DRAFT REPORT

on effective measures to ‘green’ Erasmus+, Creative Europe and the European Solidarity Corps
(2019/2195(INI))

Committee on Culture and Education

Rapporteur: Laurence Farreng
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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on effective measures to ‘green’ Erasmus+, Creative Europe and the European Solidarity Corps
(2019/2195(INI))

The European Parliament,

– having regard to Articles 11, 165, 166, 167, 191 and 193 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

– having regard to the Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,

– having regard to its resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal1,

– having regard to the European Council conclusions of 12 December 2019,

– having regard to the Commission communication of 11 December 2019 to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled ‘The European Green Deal’ (COM(2019)0640),

– having regard to its resolution of 28 November 2019 on the climate and environment emergency2,

– having regard to the resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Member States meeting within the Council of 5 June 2019 establishing guidelines on the governance of the EU Youth Dialogue – European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027,

– having regard to the communication from the Commission to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 22 May 2018 entitled ‘Building a stronger Europe: the role of youth, education and culture policies’ (COM(2018)0268),

– having regard to its legislative resolution of 28 March 2019 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing ‘Erasmus’: the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport3,


– having regard to the report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the

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1 Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0005.
Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 31 January 2018 entitled ‘Mid-term evaluation of the Erasmus+ programme (2014-2020)’ (COM(2018)0050),

– having regard to its resolution of 2 February 2017 on the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing ‘Erasmus+’: the Union programme for education training, youth and sport⁴,

– having regard to its legislative resolution of 12 March 2019 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Solidarity Corps programme⁵,


– having regard to its legislative resolution of 28 March 2019 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Creative Europe programme (2021 to 2027)⁶,


– having regard to its resolution of 2 March 2017 on the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Creative Europe programme (2014 to 2020)⁷,


– having regard to the undertakings given by the then Commissioner-designate for

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innovation, research, education, culture and youth at her hearing before Parliament on 30 September 2019,

– having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
– having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture and Education (A9-0000/2020),

A. whereas the European Green Deal sets the target of a climate-neutral European Union by 2050, thereby putting the climate emergency at the centre of all the Union’s programmes and policies;

B. whereas education, sport, volunteering and culture play a fundamental role in the green transition as regards awareness-raising, learning, communication and the sharing of knowledge, and whereas the potential they offer can be exploited to develop innovative ways of tackling environmental challenges;

C. whereas the Erasmus+, European Solidarity Corps (ESC) and Creative Europe programmes all have an impact on the daily lives of millions of Europeans;

D. whereas, although these programmes do not primarily focus on the environment, they nonetheless contribute to the green transition through their substance and scope, so that their essential nature should be preserved;

E. whereas the Erasmus+ programme can do much to foster sustainable development; whereas the programme promotes lifelong learning;

F. whereas the objectives and the very nature of the ESC give young people the opportunity to take practical action to protect the environment;

G. whereas the experience of mobility offered by these programmes can change everyday behaviour, and whereas mobility of this kind should therefore be encouraged;

H. whereas Creative Europe has a role to play in promoting culture and the audiovisual media, which can help raise people’s awareness of environmental issues and are also a unique source of creative solutions;

I. whereas freedom of expression and of artistic creation is an inalienable aspect of Creative Europe, and whereas any attempt to ‘green’ the programme should in no way affect its artistic content, which stems from the freedom enjoyed by creators;

J. whereas Parliament has called for an ambitious budget for the three programmes in the next programming period, to help them, in particular, become more inclusive and accessible, and whereas a smaller budget would neither make this possible nor create scope for the introduction of environmental measures without jeopardising other key parts of the programmes;

K. whereas the aim, under the current multiannual financial framework, of devoting 20% of expenditure to climate protection measures cannot be achieved if the data and instruments needed to measure the contribution of the programmes to meeting this aim are not available, and whereas they must therefore be put in place as a matter of urgency;
L. whereas only physical mobility makes for total immersion in, and optimum interaction with, other cultures, and whereas it can therefore only be complemented, and not replaced, by virtual mobility;

M. whereas digital technologies also have an environmental footprint;

N. whereas there are currently few incentives – particularly of a financial nature – to encourage participants in the three programmes to shift to more environmentally friendly means of transport;

**Objectives common to the three programmes**

1. Deplores the Commission’s failure to propose environmental indicators for the new programmes; calls, therefore, for specific indicators to be incorporated into their operating rules; calls for the data gathered to be made public once a year;

2. Calls on the Commission to record systematically the means of transport used so that participants’ individual CO$_2$ emissions can be calculated; takes the view that the Mobility Tool should be used for this purpose and that use of the Tool should be extended to cover all parts of Erasmus+ and the ESC; calls on the Commission to make a similar calculation tool available for journeys undertaken in connection with the Creative Europe programme;

3. Takes the view that the good practices already employed by national agencies and offices and by project developers should be surveyed, coordinated and assessed; calls on the Commission to circulate a list of recommendations once this process is complete;

4. Calls on the main stakeholders in the programmes to inform participants of examples of good practice which they can employ in their everyday lives, perhaps by means of a digital app;

5. Calls on the Commission and on national agencies and offices to take account of the environmental aspects of projects and to evaluate projects accordingly;

6. Urges the Commission to make it possible for participants to choose the least-polluting means of transport, but at the same time not to stigmatise or exclude participants for whom air travel is the only option; calls for special attention to be paid to the outermost regions in this regard;

7. Calls on the Commission to revise the current financial rules so that the additional costs and journey times associated with the use of more environmentally friendly means of transport can be offset; insists that the additional costs be reimbursed in full;

8. Calls on the Commission – particularly in the light of its European Year of Rail in 2021 – to enter into partnerships with European rail and bus companies so that participants are eligible for discounted fares;

**Erasmus+**

9. Calls on the Commission to include respect for the environment among the principles set out in the Erasmus+ Higher Education Charter; urges the Commission to apply this
approach to the whole programme;

10. Emphasises the potential of the European Universities and Vocational Education and Training Centres of Excellence, as they could introduce programmes of excellence for teaching and training in environmental issues, provided sufficient funding is available;

11. Notes that the future European Student Card can do much to make participation in the Erasmus+ programme more environmentally friendly;

12. Points out that the online SALTO platforms in the programme are an excellent source of information and advice for project developers; calls on the Commission to set up a SALTO platform for greening;

13. Stresses the value of the ‘eTwinning’ network aimed at teachers, which enables them to develop and share training modules, particularly on sustainability and climate change, this year’s topics; calls on the Commission to disseminate as widely as possible the annual report on this priority as well as the handy kit for teachers;

14. Urges that, under the Sport section, encouragement be given to joint projects with sports associations on the subject of the environment and nature protection;

15. Considers that encouraging mobility among the staff of local sports organisations would help make them aware of more environmentally friendly ways of organising sports events; calls for greater emphasis to be placed on environmental issues when the European Week of Sport takes place;

European Solidarity Corps (ESC)

16. Takes the view that the quality label which every project developer has to obtain before participating in ESC activities must also cover sound environmental practices;

17. Points out that the Commission can launch calls for thematic projects; calls on it to step up its promotion of the environmental dimension of the ESC by increasing the visibility of these projects on the PASS platform;

18. Calls on the national authorities involved in the ESC to support and actively advise organisations responsible for sending and receiving participants; stresses that they are also able to identify the scope for and set up environmental projects in situ;

Creative Europe

19. Calls on the Commission to draw up, together with the national offices, a charter setting out the environmental principles which every participant in the programme must observe;

20. Calls on the Commission to publish a ‘good environmental practice’ guide covering audiovisual and cultural production, dissemination and event organisation, with a particular focus on transport, energy and waste management and with the aim of making the practices concerned standard for all projects financed by the programme;

21. Urges the Commission to investigate the scope for synergies with Horizon Europe and the new knowledge and innovation community focusing on the culture and creation
sector in the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT);

22. Calls on the Commission to authorise, as a trans-sectoral measure, the establishment of a European network of environmental consultants to advise project developers;

23. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Member States and the national agencies and offices responsible for implementing the three programmes.
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

We are in the midst of a climate and environmental emergency, and Europe’s response, in the form of the ambitious Green Deal presented by the Commission in December 2020, must inform all EU public policies. Parliament declared a climate emergency in a vote taken in November 2019. There is a sense of urgency among many Europeans: in a Eurobarometer survey published in December 2019, 38% of respondents said that climate change and environmental protection were the main political challenges at European and national level.

All sectors of the economy will be forced to examine their production models and make changes, reducing their environmental impact, but above all coming up with innovative solutions which will call for new competences.

The role of culture and education in the fight against climate change and in sustainable development

Culture and education are the cornerstone of this process of societal change. The education of children, apprentices and students and the training of adults helps raise awareness and shape responsible citizens and enables good practices to be shared and disseminated, new competences in the area of sustainable development to be acquired and future devisers of innovative solutions to be trained. Without education there will be no researchers, no engineers and no scientists to help us reflect and fight climate change, nor will there be trained professionals to implement good practices on a broad scale.

Culture has a major role to play in raising public awareness of climate issues. It is also a productive sector which has grasped the nature of the changes it has to make in its practices.

Subject of the report

In this report, your rapporteur puts forward specific proposals to reduce the environmental impact of the three flagship programmes for education (Erasmus+), culture (Creative Europe) and volunteering (European Solidarity Corps) and to fully integrate the programmes into the Green Deal by fostering their incalculable potential. The proposed measures must be ready for implementation by January 2021, the start of the next programming period.

Creative Europe finances projects which will be seen by a wide public in a sector employing millions – an estimated 12 million people work in the cultural and creative sector in the EU.

Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps provide an experience which can change the behaviour of the participants and those around them. These are two programmes aimed primarily at young people, who are especially concerned by environmental matters.

Overall, the three programmes are a means of highlighting good practices, as examples to be followed, but the way they operate must evolve in keeping with the Green Deal.

Inalienable principles: physical mobility and creative freedom

In your rapporteur’s view, two principles must remain inalienable:

– physical mobility, which is at the heart of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes and is often an integral part of Creative Europe projects,
freedom of content and creative freedom. Under Creative Europe, creators and artists must have total freedom over their choice of content, and Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps projects must continue to be shaped by local needs in a bottom-up approach.

Mobility must remain central to the programmes and cannot be replaced by virtual mobility. A recent study by DG IPOL came down in favour of physical over virtual mobility, as the former makes total immersion possible. The value of virtual mobility remains to be determined in certain cases, for example as a way of including people deprived of other opportunities or in certain exceptional circumstances. It can thus be envisaged as complementing physical mobility, for example when planning a journey or undertaking follow-up for a project. It should be noted that virtual technologies also have an environmental impact, a fact which is too often overlooked.

Indicators and data

Your rapporteur has noted the current lack of data on the environmental footprint of the three programmes. In order to determine and evaluate the objectives, we must know where we are starting from; at the moment this is not possible.

So it is alarming to find that no indicators have been included in the draft procedural rules for the 2021-2027 period.

Finally, your rapporteur would like to call attention to the fact that the desired objective of planning more projects – particularly under Erasmus+ – might result in the programme having a bigger overall environmental impact. This is why initially we should focus only on the impact of a reduction in the individual and not the global footprint.

Financial support for green mobility and subsidies

The preference expressed by all the stakeholders surveyed for using less-polluting means of transport should be encouraged, yet opting for a greener means of transport often entails extra cost. While your rapporteur welcomes the change made to the Erasmus+ guide in 2020, with the result that exceptional costs incurred by making less-polluting journeys can be reimbursed, she criticises the use of the term ‘exceptional’ here, together with the fact that 20% of the balance must be paid by the participant. This goes against the idea of inclusion which the programme aims to achieve: all participants should be free to choose the means of transport they use, with no economic barrier.

Your rapporteur would not advocate forcing participants to travel by other means than by plane, a choice which is often made because of the sheer distance involved or the lack of suitable alternatives. Encouraging green mobility should never result in potential participants being excluded.

Your rapporteur welcomes the Commission’s plan to make 2021 the European Year of Rail. It would be beneficial to include mobility programmes such as Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps in the Year of Rail. The participants represent a large group with a critical mass which would be attractive for rail companies. The Commission might draw on the experience gained in preparing for Discover EU, when it formed a partnership which enabled thousands of young Europeans to obtain a rail pass to discover Europe.
Finally, your rapporteur recommends that projects with environmental content or objectives or which deal with a different subject but incorporate green principles should be awarded extra points when they are assessed by national offices and agencies. Your rapporteur takes the view that the carrot is preferable to the stick. It is up to the agencies to select, from a list of European priorities, the national priorities which will determine the award of extra points, and your rapporteur regards it as essential that the European priority linked to sustainable development become horizontal and Europe-wide.

**Everyday life and relations with project developers and receiving organisations**

In addition to mobility between sending and receiving countries, participants’ everyday lives must also be accorded high importance, in particular in the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes. Mobility makes for a change of scene, with an opportunity to adopt new environmental practices (waste sorting, soft mobility, local consumption, etc.).

Universities should be the trailblazers here: since many now have green offices, why not put them in touch with the services responsible for receiving international students? Former Erasmus+ students should also be included. They could give advice, including practical details such as where to shop locally, what organisations to contact, or how to recycle furniture after a few months in the country.

The Commission should provide the tools, with national agencies then taking over and acting as platforms. There will be many solutions, and they must emerge locally rather than being imposed from outside.

Your rapporteur has high hopes of the future European Student Card, due to be introduced by 2025. It should incorporate features conducive to a more sustainable lifestyle, such as discounts for using public transport, and it should encourage students to make virtuous choices.

There should be a focus on the role of organisations responsible for sending and receiving participants in the European Solidarity Corps, as they make the arrangements for participants’ transport, accommodation and everyday lives, including the loan of bicycles or the provision of passes for public transport. They should be listened to when they share good practices and advised by the agencies running the programme. Since they are rooted in the local area, they can identify the projects which are sustainable and have an environmental thrust.

Finally, we should highlight and applaud the role of national agencies and offices, which have already embarked on the green transition, in particular with their waste management. Many have already devised laudable practices which could usefully be introduced systematically.

**Specific training in new competences under Erasmus+**

Erasmus+ is a programme we should look to for developing trans-European training courses in environmental matters. In addition to the ‘conventional’ projects, two very promising pilot initiatives are financed under Erasmus+: European Universities and Vocational Education and Training Centres of Excellence. Some of the participating consortiums have already started to set up teaching or training programmes dedicated to sustainable development and the fight against climate change. Your rapporteur is convinced of the huge potential of these two initiatives to train future European professionals in the area of sustainable development and also of the need to provide them with a proper budget.
Sport

Your rapporteur would also like to emphasise the significance of sport, which is important for health and, when played outside, a powerful driver when it comes to raising awareness of environmental matters.

Communication, awareness-raising and sharing good practices

Your rapporteur welcomes the fact that a significant number of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps projects have developed a responsible approach and are concerned with environmental issues. The same is true of the culture sector, which has embraced the issue of the environment, devising new techniques to help it adapt, encouraging people to use public transport and in some cases employing eco-consultants.

These good practices need to be coordinated.

Your rapporteur therefore stresses the need for the following to be developed and widely disseminated: a handbook of shared good practices, internet sites, training for agencies of national authorities, platforms, etc. There are a host of ideas of interest to stakeholders in education and culture which need to be developed in the short term.

Work also needs to be done in the area of communication, as many potential participants are not aware that their environmental projects might be eligible for financing from EU programmes. This should therefore be highlighted at Erasmus Days and during European Green Week, the *Joli Mois de l’Europe* and European Sports Week. It should also be promoted on dedicated websites, taking care not to overshadow other kinds of projects.

Your rapporteur believes that integrating a sustainability dimension into these programmes is a precondition for the Green Deal to succeed, in order both to change people’s behaviour throughout Europe by sharing tried and tested practices among people in the 27 Member States and to develop the competences of the future and make more effective use of digital and energy-related technologies in the creative sectors.

Put succinctly, the aim must be to inspire the men and women who will shape Europe from today onwards.