

Erasmus+: More than just mobility

Erasmus+ is the EU's single integrated education programme for improving young people's skills and employability, and currently covers the 2014-2020 period. It also promotes the modernisation of education and training in the EU Member States, by facilitating transnational contacts amongst different players and across different sectors. Erasmus+ brings together the previous EU programmes in education, training and youth, and also includes sports.

Objectives and focus

Overall, [Erasmus+](#) is intended to contribute towards the EU's [strategic objectives](#) for education and training, in line with the Europe 2020 priorities, with special focus on addressing [skills deficits and skills mismatch](#). In April 2019, there were 3.2 million [unemployed](#) people under the age of 25 in the EU, a 36% decrease from the nearly 5 million in [2015](#). Still, four in 10 EU employers find it hard to recruit staff with the necessary skills. Therefore, Erasmus+ continues to focus on increasing attainment in higher education, lowering early school drop-out rates and improving attainment in key skills such as knowledge of a foreign language. It seeks to bridge formal (schools, universities), [non-formal](#) (evening classes, clubs) and informal (voluntary work) education, by supporting certification tools so that skills recognition is not limited to school certificates. This is useful, as young people who have studied or trained abroad [claim](#) to gain additional skills such as communication, adaptability, the ability to work with people from different backgrounds and problem-solving. Others who follow unconventional learning paths would also find certification useful.

Beneficiaries

Participating countries fall into [two categories](#): programme countries and partner countries. In addition to EU Member States, the group of programme countries currently includes Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey. These countries were required to meet certain conditions and set up a national agency to manage the programme. Other countries from around the world can become partner countries by force of bilateral agreements granting them limited access to the programme.

In programme countries, members of accredited institutions, their students and staff, can participate in mobility exercises. Accredited institutions include institutions offering higher education, vocational education, training or adult education programmes, schools and youth organisations. Students can study and train abroad [for periods](#) adding up to a maximum of 12 months per degree level (undergraduate, master's, doctorate). [Grants](#) vary depending on costs in the destination country (range: €300-350 per month). A student loan facility enables master's students to borrow up to €18 000 for their degree abroad. However, [uptake](#) has been lower than expected due to delays in the launch of the facility and low participation among financial institutions. Students with special needs or from lower-income households receive additional support, which can be supplemented by funds from the national or regional budgets.

The European Commission [estimates](#) that from 2014 to 2020, the programme will have created mobility opportunities for over 4 million people, including 2 million higher education students, 650 000 vocational education and training students, 800 000 lecturers, teachers and other staff, 500 000 young people participating in volunteering or youth exchange schemes and over 25 000 joint master's degree students. Between [2014 and 2018](#), over 2 million students and staff spent a period abroad under the programme.

A 2014 study commissioned by the European Parliament indicates that programmes such as Erasmus+ are very effective in engaging European citizens in European integration. However, it points out that relatively [few EU citizens become their beneficiaries](#) and that [disadvantaged](#) people are more difficult to reach.

Key actions

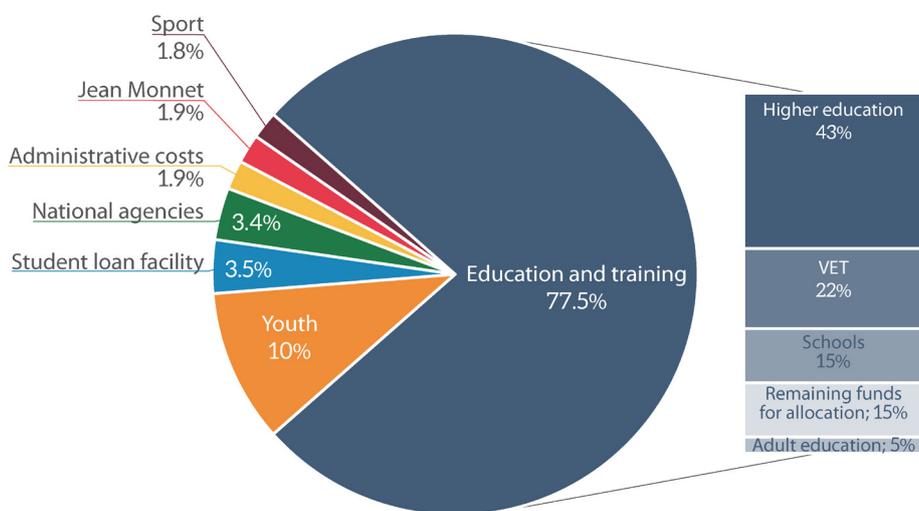
Erasmus+ is built on three key actions, which take up almost all of its budget. The first, [Mobility of individuals](#) (63 % of the budget), promotes learning opportunities for individuals within the EU and beyond, with a

target of [20 % student mobility](#) by 2020. The second (28 % of the budget) promotes [cooperation for innovation and the exchange of best practices](#). By 2020, around 25 000 [strategic partnerships](#) will have linked 125 000 educational institutions, youth organisations and enterprises. Partners are expected to implement innovative practices and learn from each other. An additional 3 500 institutions, organisations and enterprises will have joined efforts to set up more than 300 [sector skills alliances](#) or [knowledge alliances](#). Sector skills alliances address skills gaps by adapting vocational education and training to sector-specific labour-market needs. Knowledge alliances foster innovative and entrepreneurial capacity in higher education. Furthermore, this action helps higher education institutions to develop their international dimension, including that of partner countries. Support is also going to IT platforms developed as spaces for virtual collaboration. The third key action (4.2 % of the budget) supports [policy development](#). It brings together young people and policy-makers in focused discussions, finances studies and information gathering, and encourages peer-learning by means of actions such as the exchange of best practices. It also supports tools, such as [Youthpass](#), that help mobility by facilitating the recognition of qualifications.

Budget

Erasmus+ has a budget of [€14.7 billion](#) for the 2014-2020 period, which is a [40 % increase](#) compared to the previous period but a decrease from the [amount originally proposed](#) by the Commission. An additional €1.68 billion is available for actions with third countries through the external action budget. The programme encompasses [previous education programmes](#) (notably Erasmus, Tempus, Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig and Youth in Action), bringing an overall reduction in calls and actions and more efficient use of funds. The division of funds in the three key actions described above applies to the areas of 'education and training' and 'youth'. Over two-thirds of the budget goes to education and training (see Figure 1). Within this category, higher education receives almost half of that amount.

Figure 1 – Erasmus+ 2014-2020 budget (€14.7 m); breakdown of the education and training budget by sector



Source: European Commission [Erasmus+ in detail](#).

Erasmus+ also contributes to [sport](#), which receives 1.8 % of the global budget. Funds support collaborative partnerships that promote integrity in sport (such as anti-doping and the fight against match-fixing). Grants are also available for non-profit-making European sports events. Sport is additionally supported by studies and data collection to help policy-makers and stakeholders' dialogue, particularly in the annual [EU sports forum](#). Another 1.9 % of the budget finances activities under

the [Jean Monnet](#) sub-programme. These activities aim to promote excellence in European integration studies in higher education worldwide, by supporting academic institutions, research and teaching activities. Another branch of the Jean Monnet sub-programme nurtures dialogue between academics and policy-makers to improve EU policy governance.

The Commission has [programme guidelines](#) and a [work programme](#) for 2019 on the basis of which it issues [calls](#) for proposals. In the meantime, the Parliament has adopted its position on the Commission's [proposal](#) for the new 2021-2027 programming period. It favours the label 'Erasmus+' to signal continuity, a stronger emphasis on inclusion and an even bigger envelope than the one proposed by the Commission.

This is an update of an ['at a glance' note](#) published in March 2015.

