their own institutions, mainly due to separate account holders per KA within institutions.

There are hardly any alternatives for Erasmus+ in acquiring funding for internationalisation on a similar scale in the Netherlands. The alternatives mentioned are usually more specific or have a different target group. Erasmus+ is perceived to be more accessible than other funding programmes.

### 3.1.5 *European added value and sustainability*

The added value of Erasmus+ is the international collaboration opportunities that it offers, which stimulates internationalisation, innovation and quality improvements. It is found that too little attention is paid to long-term effects of projects in the application phase and to knowledge sharing of project results.

A budget increase would be welcomed by the stakeholders in both the youth and the education and training field, as the number of good quality applications now exceeds the budget possibilities. A matter of concern of an increased budget would be the lack of sufficient manpower to handle the extra work resulting from an increasing number of applications.

## 3.2 Recommendations

Following from our analyses of the gathered data (desk study, interviews, workshops, surveys), we formulate a number of recommendations regarding the points for improvement for the Erasmus+ programme in the current as well as future programming period.

### **Stimulating cross-sectoral projects**

- There is a widespread belief that cooperation between sectors and institutions or organisations can enlarge the effectiveness of Erasmus+, but currently a limited number of KA2 projects are being financed due to budget limitations. An increase in budget for KA2 is therefore desirable.
- A dedicated budget for cross-sectoral projects may generate more possibilities for these types of projects.
- Encouraging collaboration between different sectors and different stakeholders can increase the impact of Erasmus+ programmes, for example through reaching audiences for youth projects through educational institutions. As there is limited awareness among institutions and organisations that they can establish collaborations between the different sectors, or between different education levels, it is recommended that the NAs promote this more strongly or make these possibilities more visible in their meetings or on their website.

### Increasing policy impact

- To involve policymakers or local authorities in projects, building bridges with organisations and institutions, and youth and student participants should be stimulated. The NAs could disseminate Erasmus+ more widely among local authorities and inform institutions and organisations of the possibility to collaborate with authorities to facilitate spill-over effects. Additionally, to increase policy impact, decentralised actions under KA3 could be opened up for education and training institutions as well.
- (Local) government could fulfil an ‘ambassador’s role’ to disseminate how to establish a collaboration with a local authority, and what the benefits for government institutions can be.

### More attention to lifelong learning

- The awareness of the importance of lifelong learning seems to be hardly influenced by Erasmus+ at the moment. In order to increase the effectiveness regarding this objective, lifelong learning should gain more attention and collaboration with the private sector (businesses and companies) could be encouraged as is currently being done in the VET education sector.

### Reaching lower opportunity and special needs youth and students

- To reach the objective of reaching lower opportunity and special needs youth and students, there should be an unambiguous definition for the registration of these groups, for all sectors. In this way, measuring the extent to which these groups have been reached can be done in an unambiguous way.
- Increasing awareness among lower opportunity youth may be done by adjusting the way of approaching them. Research shows that personal contact works best, although this is not always possible.<sup>88</sup> A first step could be taken by reaching out via websites, blogs, movies and social media. Also, institutions can play a larger role in reaching out to lower opportunity youth.

### Increasing accessibility of the programme

- In order to make it more attractive for newcomers to apply, a separate “light” application procedure, taking into account proportionality of applications (smaller projects are more likely to have smaller impact), could help reduce the administrative burden that currently discourages new applicants and smaller organisations from applying. In the first step, newcomers can submit a “light” application, which can lead up to a “regular” application in the following call.

### Improving support from NAs

- The perception of applicants on the efforts of the NAs does not always reflect the reality of activities pursued. Giving more visibility to the efforts that the NAs are taking (e.g. Transnational Cooperation Activities (TCAs), personal advice) may reduce this mismatch between perception and reality.

### Increasing visibility and knowledge sharing

- Participants’ awareness of possible impacts of Erasmus+ needs to be enhanced. Now applicants’ focus is often on the opportunities for funding and less on the implications of the mobility experience. Hence, to achieve sustainable learning effects, more attention could be paid to the impacts of Erasmus+, by having participants spell out their expectations on impact of their participation as well as paying attention to mobility experiences a year or more after the mobility experience has taken place. This could for example, be stimulated by institutions.
- Several stakeholders indicate that to increase the European added value of Erasmus+ it is important to improve the knowledge sharing between projects and countries to avoid reinventing the wheel over and over again. In addition, knowledge sharing at the start of a programme instead of the end might improve the outcomes of projects.
- Institutions and organisations, as well as local authorities and businesses, should be encouraged more to share their project results internally. Also, evaluating project results in light of the institutions’ internationalisation policies could help in establishing sustainable effects.

---

<sup>88</sup> <https://www.epnuffic.nl/publicaties/vind-een-publicatie/uitgaande-studentenmobiliteit.pdf>

## Annex 1 List of Abbreviations

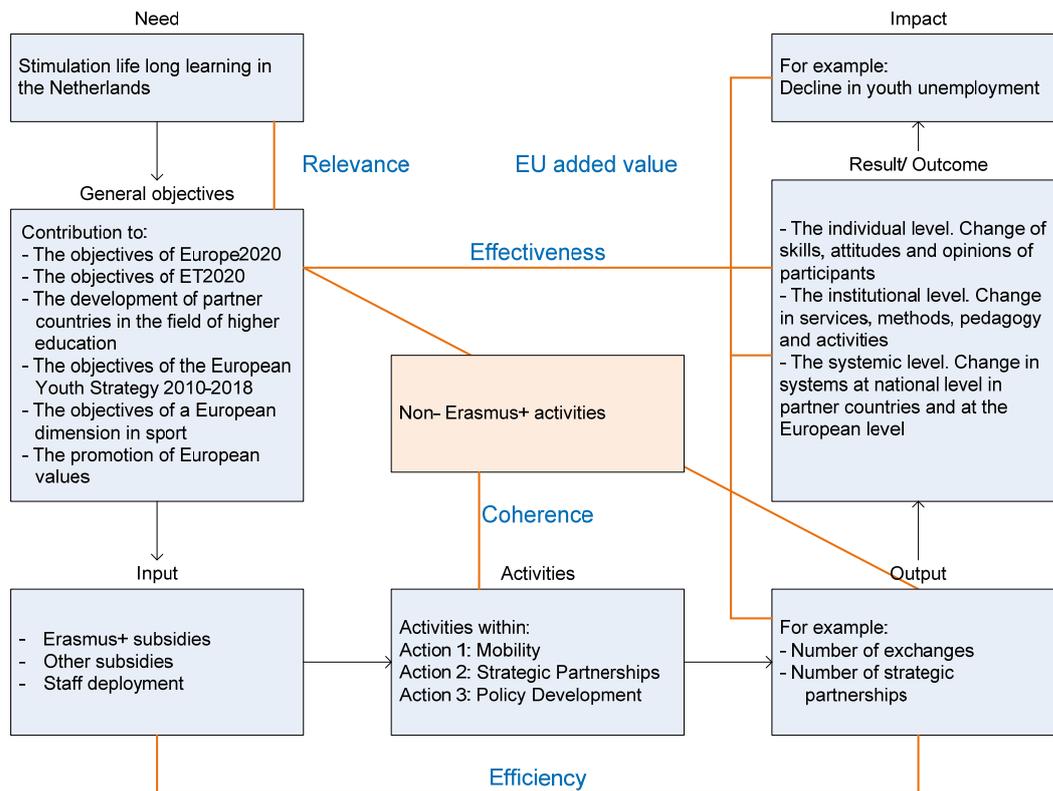
- ADR – Auditdienst Rijk
- ECVET – European Credits system for Vocational Education and Training
- EQF – European Qualifications Framework
- ESF – European Social Fund
- ESL – Early school leaving
- EU – European Union
- FTE – Full time equivalent
- HE – Higher Education
- KA – Key Action
- LLP – Lifelong Learning Programme
- NA – National Agency
- NEET – Not in education, employment, of training
- OCW – Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science)
- RAY – Research-based Analysis of Youth in action
- TCA - Transnational Cooperation Activities
- VET – Vocational education and training
- VWS – Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport (Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports)
- WMO – Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning (Social Support Act)



# Annex 2 Evaluation framework and evaluation questions

## Evaluation framework

Figure 1 Evaluation framework



## Evaluation questions

The evaluation questions are presented in the order they have been answered in the reports. The evaluation questions have been formulated by the European Commission. The ministries of OCW and VWS have also added questions, which can be recognised from the “QNL” prefix.

**Q1** To what extent have Erasmus+ and its predecessor programmes contributed to the realisation of the Erasmus+ specific objectives in the Netherlands? Are there differences across fields? Please provide, where relevant, your assessment for each of the specific objectives and provide evidence and examples where possible.

To what extent have Erasmus+ and its predecessor programmes contributed to the realisation of the Erasmus+ specific objectives of...

**Q1.1a** ...improving the level of key competences and skills (relevant to the labour market and contributing to a cohesive society)?

**Q1.1b** ... fostering quality improvements, innovation excellence and internationalisation at the level of education and training institutions?

**Q1.1c** ... promoting the emergence and raising the awareness of a European lifelong learning area to complement national policy reforms and to support modernisation of education and training systems?

**Q1.1d** ... enhancing the international dimension of education and training?

**Q1.1e** ... improving the teaching and learning of languages and to promote the Union's broad linguistic diversity and intercultural awareness?

**Q1.2a1** ... improving the level of key competences and skills of young people, including those with fewer opportunities?

**Q1.2a2** ... promoting: participation in democratic life in Europe and the labour market, active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, social inclusion and solidarity?

**Q1.2b** ... fostering quality improvements in youth work?

**Q1.2c** ... complementing policy reforms at local, regional and national level and supporting development of knowledge and evidence-based youth policy as well as the recognition of non-formal and informal learning?

**Q1.2d** ... enhancing the international dimension of youth activities and the role of youth workers and organisations as support structures for young people in complementarity with the Union's external action?

**Q2** To what extent has the progress on the realisation of the specific objectives contributed to the realisation of the Erasmus+ general objectives in the Netherlands, regarding...

**Q2.1** ... the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy, including the headline education target (employment; research and development; climate/energy; education; social inclusion and poverty reduction)?

**Q2.2** ... the objectives of the ET2020 strategic framework, including the corresponding benchmark?

**Q3** To what extent have Erasmus+ actions influenced policy developments in the domains of education and training, youth in the Netherlands? Which actions were most effective in doing so? Are there marked differences between different fields?

**Q4** What specific approaches (such as co-financing, promotion or others) have you taken in order to try to enhance the effects of Erasmus+ in the Netherlands? To what extent have these approaches been effective? Can any particular points for improvement be identified?

**Q5** Do you consider that certain actions of the programme are more effective than others? Are there differences across fields? What are the determining factors for making these actions of the programme more effective?

**Q6** To what extent has the integration of several programmes into Erasmus+ made the programme more effective in the Netherlands? Do you see scope for changes to the structure of Erasmus+ or its successor programme that could increase effectiveness?

**Q7a** Is the size of the budget appropriate and proportionate to what Erasmus+ is set out to achieve?

**Q7b** Is the distribution of funds across the programme's fields and actions appropriate in relation to their level of effectiveness and utility?

**Q8** What challenges and difficulties do you encounter while implementing the various actions of Erasmus+? What changes would need to be introduced in Erasmus+ or its successor programme to remedy these?

**Q9** To what extent are the approaches and tools that are used for disseminating and exploiting the results of Erasmus+ and its predecessor programmes in the Netherlands effective? Where do you see possibilities for improvement?

**Q10** To what extent is the system of cooperation and the division of tasks between the Commission, Executive Agency, Nationaal Agentschap Jeugd and Nationaal Agentschap Onderwijs en Training, European Investment Fund, National Authorities, Independent Audit Bodies and Erasmus+ Committee efficient and well-functioning from the point of view of the Netherlands? What are the areas for possible improvement or simplification in the implementation of Erasmus+ or a successor programme?

**Q11a** To what extent has the integration of several programmes into Erasmus+ resulted in efficiency gains or losses for the implementation of the programme in the Netherlands, at the level of the National Agencies? Do you see scope for changes to the structure of Erasmus+ or its successor programme that could increase efficiency?

**Q11b** To what extent has the integration of several programmes into Erasmus+ resulted in efficiency gains or losses for the implementation of the programme in the Netherlands, on the beneficiaries' and participants' level? Do you see scope for changes to the structure of Erasmus+ or its successor programme that could increase efficiency?

**Q12** Do you consider that the implementation for certain actions of the programme is more efficient than for others? Are there differences across fields? Which good practices of these more efficient actions of the programme could be transferred to other actions?

**Q13a** To what extent has the system of simplified grants resulted in a reduction of the administrative burden for National Agencies? Are there differences across actions or fields? What elements of the programme could be changed to further reduce the administrative burden, without unduly compromising its results and impact?

**Q13b** To what extent has the system of simplified grants resulted in a reduction of the administrative burden for beneficiaries and participants? Are there differences across actions or fields? What elements of the programme could be changed to further reduce the administrative burden, without unduly compromising its results and impact?

**Q14** To what extent are the IT tools provided by the Commission adequate for the efficient management and implementation of the programme in the Netherlands? Do they answer to your needs? Give specific examples where they can be improved. Is the set of IT tools appropriate or should it cover more/less elements of the programme implementation?

**Q15** To what extent is the level of human and financial resources that is available for the implementation of the programme in the Netherlands adequate? What steps did you take to optimise the efficiency of the resources deployed for the Erasmus+ implementation in the Netherlands?

**QNL1** What are the effects of the integration of the different Erasmus+ programmes for the flexibility of these programmes, related to the different sectors?

**QNL2** To what extent is Erasmus+ flexible enough to do right to national priorities?

**QNL3** In which way can obstacles for young people with fewer opportunities be removed from the procedures? In which way can obstacles for young people who are not registered for the mandatory insurance (EVS) be removed? In what way can obstacles for students who live in the border region of the Netherlands and study or fulfil a traineeship abroad, be removed? In what way can obstacles for teachers, who live in the border region of the Netherlands and but work abroad, be removed?

**QNL4** In which way can obstacles for (small) volunteer-led organizations, be removed from the procedures?

**Q16** To what extent do the Erasmus+ objectives continue to address the needs or problems they are meant to solve? Are these problems still relevant in the context of the Netherlands? Have the needs or problems evolved in such a way that the objectives of Erasmus+ or its successor programme need to be adjusted?

**Q17** To what extent are needs of different stakeholders and sectors addressed by the Erasmus+ objectives? How successful is the programme in attracting and reaching target audiences and groups within different fields of the programme's scope? Is the Erasmus+ programme well known to the education and training, and youth communities? In case some target groups are not sufficiently reached, what factors are limiting their access and what actions could be taken to remedy this?

**QNL5** To what extent do the PO- and VO-sector profit from the Erasmus+ programme? Which factors play a role in this and which recommendations can be made regarding this issue?

**Q18** To what extent are the various actions that have been brought together in Erasmus+ coherent? Can you identify any existing or potential synergies between actions within Erasmus+? Can you identify any tensions, inconsistencies or overlaps between actions within Erasmus+?

**Q19** To what extent does Erasmus+ complement other national and international programmes available in the Netherlands? Can you identify any tensions, inconsistencies or overlaps with other programmes?

**Q20a** To what extent do Erasmus+ and its predecessor programmes produce effects that are additional to the effects that would have resulted from similar actions initiated only at regional or national levels in the Netherlands?

**Q20b** What possibilities do you see to adjust Erasmus+ or its successor programme in order to increase its European value added?

**Q21** To what extent will Erasmus+ be able to absorb the sharp increase in the budget that is foreseen in the coming years up to 2020 in the Netherlands in an effective way? Could the programme use even higher budgets in an effective way? Do you see challenges to effectively use more money for particular actions or fields of the programme?

## Annex 3 List of references

Consulted documents	
EC	Erasmus+ programme guide 2014
EC	Erasmus+ programme guide 2015 + corrigendum
EC	Erasmus+ programme guide 2016
EC	Guide for NAs implementing the Erasmus+ programme_2014
EC	Guide for NAs implementing the Erasmus+ programme_2015
EC	Guide for NAs implementing the Erasmus+ programme_2016
EC	Call for proposals 2014
EC	Call for proposals 2015
EC	Call for proposals 2016
EC	Erasmus+ Guide for Experts on Quality Assessment 2016
EC	2015 Joint Report under the ET 2020
NA-J + NA- OT	Workprogramme 2014
NA-J + NA- OT	Workprogramme 2015
NA-J + NA- OT	Workprogramme 2016
NA-J + NA- OT	Year report 2014
NA-J + NA- OT	Year report 2015
NA- OT	KA1 (KA103)_2014
NA- OT	KA1 (KA101)_2015
NA- OT	KA1 (KA103)_2015
NA- OT	KA1 (KA107) (R1)_2015
NA- OT	KA1 (KA107) (R2)_2015
NA- OT	KA1 (KA101)_2016
NA- OT	KA1 (KA103)_2016
NA- OT	KA1 (KA107)_2016
NA- OT	KA2_2014 Justification
NA- OT	KA2 2015
NA- OT	KA2 (KA201)_2016
NA- OT	KA2 (KA202)_2016
NA- OT	KA2 (KA203)_2016
NA- OT	KA2 (KA204)_2016
NA-J	KA1 (K105) (R1)_2014
NA-J	KA1 KA2 KA3 (R2)_2014
NA-J	KA1 KA2 KA3 (R3)_2014
NA-J	KA1 KA2 KA3 (R1)_2015
NA-J	KA1 KA2 KA3 (R2)_2015
NA-J	KA1 KA2 KA3 (R3)_2015
NA-J	KA1 KA2 KA3 (R1)_2016
NA-J	KA1 KA2 KA3 (R2)_2016

NA-OT	Informal NA Directors Meeting 2016 (1+2)
NA-J	Business meeting 2014 (1)
NA-J	Business meeting 2014 (2)
NA-J	Business meeting 2015 (1)
NA-J	Business meeting 2015 (2)
NA-J	Business meeting 2015 (3)
NA-J	Business meeting 2015 (4)
NA-J	Business meeting 2015 (5)
NA-J	Business meeting 2016 (1)
NA-J	Final Report 2014 KA105 (R1)
NA-J	Final Report 2014 KA105 (R2)
NA-J	Final Report 2014 KA105 (R3)
NA-J	Final Report 2015 KA105 (R2) (1)
NA-J	Final Report 2015 KA105 (R2) (2)
NA-J	Final Report 2015 KA105 (R2) (3)
NA-J	Final Report 2014 KA347 (R1)
NA-J	Final Report 2014 KA347 (R2)
NA-J	Final Report 2015 KA347
NA-J	Input uit business meeting voor Midterm Evaluatie Erasmus+_ 2016 (1)
NA-J	Annual business meeting for the common input for the mid-term evaluation 2017.
NA-J	Staff training plan_2015
NA-J	Werkplan youth in action netwerk
NA-OT	Numbers KA1 + KA2 in Calls 2014 + 2015 + 2016

Additional sources	
	Panteia (2010). Interim evaluation Lifelong Learning programme + annexes
	Ernst & Young (2010). Interim evaluation Youth in Action + annexes
	Public Policy and Management Institute (2011). Interim evaluation of the lifelong learning programme (2007-2013) + annexes
	AEF (2013). All Set? Beleidsonderzoek voorbereiding van de uitvoering van Erasmus+ programma 2014-2020
	OCW (2014). Kamerbrief. De wereld in. Visiebrief internationale dimensie van ho en mbo
	OCW (2014). Kamerbrief. Internationale dimensie van hoger onderwijs en middelbaar beroepsonderwijs.
	OCW (2015). Kamerbrief. Voortgang Bologna proces en EHEA conferentie
	OCW (2015). Kamerbrief. Aanpak Jeugdwerkloosheid
	OCW (2016). Kamerbrief. Internationaliseren met ambitie
	NJI (2011). De impact van Youth in Action (+ summary)
	RAY (2011). Research based analysis Youth in Action
	Boomkens, Awad & Metz (2016). Monitoren Impact Erasmus+ Jeugd – Nederland. Rapportage over het onderzoek naar de impact van deelname aan het Erasmus+ Jeugd programma 2014-2015 (Concept).
	CPB (2012). De economische effecten van internationalisering in het hoger onderwijs
	Onderwijsraad (2015). Startdossier Internationaliseringsagenda voor het onderwijs 2015-2020.
	Onderwijsraad (2016). Internationalisering van de jeugdcultuur
	EP Nuffic (2016). Uitgaande studentenmobiliteit.

Eurostat data
NJI (n.d.). Verbinding onderwijs en jeugdhulp.
Researchcentrum voor Onderwijs en Arbeidsmarkt (ROA) (2013). De arbeidsmarkt naar opleiding en beroep tot 2018.
Website Onderwijs in cijfers ( <a href="http://www.onderwijsincijfers.nl">www.onderwijsincijfers.nl</a> )



## Annex 4 List of interviewees

#	Interviewee(s)	Organisation	Category	Education & Training/Youth	Methods
1.	Denise Heiligers & Liefke Reitsma	Ministerie van OCW, Directie Internationaal Beleid	Ministry	Education & Training	Face to Face interview
2.	Marjan Zandbergen (VO) & Hugo Nieber (PO)	Ministerie van OCW, Directie Primair Onderwijs, Directie Voortgezet Onderwijs	Ministry	Education & Training	Face to Face interview
3.	Peter van IJsselmuiden	Ministerie van OCW, Directie Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs	Ministry	Education & Training	Face to Face interview
4.	Joost van der Veen	Ministerie van OCW, Directie Hoger Onderwijs en Studiefinanciering	Ministry	Education & Training	Telephone interview
5.	Jan van der Burg & Marieke Koppenaar-De Lange	Ministerie van VWS, Directie Jeugd	Ministry	Youth	Face to Face interview
6.	Lem van Eupen, Annemarie de Ruiter & Ellen Hanselman	Nationaal Agentschap Erasmus+ Onderwijs & Training	National Agency	Education & Training	Face to Face interview
7.	Lorance Janssen & Peter Pieters	Nationaal Agentschap Erasmus+ Jeugd	National Agency	Youth	Face to Face interview
8.	Jurgen Rienks	VSNU	Umbrella organisation	Education & Training	Face to Face interview
9.	Emiel de Groot	Vereniging Hogescholen	Umbrella organisation	Education & Training	Face to Face interview
10.	Veronique Feijen & Manfred Polzin	MBO-raad	Umbrella organisation	Education & Training	Face to Face interview
11.	Miriam Appelman	VO-raad	Umbrella organisation	Education & Training	Face to Face interview
12.	Mark Weekenburg	PO-raad	Umbrella organisation	Education & Training	Face to Face interview
13.	Desley van der Zande	Interstedelijk Studenten Overleg (ISO)	Umbrella organisation	Education & Training	Face to Face interview
14.	Fried Kramer & Anne-May Janssen	Neth-ER	Umbrella organisation	Education & Training	Face to Face interview
15.	Martijn Westerbrink	TIO University of Applied Sciences	Postsecondary vocational education organisation (Hbo)	Education & Training	Telephone interview

#	Interviewee(s)	Organisation	Category	Education & Training/Youth	Methods
16.	Myrna Schumacher	NHTV Breda	Postsecondary vocational education organisation (Hbo)	Education & Training	Telephone interview
17.	Harrie Poulssen	Katholieke Pabo Zwolle	Postsecondary vocational education organisation (Hbo)	Education & Training	Skype interview
18.	Elke van der Valk	Stichting Fontys	Postsecondary vocational education organisation (Hbo)	Education & Training	Telephone interview
19.	Anja Hetsen-Huijsmans	Stichting Aeres Groep	Postsecondary vocational education organisation (Hbo)	Education & Training	Telephone interview
20.	Mark van Dun	Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam	University (Wo)	Education & Training	Face to Face interview
21.	Mirjam de Groot	Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam	University (Wo)	Education & Training	Telephone interview
22.	Yvette Slieden	Maastricht University	University (Wo)	Education & Training	Telephone interview
23.	Marieke Farchi	Stichting VU	University (Wo)	Education & Training	Telephone interview
24.	Marieke te Booij & Hester Bergsma	Leiden University	University (Wo)	Education & Training	Telephone interview
25.	Erwin Meerkerk	Gomarus SG	Secondary education organisation	Education & Training	Telephone interview
26.	Robin Bakker	RSG Brokdele	Secondary education organisation	Education & Training	Telephone interview
27.	Jeroen de Ruijter	Van der Capellen SG	Secondary education organisation	Education & Training	Telephone interview
28.	Dirk van Dorth	RSG Tromp Meesters	Secondary education organisation	Education & Training	Telephone interview
29.	Hester Langkamp-Waanders	Basisschool de Regenboog	Primary education organisation	Education & Training	Telephone interview
30.	Hans de Haan	Stichting Regionaal Orgaan Openbaar Basisonderwijs Lauwersland	Primary education organisation	Education & Training	Telephone interview
31.	Debby van der Putten	Stichting de Noordwijkse School	Primary education organisation	Education & Training	Telephone interview
32.	Cees Visser	OBS de Zeester	Primary education organisation	Education & Training	Telephone interview
33.	Udo Lut	Stichting Landstede	VET organisation	Education & Training	Telephone interview
34.	André Huigens	M. van der Spek Hoveniersbedrijf	Company	Education & Training	Telephone interview
35.	Harman Tietema	ROC de Leijgraaf	VET organisation	Education & Training	Telephone interview
36.	Ton Stok	Stichting Wellant	VET organisation	Education & Training	Telephone interview
37.	Minke Kloppenburg	Noorderpoort	VET organisation	Education & Training	Telephone interview
38.	Joost Geerse	HMC MBO Vakschool	VET organisation	Education & Training	Telephone interview
39.	Elwine Halewijn	ITTA	Adult education organisation	Education & Training	Telephone interview

#	Interviewee(s)	Organisation	Category	Education & Training/Youth	Methods
40.	Jo Peeters	EDOS Foundation	Adult education organisation	Education & Training	Telephone interview
41.	Anne Charlotte Fauvel	Eatris	Company	Education & Training	Telephone interview
42.	Debby van der Meulen	Bouwmensen Amersfoort	Company	Education & Training	Telephone interview
43.	Lia Hamminga	Spartak Interdisciplinair Plaform voor Oost-Europa	Youthorganisation	Youth	Telephone interview
44.	Mirjam Gietema	Stichting European Institute for Democratic Participation	Youthorganisation	Youth	Telephone interview
45.	Meral Ari	Antre Foundation	Youthorganisation	Youth	Telephone interview
46.	Marko Vlaming	De Olde Vechte Stichting	Youthorganisation	Youth	Telephone interview
47.	Peter Keijzer	Richter	Youthorganisation	Youth	Telephone interview
48.	Steven van der Veeke	Stichting GO	Youthorganisation	Youth	Telephone interview
49.	Chris van Maanen	Rock Solid Foundation for International Youth Work	Youthorganisation	Youth	Telephone interview
50.	Friso Wennekes	Stichting Nederland bouwt V.O.C. Retourschip	Youthorganisation	Youth	Telephone interview
51.	Bas Krans	The Exchangeables	Youthorganisation	Youth	Telephone interview
52.	Wietske Visser	Het Schienvat	Youthorganisation	Youth	Telephone interview
53.	Nana Shaginashvili	Stichting International Youth Bridges	Youthorganisation	Youth	Telephone interview
54.	Yvonne Heselman	IDEA NL	Youthorganisation	Youth	Telephone interview
55.	Biju Oledath	Stichting Don Bosco Youthnet Nederland	Youthorganisation	Youth	Telephone interview
56.	Theo van de Veerdonk	Gemeente 's Hertogenbosch	Municipality	Education & Training	Telephone interview
57.	Jan Bloemheuvel	Gemeente Utrecht	Municipality	Education & Training	Telephone interview
58.	Marscha Kuijpers	Gemeente Tilburg	Municipality	Youth	Telephone interview

In addition to our semi-structured interviews, the Auditdienst Rijk (ADR) has been consulted on an earlier version of this report, and has provided feedback.



## Annex 5 List of participants in the workshops

### Participants Synmind workshop – online

Participant	Organisation	Category	Education & Training/Youth
Liefke Reitsma	Ministerie van OCW, Directie Internationaal Beleid	Ministry	Education & Training
Jan van der Burg	Ministerie van VWS, Directie Jeugd	Ministry	Youth
Lem van Eupen	Nationaal Agentschap Erasmus+ Onderwijs & Training	National Agency	Education & Training
Peter Pieters	Nationaal Agentschap Erasmus+ Jeugd	National Agency	Youth
Miriam Appelman	VO-raad	Umbrella organisation	Education & Training
Bart van Zelst	Stichting JOB MBO	Umbrella organisation	Education & Training
Mark van Dun	Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam	Higher education	Education & Training
Udo Lut	Stichting Landstede	Vocational education	Education & Training
Jo Peeters	EDOS Foundation	Adult education	Education & Training
Andrea Bos	Nationale Jeugdraad	Youth institution	Youth
Peter Keijzer	Richter	Youth institution	Youth

### Participants Workshop 5 December – Ministry OCW

	Participant	Organisation	Category	Education & Training/Youth
1.	Liefke Reitsma	Ministerie van OCW, Directie Internationaal Beleid	Ministry	Education & Training
2.	Jan van der Burg	Ministerie van VWS, Directie Jeugd	Ministry	Youth
3.	Lem van Eupen	Nationaal Agentschap Erasmus+ Onderwijs & Training	National Agency	Education & Training
4.	Peter Pieters	Nationaal Agentschap Erasmus+ Jeugd	National Agency	Youth
5.	Jurgen Rienks	VSNU	Umbrella organisation	Education & Training
6.	Veronique Feijen	MBO-raad	Umbrella organisation	Education & Training
7.	Mariëlle Brouwer	Neth-ER	Umbrella organisation	Education & Training
8.	Andrea Bos	Nederlandse Jeugdraad	Umbrella organisation	Youth
9.	Harrie Poulssen	Katholieke Pabo Zwolle	Post-secondary education	Education & Training
10.	Cindy Schotte	Leiden University	Higher education	Education & Training
11.	André Huigens	M. van der Spek Hoveniersbedrijf	VET & companies	Education & Training
12.	Jo Peeters	EDOS Foundation	Adult education	Education & Training
13.	Peter Keijzer	Richter	Youth organisation	Youth
14.	Maartje Bulthuis	The Youth Company	Youth organisation	Youth

## Annex 6 Specific objectives Erasmus+ (relevant for this midterm evaluation)

### Education and Training

1. to improve the level of key competences and skills, with particular regard to their relevance for the labour market and their contribution to a cohesive society, in particular through increased opportunities for learning mobility and through strengthened cooperation between the world of education and training and the world of work;
2. to foster quality improvements, innovation excellence and internationalisation at the level of education and training institutions, in particular through enhanced transnational cooperation between education and training providers and other stakeholders;
3. to promote the emergence and raise awareness of a European lifelong learning area designed to complement policy reforms at national level and to support the modernisation of education and training systems, in particular through enhanced policy cooperation, better use of Union transparency and recognition tools and the dissemination of good practices;
4. to enhance the international dimension of education and training, in particular through cooperation between Union and partner-country institutions in the field of VET and in higher education, by increasing the attractiveness of European higher education institutions and supporting the Union's external action, including its development objectives, through the promotion of mobility and cooperation between the Union and partner-country higher education institutions and targeted capacity-building in partner countries;
5. to improve the teaching and learning of languages and to promote the Union's broad linguistic diversity and intercultural awareness;

### Youth

1. to improve the level of key competences and skills of young people, including those with fewer opportunities, as well as to promote participation in democratic life in Europe and the labour market, active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, social inclusion and solidarity, in particular through increased learning mobility opportunities for young people, those active in youth work or youth organisations and youth leaders, and through strengthened links between the youth field and the labour market;
2. to foster quality improvements in youth work, in particular through enhanced cooperation between organisations in the youth field and/or other stakeholders;
3. 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, in particular through enhanced policy cooperation, better use of Union transparency and recognition tools and the dissemination of good practices;
4. to enhance the international dimension of youth activities and the role of youth workers and organisations as support structures for young people in complementarity with the Union's external action, in particular through the promotion of mobility and cooperation between the Union and partner-country stakeholders and international organisations and through targeted capacity-building in partner countries.

# Annex 7 EU objectives

## Erasmus+ objectives

Erasmus+ has the following objectives:

- Improving (labour market) skills and knowledge;
- Improving youth's skills and knowledge;
- Improving language education and stimulating citizens to learn more languages;
- Improving education and training through innovation, internationalization and enhancing the quality of education itself;
- Improving quality of youth work, and enhancing youth work through the use of international knowledge and networks;
- Making education and training and youth more internationally oriented;
- Stimulating political and labour market participation;
- Facilitating and promoting lifelong learning;
- Developing and/or improving local, national and European policies.

## Europe 2020

The Europe 2020 strategy for growth has three top priorities:

1. Smart growth for an economy based on knowledge and innovation;
2. Sustainable growth for a greener, more competitive economy with a more efficient use of resources;
3. Inclusive growth for an economy with sufficient employment and social and territorial cohesion.

In line with the Europe 2020 priorities, the following specific targets have been set for the Netherlands:

- 80% employment rate among 20-64-year olds;
- 2,5% of the GDP spent on research and development;
- 16% reduction in emission compared to 2005 levels (which has been changed to 25% in 2015 in line with a Dutch court ruling);
- 14% of energy should be renewable energy (in % of gross final energy consumption);
- Below 8% early school leavers;
- At least 40% of 30 to 34-year-olds should have completed tertiary education or the equivalent;
- A reduction of 100,000 people at risk of poverty or social exclusion (people aged 0-64 living in a jobless household).

## ET 2020

ET2020 consists of four strategic objectives:

1. Stimulate lifelong learning and mobility of students;
2. Improve the quality and efficiency of education and training;
3. Encourage equality, equity, social cohesion and active citizenship;
4. Stimulate innovation and creativity in education and training.

ET2020 focuses on mutual learning and the exchange of knowledge and good examples. The thought behind ET2020 is that good education is the key to the economic success of the EU.

The following EU benchmarks for 2020 have been set for education and training for the Netherlands:

- At least 95% of children (from 4 to compulsory school age) should participate in early childhood education;
- Fewer than 15% of 15-year-olds should be under-skilled in reading, mathematics and science;
- The rate of early leavers from education and training aged 18-24 should be below 10%;
- At least 40% of people aged 30-34 should have completed some form of higher education;
- At least 15% of adults should participate in lifelong learning;
- At least 20% of higher education graduates and 6% of 18-34 year-olds with an initial vocational qualification should have spent some time studying or training abroad;
- The share of employed graduates (aged 20-34 with at least upper secondary education attainment and having left education 1-3 years ago) should be at least 82%.

## Annex 8 Needs per sector

In the Erasmus+ work programmes several needs are defined with regards to Youth and Education and Training that Erasmus+ is expected to address. These are outlined below.

### Youth

With regards to Youth the following general needs are defined within the following areas:

- The professionalization and quality of youth work;
- Youth participation;
- Inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities;
- International mobility;
- Recognition of non-formal learning;
- Cooperation between local governments and businesses;
- Entrepreneurship.

### Primary and secondary education

For primary and secondary education the following themes were listed:

- Enhancing foreign language education;
- Excellence and development of talents;
- Professionalization of teachers and school leaders;
- Mathematics and language learning;
- Entrepreneurship: encouraging entrepreneurial (learning) behaviour;
- Pre-school education;
- Virtual communication;
- Science;
- Early School Leaving;
- Schools with a special profile (Culture or sports);
- Cooperation between education and the world of work.

### Vocational education

For Vocational education the defined themes are:

- Quality of education and quality assurance;
- Curriculum and examination;
- BPV [Beroepspraktijkvorming] and work-based learning;
- The prevention of ESL;
- Continuous learning from pre-vocational to vocational education to higher professional education (vmbo-mbo-hbo);
- Professionalisation of teachers and trainers: HRM, register of teachers, quality of teaching and focus on teachers;
- International mobility;
- Regional cooperation and positioning.

In 2015 the following themes were added to the list of priorities:

- Opening up IGT in VET;
- Stimulate entrepreneurship.

In 2016 the following need was added:

- Excellence in VET and excellent craftsmanship.

## Higher education

Dutch higher education aims to improve the international positioning of Dutch higher education.

Listed needs for higher education are:

- Clarifying continuous learning to higher education;
- Improve the relevance for the labour market;
- Develop innovative entrepreneurial skills;
- Reduce obstacles for the transferability of loans;
- Increase mobility.

## Adult education

For adult education the following main objectives were appointed

- Training of basic and transversal skills;
- Training of specific groups;
- Training of professional skills;
- Valuing and validating learning outcomes;
- Professional development of teachers and volunteers.

The needs analysis of higher education and adult education remained the same in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

## Cross sectoral themes

Next to the identified needs for the specific sectors the NAs Youth and Education and Training listed a few cross sectoral themes that need focus:

- The prevention of dropouts or early school leaving (ESL);
- Stimulating continuous learning (from pre-school all the way through post HE) and cooperation in the knowledge chain;
- More mobility and improved foreign language learning;
- Development of entrepreneurship;
- Strengthening of the relevance for the labour market and the improvement of internships.

Before drafting the action plans of 2016 it was assessed that these previous determined needs were still relevant but that two new topics needed to be added:

- Attention for the theme of radicalisation;
- Attention for the theme of migrants.

## Annex 9 Survey Results

### Effectiveness

#### Survey Youth

##### Skills and knowledge

Respondents were asked about the effects their Erasmus+ participation has had on different topics. On average respondents (strongly) agree that through their participation one or more of their skills and their knowledge on one or more topics have improved. They also (strongly) agree on average that their participation is of added value to their CV and that their (future) work activities will benefit from their Erasmus+ experiences. Moreover, the majority agrees having participated in Erasmus+ they have more to offer an employer than other young people who did not participate. However, it should be noted that about 20 percent of the respondents do not have a clear opinion of the effects on their CV and whether they have more to offer an employer.

Figure 9.1 Effects of Erasmus+

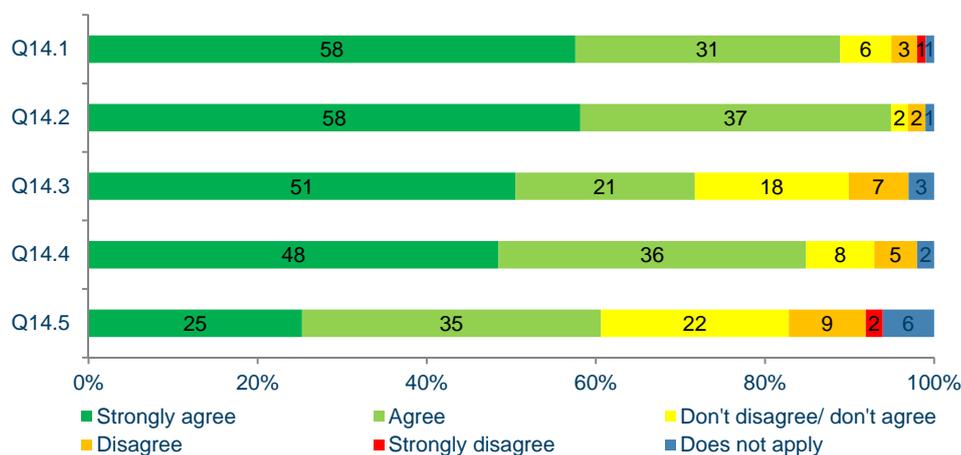


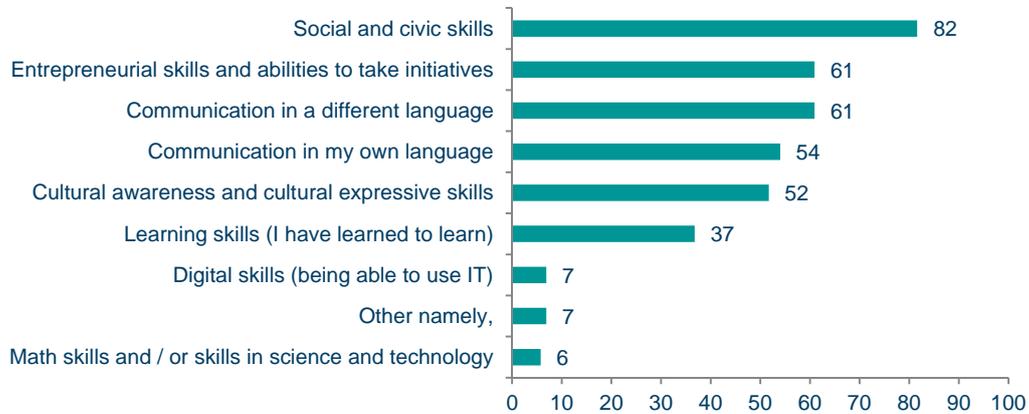
Table 9.1 Effects of Erasmus +

Item	Statement	Mean (1= strongly disagree- 5= strongly agree)
Q14.1	Through my Erasmus+ participation one or more of my skills have improved.	4,43
Q14.2	Through my Erasmus+ participation my knowledge on one or more topics has improved.	4,53
Q14.3	I believe that participation in the Erasmus + project is of added value to my CV.	4,19
Q14.4	I think in my (future) work activities will benefit from my Erasmus + experience.	4,31
Q14.5	I believe that I have more to offer an employer, because of my Erasmus + experience, than other young people who did not participate.	3,77

When asked about what skills have improved because of the participation in Erasmus+, respondents indicate they improved mostly their social and civic skills (82%) and entrepreneurial

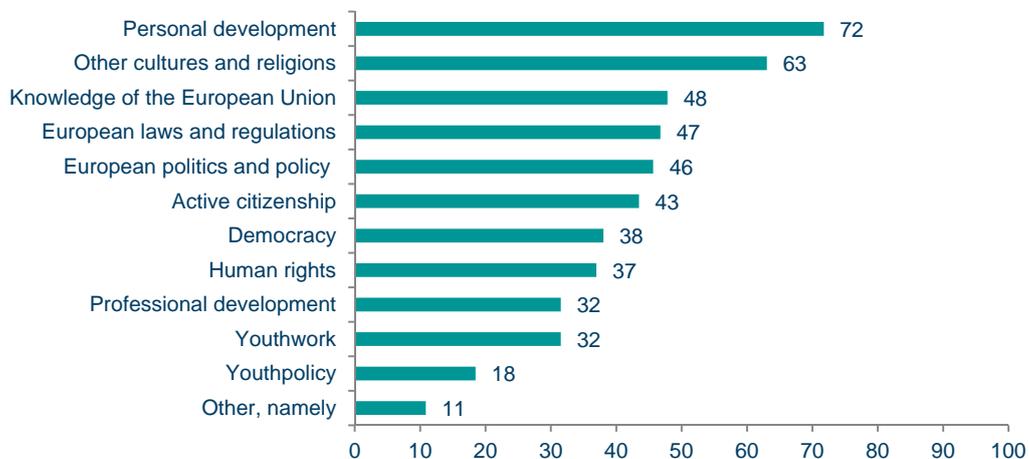
skills and abilities to take initiatives (61%). Participants of Erasmus+ are able to transform ideas into action. Besides, Erasmus+ participation improves communication in a different language but also their own language (61% and 54%). More than half of the respondents also indicated that they improved their cultural awareness and cultural expressive skills. They appreciate the value of various forms of culture more and are aware of their own national cultural context.

**Figure 9.2 Skills improvement**



Regarding the topics on which respondents improved their knowledge because of their Erasmus+ participation. The majority of respondents indicate they improved their personal development (72%), but also their knowledge on other cultures and religions (63%). Between 46 and 48 percent of the respondents improved their knowledge of the European Union, the European laws and regulations and the European politics and policy.

**Figure 9.3 Knowledge improvement**

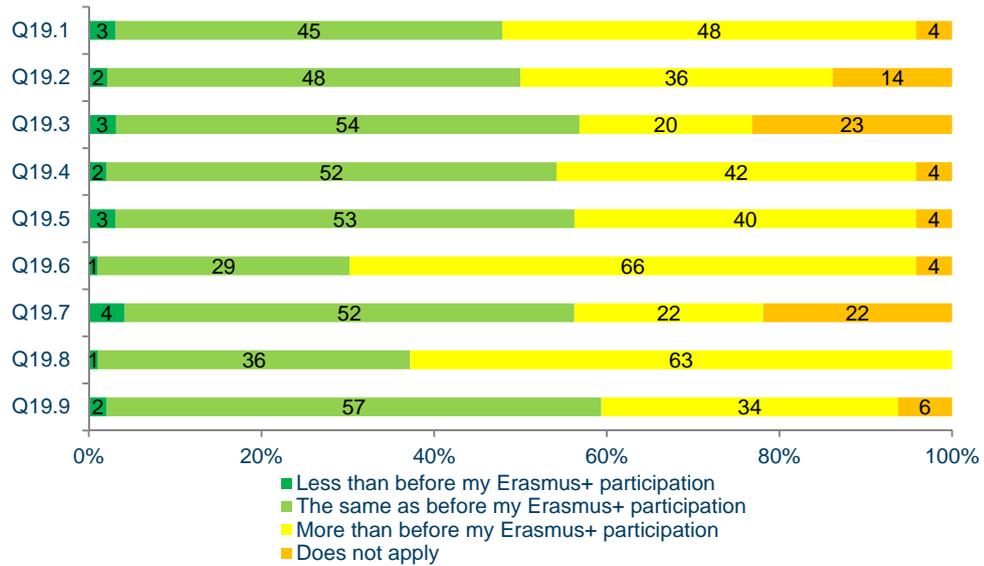


Of all foreign languages 96 percent of the respondents are better able to express themselves in English after their participation.

#### *Participation in democratic life*

We asked the respondents about statements on citizenship. On average, respondents remain involved as a citizen to the same extent as before their Erasmus+ participation. However, there are two exceptions. Respondents are on average more aware of what is happening in Europe after their participation and they appreciate cultural diversity more than before as well.

**Figure 9.4 Impact on democratic citizenship**



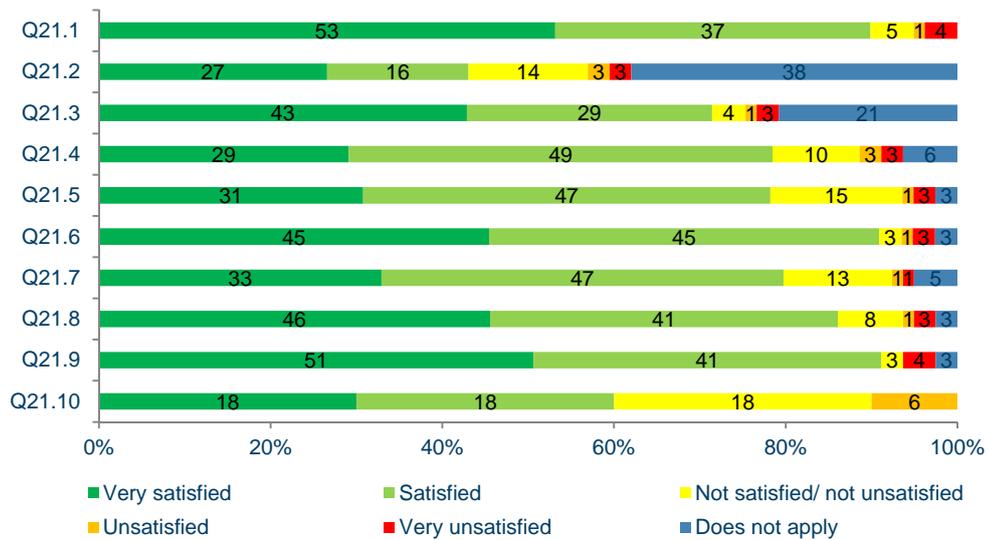
**Table 9.2 Impact on democratic citizenship**

Item	Statement	Mean (1= less than before, 2= same as before, 3= more than before)
Q19.1	I am an active citizen	2,47
Q19.2	I am interested in politics	2,40
Q19.3	I am politically active	2,22
Q19.4	I find democracy important	2,41
Q19.5	I am aware of what is happening in the Netherlands	2,38
Q19.6	I am aware of what is happening in Europe	2,67
Q19.7	I am volunteering	2,23
Q19.8	I appreciate cultural diversity	2,62
Q19.9	I am active in preventing intolerance (e.g., racism).	2,34

**Organisation Erasmus+**

Respondents are in general (very) satisfied with Erasmus+. They are (very) satisfied with the organisation of the project, the information and clarity about the application procedure at their organisation and the information about the goals and expected personal outcomes. They are also satisfied with the support and guidance during the preparation phase of the projects and during the project. Moreover, there is satisfaction regarding the possibility to gain knowledge and skills in several areas. It seems not all respondents had the possibility to select a country of choice or the possibility to select a project that matches their interests.

**Figure 9.5 Opinion about the project**



**Table 9.3 Opinion about the project**

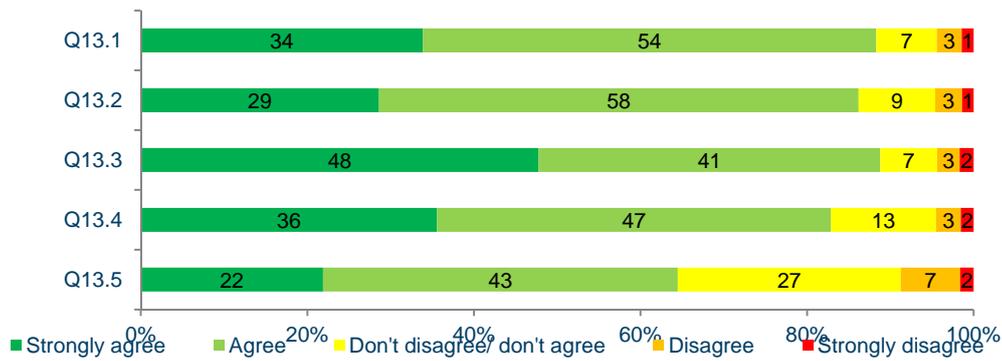
Item	Statement	Mean (1= very satisfied - 5= very unsatisfied)
Q21.1	Organisation of the project	1,66
Q21.2	The possibility to select a country of choice	2,00
Q21.3	The possibility to select a project that matches my interest	1,64
Q21.4	Information and clarity about the application procedure at my organisation	1,93
Q21.5	Support and guidance during the preparation phase of the project	1,95
Q21.6	Support and guidance during the project	1,67
Q21.7	Information about the goals and expected personal outcomes of participation in the project	1,85
Q21.8	Possibility to gain knowledge in several areas	1,71
Q21.9	Possibility to gain skills in several areas	1,62
Q21.10	Other, namely	2,20

## Survey Education and training

### Skills and knowledge

Respondents were asked about the effects that their Erasmus+ participation has had on different topics. Similar to respondents from the Youth survey, the respondents generally agreed that through their participation in the programme, one or more of their skills and their knowledge on one or more topics have improved. They also generally agreed that their participation is of added value to their CV and that their (future) work activities will benefit from their Erasmus+ experiences. However, on average respondents did not have a clear opinion regarding the statement that after having participated in Erasmus+, they would have more to offer an employer than other young people who did not participate.

**Figure 9.6 Effects of Erasmus+**

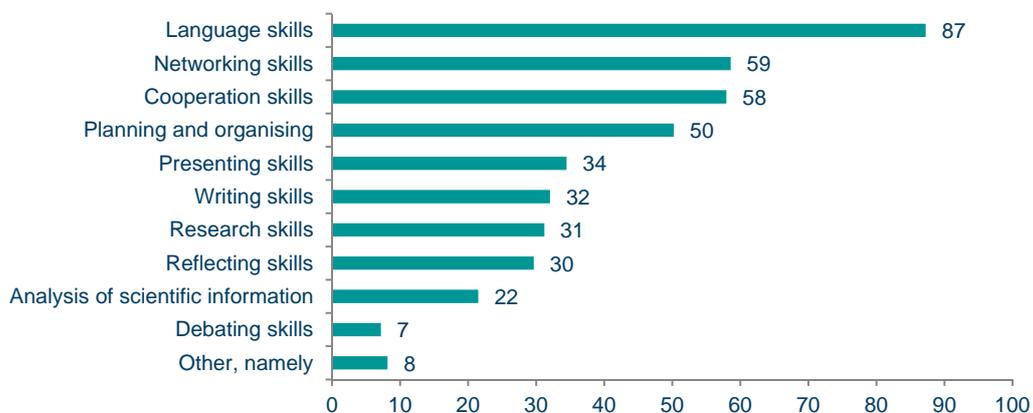


**Table 9.4 Effects of Erasmus+**

Item	Statement	Mean (1=strongly disagree en 5=strongly agree)
Q13.1	Through my Erasmus+ participation one or more of my skills have improved.	4,16
Q13.2	Through my Erasmus+ participation my knowledge on one or more topics has improved.	4,09
Q13.3	I believe that participation in the Erasmus + project is of added value to my CV.	4,31
Q13.4	I think in my (future) work activities will benefit from my Erasmus + experience.	4,12
Q13.5	I believe that I have more to offer an employer, because of my Erasmus + experience, than other young people who did not participate.	3,76

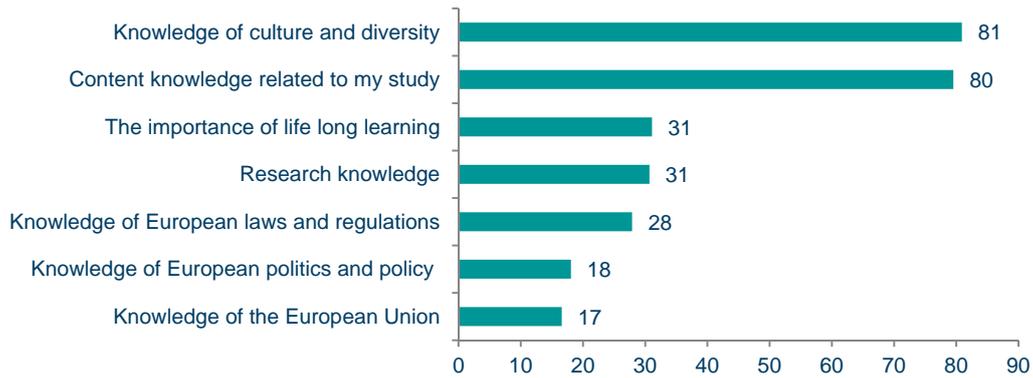
When asked about what skills have improved because of the participation in Erasmus+, respondents indicated that they mostly improved their language skills (87%). Also the networking skills and cooperation skills are indicated to be improved due to the participation in Erasmus+. Half of the respondents also indicated that their skills concerning planning and organising have improved.

**Figure 9.7 Skills development**



Concerning the topics on which respondents improved their knowledge because of their Erasmus+ participation. The majority of respondents indicated that they improved their knowledge of culture and diversity (81%), as well as the content knowledge related to their study (80%).

**Figure 9.8 Knowledge development**

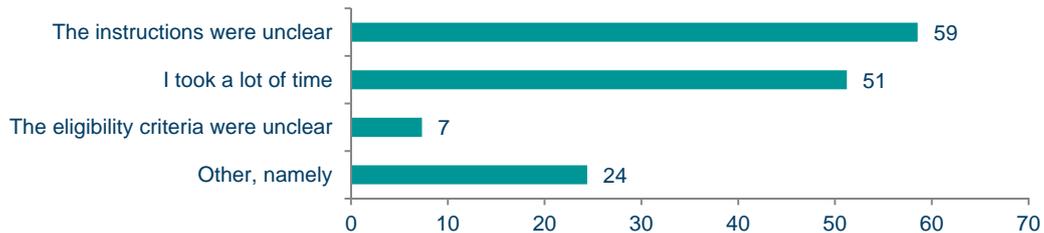


Similar to the Youth survey, the foreign languages respondents are now best able to express themselves in English (86%). This percentage is lower than in the Youth survey, as the respondents in the Education and Training survey indicate more languages in which they improved after Erasmus+.

*Enrolment procedure*

Respondents were asked what difficulties they encountered in the enrolment procedure. Almost 60 percent indicate the instructions were unclear and the enrolment procedure also took a lot of time (51%).

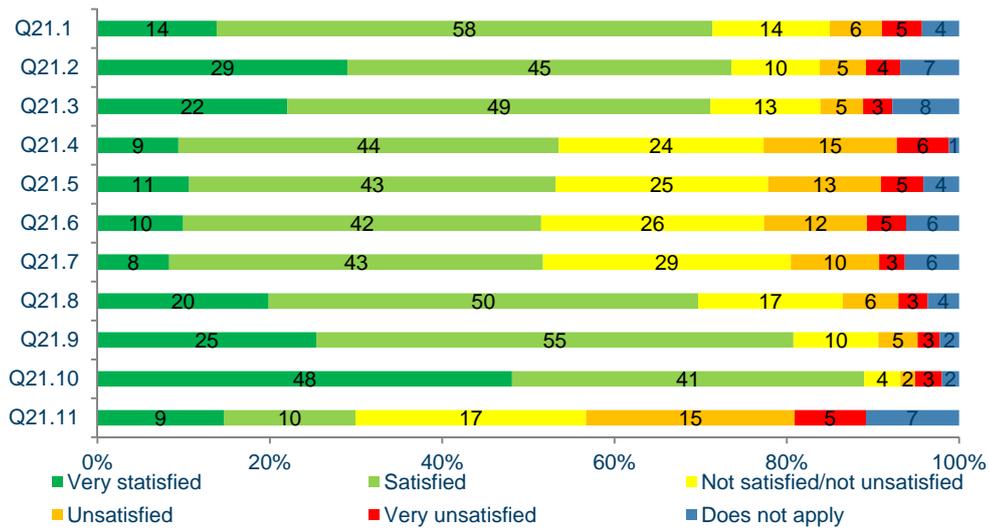
**Figure 9.9 Enrolment procedure**



*Organisation Erasmus+*

Respondents are in general (very) satisfied with Erasmus+. On average they are mostly satisfied with the support and guidance during the preparation phase of the project and during the project. Respondents are also satisfied about the information and clarity about the application procedure at their organisation and the information about the goals and expected personal outcomes of participation in the project.

**Figure 9.10 Organisation of the project**



**Table 9.5 Organisation of the project**

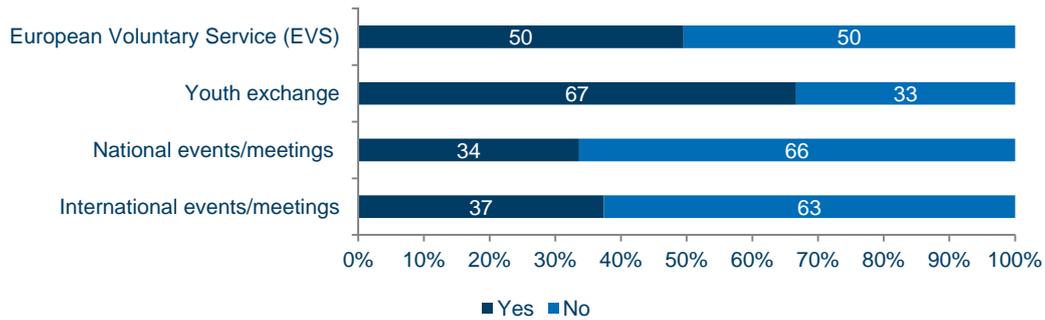
Items	Statement	Mean (1= very satisfied 5=very unsatisfied)
Q21.1	Organisation of the project	2,27
Q21.2	The possibility to select a country of choice	2,04
Q21.3	The possibility to select a project that matches my interest	2,12
Q21.4	Information and clarity about the application procedure at my organisation	2,64
Q21.5	Support and guidance during the preparation phase of the project	2,57
Q21.6	Support and guidance during the project	2,57
Q21.7	Information about the goals and expected personal outcomes of participation in the project	2,53
Q21.8	Possibility to gain knowledge in several areas	2,21
Q21.9	Possibility to gain skills in several areas	2,01
Q21.10	Possibility to learn about other countries and cultures	1,68
Q21.11	Other, namely	2,96

## Relevance

### Survey Youth

We asked the participants whether they were aware that the projects are part of the Erasmus+ programme. The majority know the European Voluntary Service and the Youth Exchange are part of Erasmus+. However, respondents were not aware that the national events/meetings with policy-makers, youth experts, youth organisations and/or government representatives and the international events/meetings with policy-makers, youth experts, youth organisations and/or government representatives are part of Erasmus+.

**Figure 9.11 Project awareness**



Respondents found out about the Erasmus+ project mostly through school (36%), friends and family (21%), another organisation/association (17%) or a youth organisation/youth association (15%). None of the respondents found out about Erasmus+ through the website of the European Commission.

Respondents choose to participate in Erasmus+ mainly because of their personal development, having fun and learning something new.

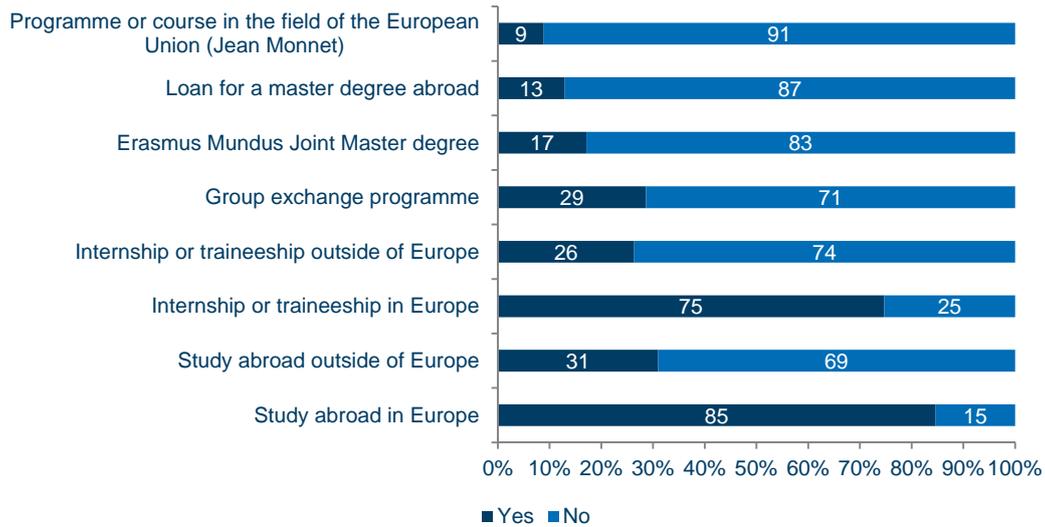
**Figure 9.12 Reasons to participate**



**Survey Education and Training**

We asked the participants whether they were aware that the projects are part of the Erasmus+ programme. The majority know that study abroad in Europe and an internship or traineeship in Europe are part of Erasmus+. However, most of the respondents were not aware that the remaining projects are part of the Erasmus+ programme.

**Figure 9.13 Awareness of projects**



Respondents did not choose to participate in Erasmus+ to improve their skills or because it was part of their study programme. They mainly choose to participate in Erasmus+ because of their personal development, going abroad / traveling and gaining experience for their CV. Also the reason to challenge themselves scores high.

**Figure 9.14 Reasons to participate**



Respondents found out about the Erasmus+ project mostly through their educational institution (95%). None of the respondents found out about Erasmus+ through the website of the European Youth Portal, the website of the European Commission or the National Agency Erasmus+ education and training.

## European added value and sustainability

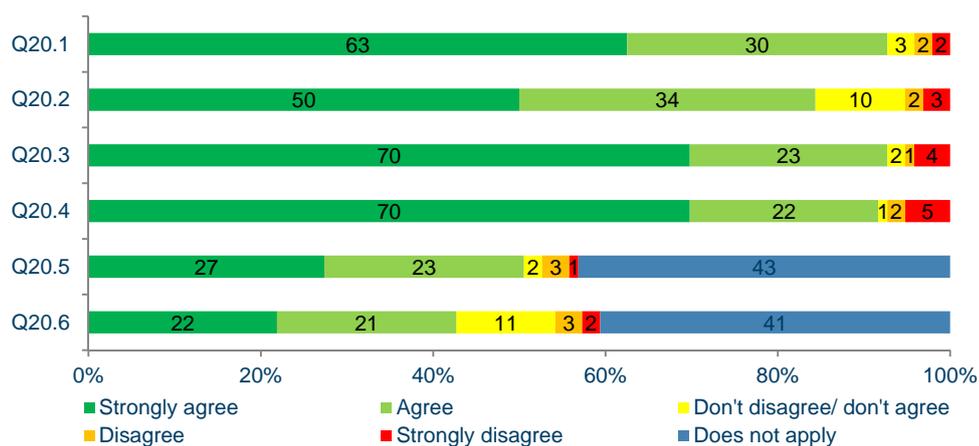
### Survey Youth

Respondents are asked whether they had to financially contribute themselves to contribute in the project. Most of them did not (42%), however 31 percent paid the contribution themselves and 23 percent indicated that their parent(s)/guardian(s) paid the contribution.

Respondents that did not have to financially contribute to take part in the project, were asked whether they still would have participated if they did have to pay a financial contribution themselves. Up to 79 percent indicate a financial contribution is not an obstacle for the participation of Erasmus+ projects.

Regarding the overall experience of Erasmus+ on average respondents (strongly) agree that the experience was very useful, they would also recommend participating in an Erasmus+ project to friends and they would like to participate themselves again in a similar project. Half of the respondents strongly agree the Erasmus+ projects met their expectation. However, results are different regarding the meetings with policy makers. The majority of the respondents did not participate in these meeting. However, respondents that did agree that they were taken seriously by policymakers. They also think that because of these meetings policy makers will consider their ideas while making future youth policies.

**Figure 9.15 Overall experience**



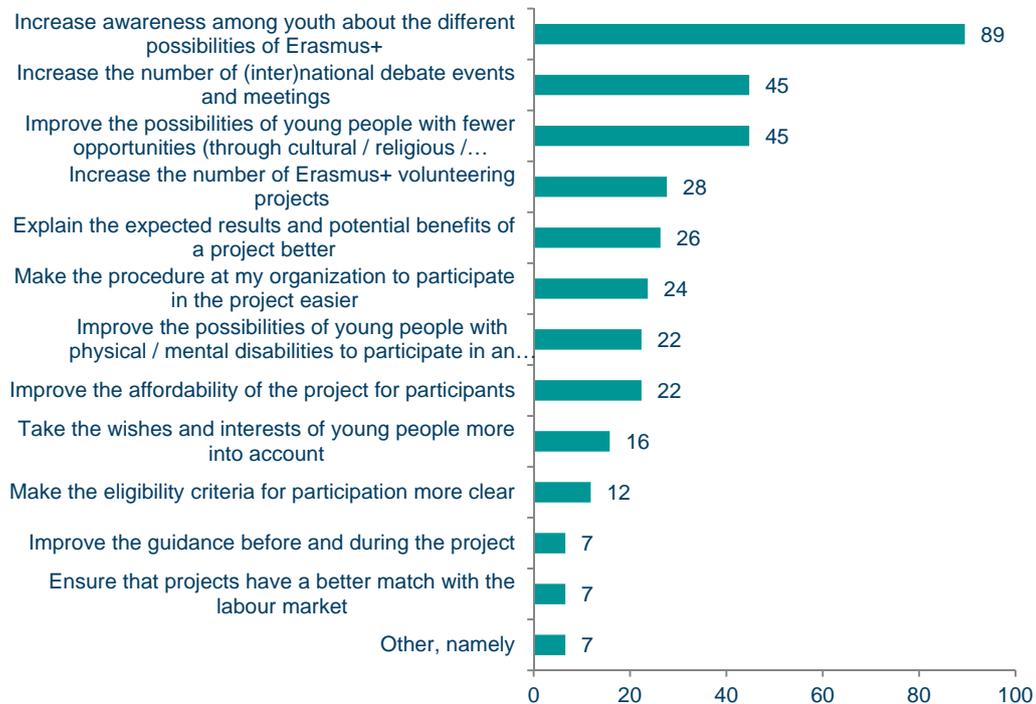
**Table 9.6 Overall experience**

Item	Statement	Mean (1= strongly disagree – 5 strongly agree)
Q20.1	Overall, I believe my Erasmus+ experience was very useful.	4,49
Q20.2	The Erasmus + project I participated in met my expectations.	4,26
Q20.3	I would recommend participating in the project to my friends.	4,53
Q20.4	I would like to participate again in the coming years in a similar project.	4,49
Q20.5	During the meeting (s) with policy makers, youth experts or youth organisations I felt taken seriously by policymakers.	4,28
Q20.6	I think that because of these meetings policy makers will consider our ideas while making future youth policies	3,96

When asking respondents about things to be improved within Erasmus+, the vast majority believe that the awareness among youth about the different possibilities of Erasmus+ should be increased

(98%). They also indicate there should be more (inter)national debate events and meetings (45%). Moreover, the possibilities of young people with fewer opportunities (through cultural / religious / economic / social barriers) to participate in an Erasmus+ project should be increased according to the respondents.

**Figure 9.16 Points for improvement**

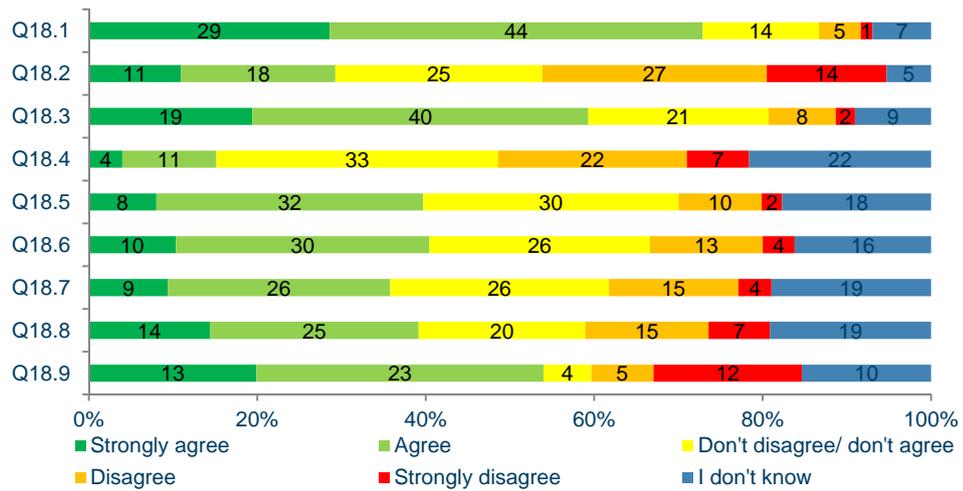


### Survey Education and Training

Half of the respondents would have participated in a similar project without the Erasmus+ financial contribution. That means the other half of the respondents would not participate in an Erasmus+ project without the financial contribution.

When asking about the added value of Erasmus+ for the study program/education, students on average agree the opportunities available for participation in Erasmus+ make their institution more attractive to students. However, students do not disagree or agree with the remaining statements.

**Figure 9.17 Added value**

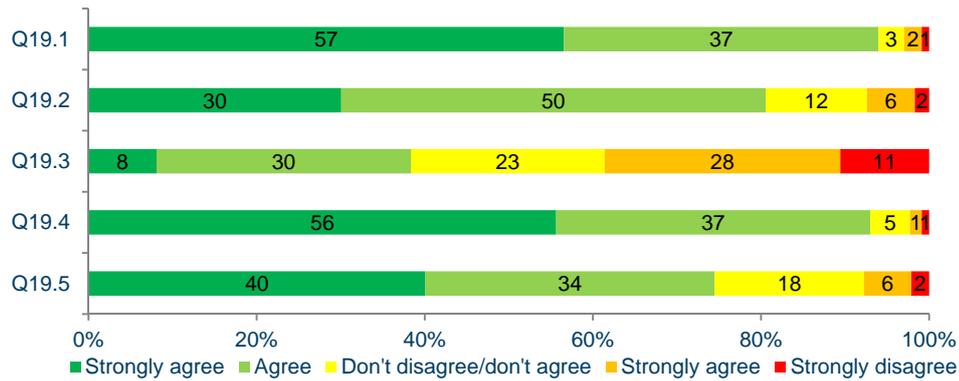


**Table 9.7 Added value**

Item	Statement	Mean (1= strongly disagree 5=strongly agree)
Q18.1	The opportunities available for participation in Erasmus+ makes my institution more attractive to students	4,01
Q18.2	The opportunities available for participation in Erasmus+ where a reason for me to choose this education institution	2,84
Q18.3	Because of Erasmus+ the quality of the curriculum of my study program improved	3,73
Q18.4	Because of Erasmus+ the quality of the teachers at my institution improved	2,77
Q18.5	Because of Erasmus+ there is a good match between the content of courses and the demands of the labour market	3,40
Q18.6	Because of Erasmus+ there are more courses that stimulate students to perform better	3,36
Q18.7	Because of Erasmus+ there is more innovation in courses and teaching methods	3,27
Q18.8	Because of Erasmus+ now more courses are taught in English	3,30
Q18.9	Other, namely	3,37

Regarding the overall experience of Erasmus+ on average respondents agree that the experience was very useful, they would also recommend participating in an Erasmus+ project to friends and they would like to participate themselves again in a similar project. They also agreed on average that the Erasmus+ projects met their expectations. However, the students are on average indecisive whether the enrolment procedure of the Erasmus+ project was simple and took a minimal amount of time.

**Figure 9.18 Overall experience**

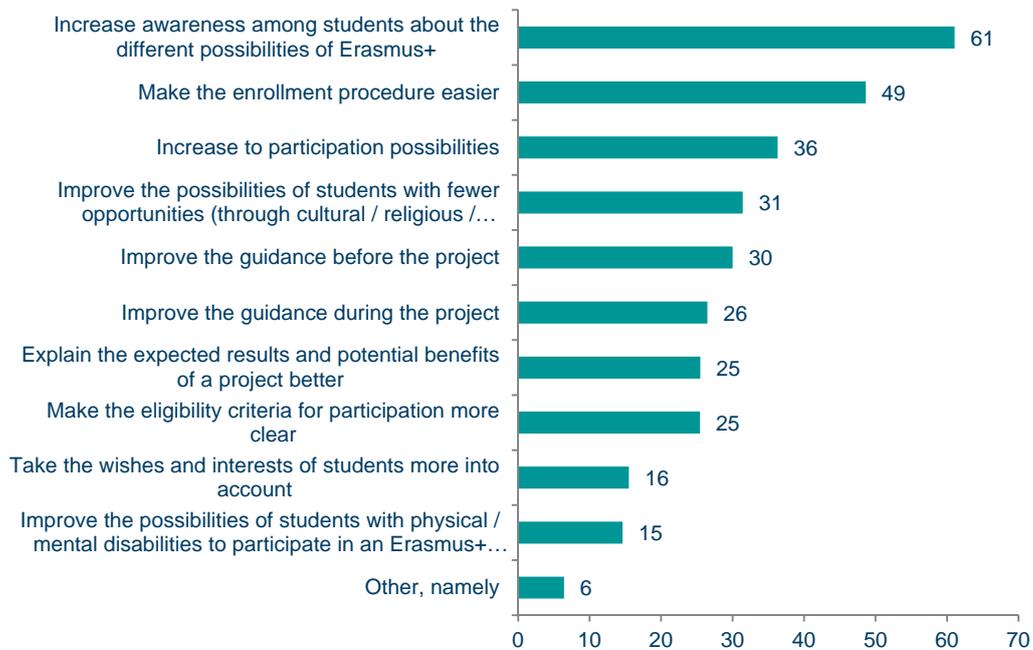


**Table 9.8 Overall experience**

Item	Statement	Mean (1=strongly disagree 5=strongly agree)
Q19.1	Overall, I believe my Erasmus+ experience was very useful.	4,47
Q19.2	The Erasmus + project I participated in met my expectations.	4,02
Q19.3	The enrolment procedure of my Erasmus+ project was simple and took little time	2,97
Q19.4	I would recommend participating in the project to my friends.	4,45
Q19.5	I would like to participate again in the coming years in a similar project.	4,05

When asking respondents about things to be improved within Erasmus+ the vast majority thinks the awareness among students about the different possibilities of the programme should be increased (61%). Almost half of the respondents indicate the enrolment procedure should be easier.

**Figure 9.19 Points for improvement**





## Annex 10 Outcomes – number of applications and granted projects

**Table 10.1 Number of applications and granted projects for KA1 (2014, 2015 and 2016)**

Area	Year	Applications	Not granted	Rejected	Rejected above threshold	Reserve	Granted	% Granted	
School education staff mobility	KA101	2014	229	171	48	0	123	58	25%
		2015	93	8	8	0	0	85	91%
		2016	72	0	5	0	0	67	93%
VET learner and staff mobility	KA102	2014	54	2	2	0	0	52	96%
		2015	47	3	3	0	0	44	94%
		2016	36	5	5	0	0	31	86%
Higher education student and staff mobility within programme countries	KA103	2014	54	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	54	100%
		2015	55	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	55	100%
		2016	56	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	56	100%
Adult education staff mobility	KA104	2014	29	17	14	0	3	12	41%
		2015	10	5	5	0	0	5	50%
		2016	9	5	5	0	0	4	44%
Youth mobility	KA105	2014	219	116				103	47%
		2015	233	95				138	59%
		2016							
VET learner and staff mobility with VET mobility charter	KA116	2014	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
		2015	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
		2016	14	1	1	0	0	13	93%

**Table 10.2 Number of applications and granted projects for KA2 (2014, 2015 and 2016)**

Area	Year	Applications	Not granted	Rejected	Rejected above threshold	Reserve	Granted	% Granted	
Cross sectoral strategic partnerships	KA200	2014	14	1	1	0	0	13	93%
		2015	0	0	0	0	0	0	N.v.t.
		2016	0	0	0	0	0	0	N.v.t.
Strategic Partnerships for school education	KA201	2014	110	99	52	47	0	11	10%
		2015	21	12	3	6	3	9	43%
		2016	19	9	5	4		10	53%
Strategic Partnerships for vocational education and training	KA202	2014	29	19	17	0	2	10	34%
		2015	43	31	26	3	2	12	28%
		2016	24	12	12	0	0	12	50%
Strategic Partnerships for	KA203	2014	38	32	28	16	4	6	16%
		2015	41	35	32	20	3	7	17%

Area	Year	Applications	Not granted	Rejected	Rejected above threshold	Reserve	Granted	% Granted	
higher education		2016	37	30	29	18	1	7	19%
Strategic Partnerships for adult education	KA204	2014	17	13	8	3	2	4	24%
		2015	30	25	14	9	2	5	17%
		2016	29	23	12	9	2	6	21%
Strategic Partnerships for youth	KA205	2014	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
		2015	19	14				5	26%
		2016	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Strategic Partnerships for schools only	KA219	2014	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
		2015	68	57	26	31	0	11	16%
		2016	39	16	9	6	0	23	59%

**Table 10.3 Number of applications and granted projects for KA3 (2014 and 2015)**

Area	Year	Applications	Not granted	Rejected	Rejected above threshold	Reserve	Granted	% Granted
Structured dialogue	KA347	2014	11				4	36%
		2015	13				5	38%
		2016						

## Annex 11 List of alternative programmes

Primary education	Secondary education	Vocational education	Adult education	Higher education	Youth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Bird</li> <li>• Regional collaborations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pestalozzi</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OCW mobility funds</li> <li>• Interreg</li> <li>• Euregional subsidies</li> <li>• Centre for Expertise</li> <li>• Centre for Innovative Craftsmanship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OCW funds (Tel mee met Taal)</li> <li>• Tempus</li> <li>• ESF</li> <li>• Europe for citizens</li> <li>• UNESCO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OCW - Holland Scholarship</li> <li>• Interreg</li> <li>• Own scholarships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Europe for citizens</li> <li>• Youth guarantee programme</li> <li>• Council of Europe</li> <li>• Youth foundation</li> <li>• ESF</li> <li>• Labour unions (sponsored by VWS)</li> </ul>



## About Ecorys

At Ecorys we aim to deliver real benefit to society through the work we do. We offer research, consultancy and project management, specialising in economic, social and spatial development. Focusing on complex market, policy and management issues we provide our clients in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors worldwide with a unique perspective and high-value solutions. Ecorys' remarkable history spans more than 85 years. Our expertise covers economy and competitiveness; regions, cities and real estate; energy and water; transport and mobility; social policy, education, health and governance. We value our independence, integrity and partnerships. Our staff comprises dedicated experts from academia and consultancy, who share best practices both within our company and with our partners internationally.

Ecorys Netherlands has an active CSR policy and is ISO14001 certified (the international standard for environmental management systems). Our sustainability goals translate into our company policy and practical measures for people, planet and profit, such as using a 100% green electricity tariff, purchasing carbon offsets for all our flights, incentivising staff to use public transport and printing on FSC or PEFC certified paper. Our actions have reduced our carbon footprint by an estimated 80% since 2007.

ECORYS Nederland B.V.  
Watermanweg 44  
3067 GG Rotterdam

P.O. Box 4175  
3006 AD Rotterdam  
The Netherlands

T +31 (0)10 453 88 00  
F +31 (0)10 453 07 68  
E [netherlands@ecorys.com](mailto:netherlands@ecorys.com)  
Registration no. 24316726

**W** [www.ecorys.nl](http://www.ecorys.nl)







P.O. Box 4175  
3006 AD Rotterdam  
The Netherlands

Watermanweg 44  
3067 GG Rotterdam  
The Netherlands

T +31 (0)10 453 88 00  
F +31 (0)10 453 07 68  
E [netherlands@ecorys.com](mailto:netherlands@ecorys.com)

**W [www.ecorys.nl](http://www.ecorys.nl)**

*Sound analysis, inspiring ideas*