



TEXTS ADOPTED

P9_TA(2020)0211

Effective measures to ‘green’ Erasmus+, Creative Europe and the European Solidarity Corps

European Parliament resolution of 15 September 2020 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 its resolution of 17 April 2020 on EU coordinated action to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences³,
- 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 European 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

¹ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0005.

² Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0078.

³ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0054.

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 sport¹,
- having regard to the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 establishing 'Erasmus': the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport (COM(2018)0367),
- having regard to 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 sport²,
- having regard to the report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the 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 sport³,
- 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 programme⁴,
- having regard to the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 June 2018 establishing the European Solidarity Corps programme (COM(2018)0440),
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2018/1475 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 October 2018 laying down the legal framework of the European Solidarity Corps⁵,
- 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 the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 establishing the Creative Europe programme (2021 to 2027) (COM(2018)0366),
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 of the European Parliament and of the

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0324.

² OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 5.

³ OJ C 252, 18.7.2018, p. 31.

⁴ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0150.

⁵ OJ L 250, 4.10.2018, p. 1.

⁶ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0323.

Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Creative Europe programme (2014 to 2020)¹,

- having regard to the report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council of 30 April 2018 entitled ‘Mid-term evaluation of the Creative Europe programme (2014-2020)’ (COM(2018)0248),
 - 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)²,
 - having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 on the voluntary participation by organisations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS)³,
 - having regard to the undertakings given by the then Commissioner-designate for 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 (A9-0141/2020),
- 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; whereas the European Green Deal also aims to raise public awareness and involve citizens in climate action by developing a comprehensive European agenda; whereas such an approach should also be built on rethinking education and training, culture and youth programmes; whereas environmental protection, sustainability and fighting climate change should be mainstreamed across the programmes and promoted as transversal skills;
- B. whereas Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 calls for action to combat climate change and its impact, and whereas SDG 13’s targets include the improvement of education, awareness-raising and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation and impact reduction;
- C. whereas the COVID-19 crisis is having a dramatic impact on people’s everyday lives, notably with respect to mobility, education and physical access to culture, art and sport; whereas the three programmes have also been significantly affected by the crisis; whereas, in the aftermath of the pandemic, it is important to preserve the cultural values of the Union and to rebuild the European image for future generations; whereas the cultural exchange and interaction that is facilitated through the three programmes will help Europe out of the crisis, which has become more than just a health crisis;
- D. 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 good practices, and whereas this potential can be exploited throughout

¹ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 221.

² OJ C 263, 25.7.2018, p. 19.

³ OJ L 342, 22.12.2009, p. 1.

the next programming period to develop innovative ways of tackling environmental challenges;

- E. whereas the Erasmus+, European Solidarity Corps (ESC) and Creative Europe programmes all have an impact on the daily lives of millions of Europeans and underpin better cohesion and cultural understanding across the Union, in candidate and accession countries, neighbourhood countries, and throughout the world through the participation of third countries;
- F. whereas, although these programmes do not primarily focus on the environment, they nonetheless contribute to the green transition through their substance and scope, by shaping thinking that is respectful of the environment and the climate and by forging a society anchored in mutual understanding and respect; whereas their essential nature should therefore be preserved;
- G. whereas large-scale sporting and cultural events bring people together;
- H. whereas the Erasmus+ programme can do much to foster sustainable development; whereas the programme promotes lifelong learning;
- I. whereas the objectives and the very nature of the ESC give young people the opportunity to share knowledge and take practical action to protect the environment;
- J. whereas the experience of mobility offered by these programmes can be a transformative experience for participants, and can influence their everyday behaviour, and whereas mobility of this kind should therefore be encouraged;
- K. whereas Creative Europe plays a key role in promoting the arts, culture and audiovisual content and in supporting high-quality media; whereas these are key pillars of sustainable development, which help towards building more resilient societies; whereas cooperation in these areas can develop instruments to raise people's awareness of environmental, climate and sustainability issues and can thus be a unique source of creative solutions throughout Europe and the world, via participating third countries;
- L. whereas there is a need to coordinate a joint initiative to develop sustainable practices in the cultural and creative sectors; whereas such an initiative requires that the costs associated with 'greening' activities be eligible under project support;
- M. whereas freedom of expression and of artistic creation is an inalienable aspect of Creative Europe, and whereas efforts to 'green' the programme must respect this freedom; whereas green thinking in project implementation can be encouraged by factoring environmental aspects into project evaluation;
- N. whereas a substantial share of environment-related projects have been implemented over the 2014-2020 period;
- O. whereas the programmes should be accessible and free from discrimination; whereas it is essential to put in place concrete measures to make the programmes more inclusive for people with fewer opportunities, especially people with disabilities;
- P. 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, climate and sustainability measures without jeopardising other key parts of the programmes;

- Q. 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 are not available, and whereas they must therefore be put in place as a matter of urgency;
- R. whereas physical mobility enables immersion in, and optimum interaction with, other cultures; whereas virtual exchange and learning are a valuable complement to physical mobility, but do not provide the same experience;
- S. whereas digital technologies also have an environmental footprint;
- T. 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 and behaviours; whereas more environmentally friendly means of transport tend to be less accessible and affordable;

Objectives common to the three programmes

1. Notes that the concepts of climate and the environment, and even of mobility, cover only a part of the goals which the European Green Deal seeks to pursue; considers that the aim is to go beyond the purely environmental issues and to develop a fairer society for all, on the basis of rational and complementary use of resources, responsible consumption, living alongside one other in respect of one another's differences and taking into account regional and national complementarities; stresses that educators, artists and creators are also central to achieving this societal change and that the Erasmus+, Creative Europe and European Solidarity Corps programmes play an important role in achieving the broader aims of the European Green Deal;
2. Welcomes, in this regard, young people's determination to contribute to the implementation of the EU efforts towards sustainability and choosing 'Sustainable Green Europe' as one of the European Youth Goals;
3. Highlights the importance of the three programmes in promoting cooperation and innovation in European education, culture and youth policy and the positive social and economic impact of mobility; stresses that the programmes can help develop creative and innovative solutions that will make it possible, in the event of a crisis such as COVID-19, to ensure that education and cultural activities can continue effectively; calls on the Commission and national agencies and desks to show maximum flexibility and to provide support to participants and project developers so as to enable them to resume their activities post-pandemic in a sustainable way;
4. Stresses the need for a baseline assessment of the programmes' contribution to and impact on environmental and climate goals to inform the design of their future implementation; deplores the Commission's failure to propose environmental, climate and sustainability indicators for the new programmes; calls, therefore, on the Commission to propose specific indicators to the co-legislators that are to be incorporated into the regulations governing the new generation of programmes;

considers that such indicators must be carefully determined, on the basis of robust research and a common methodology and provide a thorough analysis of both the programmes' contribution to environmental and climate goals (e.g. through their objectives and project calls), and their environmental impact (e.g. through the forms of travel supported); stresses that such indicators must take into account the characteristics of the relevant programme beneficiaries in order to avoid creating excessive burdens; calls for a report with the data gathered to be presented to Parliament and made public once a year;

5. Calls on the Commission to record and calculate systematically participants' individual transport-related carbon footprint; 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 analyse the possibility of making a similar calculation tool available for journeys undertaken in connection with the Creative Europe programme; urges the Commission to make any relevant data collected easily accessible to the public, in addition to its reports on the programmes, highlighting good practices; recalls that any digital tools and apps must always comply with data protection legislation;
6. Underlines that implementing bodies play a positive and active role in suggesting how the future programmes could best address environmental issues and how to steer beneficiaries to become more environmentally sensitive; takes the view that the good practices already employed by national agencies and desks and by project developers should be surveyed, coordinated and assessed; calls on the Commission to work with stakeholders to develop and circulate a list of recommendations based on the analysis of good practices; recommends that a label be developed to certify and give visibility to responsible environmental practices and to reward environmentally innovative and promising projects in each of the programmes;
7. Notes the lack of information on the funding available within the three programmes for projects on the environment, climate and sustainability; calls on the Commission, national agencies and desks to improve communication in this regard and give more visibility to environment issues in the project setting and among receiving organisations and participants;
8. Calls on the main stakeholders in the programmes to inform participants of, and actively promote examples of, good environmental and consumption practice, which they can employ in their everyday lives while participating in the programme, and to inform participants of the environmental impact of their actions; considers that a range of digital tools can be effective, including pre-mobility online courses and potentially a digital app;
9. Stresses the key role played by organisations that receive participants, including the 'green offices' and existing networks located in destination towns and cities, and the importance of existing networks, such as Erasmus+ alumni, in promoting a sustainable way of life by sharing practical recommendations and useful tips at local level in the town, region or country in which they are located;
10. Calls on the Commission to encourage national agencies, national desks and project developers to register with the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) in order to evaluate, communicate and improve their environmental performance and

enhance the sustainability of their own operations; calls on the Commission to encourage and coordinate the efforts made by national agencies and desks to reduce their environmental footprint, for example through the use of sustainable promotional material, prudent management of travel, increased use of video-conferencing and waste reduction; believes that sustainable practices within national agencies and desks will encourage participants to adopt more sustainable consumption habits;

11. Calls on the Commission and on national agencies and desks to establish criteria to enable the environmental aspects of projects to be factored into project evaluation, thus promoting greener practices, while consistently upholding the principle of creative freedom and evaluating each project in line with the programme objectives;
12. Underlines the potential and the value of virtual learning and exchange when it comes to enabling mobility programmes to continue in the exceptional context of the COVID-19 crisis; calls on the Commission to encourage the use of virtual formats as a complement to physical mobility, where appropriate, both to reduce unnecessary travel and to ensure that, where participants are unable to travel, they can nevertheless benefit from the programmes;
13. Urges the Commission to encourage and enable participants to choose the least-polluting means of transport, such as the train, but at the same time not to stigmatise, discriminate against or exclude participants for whom air travel is the only viable option; calls for special attention to be paid to the outermost regions and to rural and remote areas in this regard;
14. 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 are reimbursed in full and additional journey times accounted for in grant allocations; calls on the Commission and the Member States to put in place effective financial assistance schemes to ensure that people who need the programmes can have access to them;
15. Calls on the Commission – particularly in the light of the planned European Year of Rail in 2021 – to enter into partnerships with European rail operators so that participants are eligible for discounted fares; stresses that similar initiatives could also be developed with bus operators, in particular for remote and rural areas and those not served by rail transport;
16. Recognises that participants in the programmes travel across their host country and beyond to explore the local culture; calls upon the national agencies and desks and project staff to encourage ‘slow travel’, eco-tourism and the use of environmentally sustainable travel options for long-distance journeys as well as for local travel;
17. Notes that smart use of digital technologies, artificial intelligence and robotics have the potential to increase social inclusion and reduce the programmes’ carbon footprint; emphasises the need to tackle the digital divide by ensuring access to digital infrastructure and equipment and the acquisition of digital skills, which are prerequisites for a smart digital transition; highlights the importance, in this regard, of a more ambitious Digital Education Action Plan, supported notably through the Erasmus+ programme;

18. Points out, at the same time, that the expansion of digitalisation can have an environmental impact; recalls that all three programmes are characterised by the use of digital tools, in particular Creative Europe, and calls on the Commission to take account of their digital environmental impact; encourages the Commission to look at ways of reducing the environmental footprint of digital tools, including websites and software, used within the programmes; calls on the main programme stakeholders to promote the use of more environmentally friendly digital tools; underlines that joined-up policy-making is required across the future digital agenda and the European Green Deal to combine the digital transformation with environmental policy;
19. Underlines that effective measures to green the Erasmus+, Creative Europe and European Solidarity Corps programmes will cost money and insists that new measures must not further erode the already extremely limited budgets of the programmes; points, in this regard, to the value of promoting effective synergies and complementarity with other relevant funding programmes, such as the Structural Funds, the Just Transition Fund, LIFE, InvestEU, Horizon Europe, in particular under Pillar II through the 'Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society' cluster, the current knowledge and innovation community on Climate, and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology – in particular, the proposal for it to house a Knowledge and Innovation Community, dedicated to the cultural and creative sector;
20. Recalls that many of the three programmes' beneficiaries are often small and struggle with complex administrative requirements; calls, therefore, on the Commission to provide guidance to national agencies and desks, and to support and foster dialogue with stakeholders to ensure that synergies are meaningfully achieved in practice;

Erasmus+

21. Calls on the Commission to include respect for the environment, sound environmental practices and environmental protection among the principles set out in the Erasmus+ Higher Education Charter; urges the Commission to apply this approach to all sectors covered by the programme and to take action to ensure that the principles are adhered to; encourages cooperation between national agencies, partner universities and students' associations to build information and advice on sustainability and environmentally sound practices into welcome and other integration activities;
22. 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, climate and sustainability issues for a wide range of stakeholders and learners and support research projects in this area; stresses that the new initiatives will only be able to achieve this with sufficient funding for the Erasmus+ programme in the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework;
23. Notes that the future implementation of the European Student Card can be a significant step in making participation in the Erasmus+ programme more environmentally friendly, since it will represent a shift from a paper-based process to a streamlined digital process, which must be of a high quality, in addition to being inclusive and accessible, thus also simplifying the management of the mobility cycle; notes that the European Student Card can be developed to offer access to services that promote more environmentally friendly life choices; calls on the Commission to make every effort to expedite the roll-out of the European Student Card;

24. Points out that the online Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities (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;
25. 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 – the annual theme for 2020; calls on the Commission to disseminate as widely as possible the annual report on this priority as well as the toolkit for teachers; draws attention, in this regard, to the importance of developing European e-learning platforms that will make it possible, in the event of a crisis such as COVID-19, to ensure the continuity of learning;
26. Urges the Commission and the Member States to take measures to support the development of school programmes on climate change and sustainability, in both primary and secondary education; considers that both Key Actions 2 and 3 of the Erasmus+ programme can help to support such efforts through targeted calls for proposals on environmental education and the exchange of best practices between schools and teachers;
27. Calls on the Commission, in the initiatives it takes to coordinate the European Higher Education Area and the European Education Area, to include a list of green criteria for regional and national education authorities on the facilities made available to schools, the inclusion of institutions in public transport networks and ensuring respect for the environment and energy resources;
28. Underlines that Erasmus+, through its support for formal and non-formal education and training and for youth participation activities, is crucial for awareness-raising among Europeans, in particular young generations, to encourage them to have an active and informed position on sustainability and relevant policies and to become engaged and conscious future citizens; highlights, in this respect, the major role played by youth and civil society organisations in sharing best practices and implementing projects raising younger generations' awareness about sustainability; considers that Erasmus+ should also contribute to enhancing knowledge of climate change and the environment among youth workers;
29. Urges that, under the Sport section, encouragement be given to joint projects with sports associations on the subject of the environment and nature protection, healthy and sustainable lifestyles, innovation to promote more environmentally sound practices in sport and the organisation of sustainable grassroots sports events; points to the need to make sports events more environmentally friendly and considers that Erasmus+ can help develop and promote best practices in that regard; considers that ESC volunteers could support the organisation of sustainable grassroots sport events;
30. Considers that long-term, locally implemented programmes and 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, climate and sustainability issues when the European Week of Sport takes place;
31. Highlights the importance of sustainable participant inclusion in the local community,

with the aim of achieving active citizenship and cultural exchange, as a key element in the Erasmus+ programme; urges the Commission to explore which programme actions can be developed in depopulated rural areas where active community engagement can help, for example, in promoting nature conservation and cultural heritage curation;

32. Points to the possibility of establishing a relationship with the European Parliament Ambassador School Programme, in order to enrich both programmes to involve participants in the local community and to build knowledge of what European citizenship entails among local students;

European Solidarity Corps (ESC)

33. Recalls that protecting the environment is considered an important solidarity activity within the ESC, consistent with the current legal basis, the Commission's proposal for the new programme after 2020, and Parliament's first reading position;
34. Takes the view that the quality label, which every organisation that sends or receives a volunteer has to obtain before participating in ESC activities, should, over time, also cover sound environmental practices; recalls that organisations participating in the ESC are often small associations; insists, therefore, that they need targeted support to enable them to adopt more sustainable practices;
35. Points out that the Commission can launch calls for thematic projects; calls on it to step up its promotion of the environmental, climate and sustainability dimension of the ESC by increasing the visibility of these projects on the Placement Administration and Support System (PASS) platform;
36. Calls on the national agencies 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 to help set up, environmental projects in situ and to ensure that volunteers are made aware of sound environmental practices in their work and their daily lives; encourages the creation of digital tools to facilitate the dissemination and exchange of good practices and of experiences among participants;
37. Calls on the Commission and national agencies to promote projects in less popular destinations to stimulate the development of the local economy and sustainability, while encouraging the exploration of new destinations;

Creative Europe

38. Emphasises the enormous potential of the cultural and creative sectors in encouraging citizens to act sustainably; notes that museums, cultural and community centres, performing arts, literature, visual arts and cross-arts initiatives could promote sustainability and contribute to reversing the climate trend, provided that sufficient funding is available; stresses the importance of sustainability and good environmental practice in the preservation of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage;
39. Calls on the Commission and the national desks to consult stakeholders from the cultural and creative sectors and to collect information on existing charters in the various fields of artistic activity, with a view to drawing up a charter with a set of environmental principles that every participant in the programme must observe; considers that the process of determining the right principles should be sector-led,

enable mutual learning and take a broad view of the issues to be addressed, which should include recycling, the circular economy and behavioural change, among both cultural creators and consumers;

40. Calls on the Commission to undertake comprehensive research and consult with stakeholders to develop a sector-specific strategy and a ‘good environmental practice’ guide covering audiovisual and cultural production, dissemination and event organisation, with a particular focus on transport, energy, resource-efficiency and waste management and with the aim of making the practices concerned standard for all projects financed by the programme; recalls that such standard practices must not come at the expense of quality cultural and audiovisual projects and events;
41. Underlines the importance of green public procurement in ensuring the supply of sustainable and environmentally-friendly goods and services at cultural events; calls on the Commission to lay down common green public procurement criteria for the cultural sector and to develop a tool to evaluate the environmental impact of cultural events; emphasises, furthermore, the environmental impact of audiovisual content production and calls on the Commission to use the MEDIA strand of Creative Europe to promote best practices in the audiovisual sector, with respect to sustainability, energy efficiency and the protection of the environment;
42. Calls on the Commission to include sustainability and respect for the environment in the selection and the evaluation criteria for the European Capitals of Culture; insists that the European Capitals of Culture must also observe the charter setting out the environmental principles mentioned above;
43. Calls on the Commission to authorise, as a trans-sectoral measure, the establishment of a European network of environmental, climate and sustainability consultants to advise project developers and Creative Europe Desks; considers that best practices should be shared and made public;

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44. 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.