



Brussels, 15 July 2025  
(OR. en)

11614/25

EDUC 324  
JEUN 200  
SPORT 30  
SOC 526  
CADREFIN 84

#### COVER NOTE

From:	Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Ms Martine DEPREZ, Director
date of receipt:	15 July 2025
To:	Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union
No. Cion doc.:	COM(2025) 395 final
Subject:	REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS on the interim evaluation of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme and the final evaluation of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme

Delegations will find attached document COM(2025) 395 final.

Encl.: COM(2025) 395 final



Brussels, 15.7.2025  
COM(2025) 395 final

**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE  
COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE  
COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**on the interim evaluation of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme and the final  
evaluation of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme**

{SWD(2025) 186 final}

## Introduction

Erasmus+ is the European Union's programme for education and training, youth and sport. Since 1987, the programme has given over 16 million <sup>1</sup> people of all ages a chance to live and learn in another country in or outside the EU, helping to promote a sense of European identity and shared values. It has also substantially contributed to cross-border cooperation and policy development in the above-mentioned fields.

This report is submitted to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions pursuant to Article 24(6) of Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council <sup>2</sup> and is accompanied by a staff working document presenting the evidence and underlying data. It provides observations of the Commission on the final evaluation of the 2014-2020 programme and the interim evaluation of the 2021-2027 programme. It builds on the support study carried out by an external independent contractor, the reports submitted by the EU Member States and third countries associated to the programme on the implementation and impact of Erasmus+ in their territories <sup>3</sup>, as well as other studies, programme monitoring data, and inputs from interested parties.

The evaluation covers Erasmus+ actions carried out from 2014 to 2020 (final evaluation) and from 2021 to 2023 (interim evaluation) in all Member States, third countries associated to the programme and third countries not associated to the programme. The programme had a total budget of EUR 16.2 billion for the period 2014-2020 and EUR 10 billion for the period 2021-2023 <sup>4</sup>.

Despite the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Erasmus+ supported learning mobility abroad of over 6.2 million participants in the 2014-2020 period and around 1.6 million in 2021-2023 helping increase their skills and competences. The programme has become more inclusive and has increased the share of people with fewer opportunities amongst its participants, going from around 10% in the 2014-2020 period to 15% in 2023. It funded over 136 000 distinct organisations in the 2014-2020 programme and more than 77 000 from 2021 to 2023, supporting their cooperation and improving their practices. Demand for funding exceeded the available funding for most programme actions during both periods.

Over both programme generations, Erasmus+ created significant European added value for individuals and organisations and played an essential role in promoting common EU values and a shared European identity. Stakeholders see it as highly relevant in the light of the socio-economic challenges that Europe is facing both internally and globally.

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<sup>1</sup> At 1 April 2025, Erasmus+ and its predecessor programmes had provided learning mobility opportunities abroad to 16.6 million people (see [data visualisation page](#)).

<sup>2</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing Erasmus+: the Union Programme for education and training, youth and sport and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013, OJ L 189, 28.5.2021, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Iceland, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Türkiye. All associated third countries, except North Macedonia, submitted a national report.

<sup>4</sup> Based on annual financing decisions between 2014 and 2023 under budget headings 1-2 (Erasmus+ 2014-2020) and 4-6 (Erasmus+ 2021-2027).

The Erasmus+ programme, in its current structure <sup>5</sup>, promoting lifelong learning from pre-primary school to adult learning, including youth activities, has been rolled out since 2014. It has now reached a high level of stability, acceptance, and support from key stakeholders from all its fields. The overall stability of the programme's structure, management and implementation modes <sup>6</sup> between the two programming periods has notably contributed to its efficient delivery.

This report takes into account recommendations put forward in the national reports and the support study, reflecting some limitations in the evidence base, particularly in relation to causality and efficiency, proposes adjustments to the implementation of the 2021-2027 programme and considers suggestions for improvements for the successor programme.

## Effectiveness

### Erasmus+ 2014-2020

**The programme effectively delivered the expected outputs <sup>7</sup> and results <sup>8</sup>** despite significant disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic that heavily affected the end of the programming period. The programme's success lays both in the volume of mobility activities, with **more than 6.2 million of learners and staff supported in over the period**, in the improvements it brought to participants' skills, organisations' practices, and its influence on policies.

Erasmus+ yielded **significant benefits to individuals, allowing them to develop skills**, such as capacity to learn, critical thinking, resilience, linguistic skills and improving academic performance, with programme participants experiencing better results than those who had not taken part in it. On the basis of national data, causal link can be identified in relation to higher education student mobility, showing improved graduation results for undergraduate students in STEM fields. It effectively fostered European identity and active citizenship, in particular through the activities implemented in the youth field. For staff, across various sectors, the programme enhanced international networking and fostered transnational partnerships. In particular, on average, 84% of staff participating in learning mobility indicated they had improved skills needed for their jobs.

The programme effectively supported **quality improvements in the participating organisations**, fostering the creation of new practices and methods, as stated e.g. by 64% of surveyed beneficiary organisations <sup>9</sup>. The establishment of organisational networks involving a large number of players from various sectors helped boost innovation capacity and improve the knowledge flow between educational organisations and business, thanks also to actions such as the Knowledge Alliances. The programme also led to the creation of new partnerships and internationalisation strategies, as confirmed e.g. in the national reports of all countries.

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<sup>5</sup> In the 2014-2020 programme, sport actions and Jean Monnet activities were separate from the three key actions. In the 2021-2027 programme sport actions were integrated into the structure of the key actions, while Jean Monnet Actions remained separate.

<sup>6</sup> The programme is implemented through a combination of indirect management, mainly by national agencies, and direct management by the European Commission and its Education and Culture Executive Agency.

<sup>7</sup> Number of mobility participants, organisations, projects.

<sup>8</sup> For example, increased skills, competences, quality improvements at organisation level.

<sup>9</sup> Survey of socio-economic actors, Support study.

Erasmus+ 2014-2020 indirectly supported the **achievement of Europe 2020 headline targets for education and 2020 benchmarks targets for European cooperation in education and training**, improving students' attitude towards education/training and the attractiveness of higher education institutions, including via the piloting of initiatives with high potential for transformational impact, such as the European Universities alliances. It influenced policy changes with the integration of innovative practices into national educational systems and triggered initiatives pursuing professionalisation and recognition of youth work as an occupational qualification. Systemic 'spillover' effects demonstrate programme impact beyond individual participants and organizations. However, challenges remain in terms of scaling up the outcomes of successful projects or long-term initiatives and translating them into impactful national reforms.

- For the future, the Commission is exploring – together with Member States and stakeholders – an investment pathway for European Universities alliances, aiming to offer a long-term comprehensive funding approach for the European Universities alliances.
- The Commission is also exploring the possibilities for ensuring strengthened funding paths, including for scale up and sustainability of the Centres of Vocational Excellence and Erasmus+ Teacher Academies initiatives.
- Furthermore, the Commission will pilot European School Alliances to increase pupil and teacher mobility, cross-border cooperation between schools and school authorities, and innovation.

The programme aligned well with the EU's political priorities addressing jobs and growth, advancing them either directly or indirectly. Its international dimension effectively contributed to priorities focusing on strengthening EU's role as a global actor. Leveraging its role of education programme, Erasmus+ indirectly contributed to the migration policy priority, supporting the integration of newly arriving immigrants.

The programme performed well in terms of **promoting equity and inclusion** in the youth sector, thanks to the setup of a dedicated strategy, tools and structures allowing to deploy targeted support to young participants and youth organisations and to provide guidance to national agencies. This comprehensive set of measures allowed to reach 29% of young people with special needs and fewer opportunities among the programme's participants in 2020. The lack of a harmonised definition, approach and strategy at programme level limited the possibility to increase the proportion of disadvantaged participants in the other sectors too. The programme approach to inclusion remained largely sectoral, with the youth sector being the most equipped to address these challenges.

### Erasmus+ 2021-2027

**Erasmus+ 2021-2027 is on track to achieve its key outputs <sup>10</sup>, results <sup>11</sup> and impacts <sup>12</sup>.** Over 1.6 million learners and staff and over 77 000 distinct organisations have benefitted

<sup>10</sup> Number of mobility participants, organisations, projects addressing horizontal priorities.

<sup>11</sup> Participants with fewer opportunities, learning outcomes and behaviours linked to horizontal priorities, organisations developing high quality practices.

<sup>12</sup> Enhanced skills, European sense of belonging/identity, increased capacity of organisations, contribution of policy development, strategies and cooperation in programme fields.

from programme support from 2021 to 2023<sup>13</sup>. These outcomes were achieved despite significant disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic that heavily affected its early stages.

The programme continues to provide **significant benefits to individuals**, including for participants with fewer opportunities, fostering a sense of European identity, upholding EU common values and increasing knowledge about European integration. 99% of participants have benefitted from their mobility experience and 95% consider they have increased their sense of belonging. Based on qualitative evidence, the recognised **lasting effects on organisations** include improved teaching practices, increased opportunities for cooperation, capacity building, organisational development and internationalisation. Smaller organisations often experience the most substantial benefits. Continuity between programming periods for most actions and the continued participation of organisations in Erasmus+ has facilitated organisational learning and increased capacity to deliver positive outcomes for learners and staff. At **system level**, Erasmus+ 2021-2027 provides significant contribution to the building of the European Education Area, it is key for achieving the objectives of the European Youth Strategy, and is instrumental for strengthening the European dimension of sport, contributing to effectively advance policy cooperation in all programme fields.

**Jean Monnet Actions** effectively promote civic engagement, cross-national academic dialogue and knowledge of the EU, in particular as regards European integration and the functioning of the EU.

Erasmus+ 2021-2027 has demonstrated resilience in responding to significant external challenges, such as COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The programme was able to respond and adapt quickly thanks to flexibility in its implementation and enhanced support mechanisms.

The evaluation concluded that **the four transversal priorities** introduced in the 2021-2027 programme (inclusion and diversity, digital transformation, green transition, participation in democratic life and civic engagement) have had **positive effects**. Among these, **inclusion and diversity** has been widely perceived as the most successfully embedded and well-implemented priority across all programme actions. A strategic approach and specific support measures have enabled more people with fewer opportunities to take part in the programme (around 15% in 2023), with the highest participation rate in the youth sector (28%). Evidence showed that participants with fewer opportunities benefit from the participation in Erasmus+ in comparable ways and extent as other participants in terms of personal development, skills acquisition, social integration and career prospects. National reports also highlighted an increased commitment from stakeholders to address the needs of people with fewer opportunities.

The evaluation also identified various and persisting inclusion-related challenges. While financial barriers emerge as a key concern, it is usually the cumulative effects of different barriers<sup>14</sup> that prevent participation in Erasmus+. The evaluation also noted the need for additional funding to fully meet the programme's objectives, especially for engaging participants with fewer opportunities, including those from the outermost regions.

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<sup>13</sup> The 2021-2023 data was not complete at the time of the evaluation. This applies in particular to the newly introduced actions, such as sport mobility.

<sup>14</sup> As defined in the [implementation guidelines](#) to the inclusion and diversity strategy of the programme, these barriers include disabilities, health problems, barriers linked to education and training systems, cultural differences, social barriers, economic barriers, barriers linked to discrimination and geographical barriers.



- The Commission will work towards increasing the outreach of the programme to ensure that opportunities for learning mobility become accessible to all.
- To further increase the participation of people with fewer opportunities, the Commission will review the implementation of the framework of inclusion and diversity measures, provide more guidance for the interpretation of the definition of ‘people with fewer opportunities’, explore additional inclusion support measures and review the current funding rules.

The **digital transformation** priority helped to focus investment on the development of digital skills and supported the digital transformation of education systems. 29% of Erasmus+ participants from 2021 to 2023 reported that their attitude towards using digital technologies had changed after their mobility experience, and that they were more inclined to use them in their studies or work. Progress was noted also in the implementation of the **Digital Opportunity Traineeships**, intended to help boost the digital skills of learners and staff, with close to 45 000 participants in the period from 2021 to 2023.

Erasmus+ 2021-2027 supported the **green transition** by increasing participants’ knowledge and promoting behavioural changes on environmental and sustainability matters, incorporating green practices into projects and contributing to the development of green skills. Around half of programme participants declared that they had improved their environmental awareness and were willing to apply more sustainable behaviours. The use of more sustainable travel options for Erasmus+ mobility has gradually grown due to rising incentives and behavioural changes. In 2023, these options were used by 1 out of 3 mobility participants. **DiscoverEU** emerges for its contribution to the green transition priority by offering young people the chance to explore Europe through sustainable travel, with a total of 179 209 passes issued by end 2023. Nevertheless, at the time of the evaluation, limited financial support at the beginning of the programme, and additional time and costs were seen as an obstacle to green travel <sup>15</sup>.

- The programme will continue to invest in developing green and digital skills, increasing knowledge and promoting behavioural changes on environmental and sustainability matters, supporting meaningful digital learning environments, adopting more sustainable practices, and decreasing the carbon footprint of mobility activities by incentivising a greater use of greener means of transport.
- The programme will further reinforce its support to basic skills, including citizenship, and STEM skills, in line with the Union of Skills communication.

The programme had a positive impact on promoting **participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement**. 57% of participants in Erasmus+ mobility activities from 2021 to 2023 acquired knowledge about democratic values during their mobility, and 39% were more willing to engage in democratic processes and community activities. Feedback from stakeholders confirms that the programme contributes to promoting common EU values and fostering European identity.

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<sup>15</sup> The support for green travel was increased in 2024 Call, after the cut-off date of the evaluation.

- Building on the example of the programme inclusion and diversity strategy, the Commission has further provided a conceptual and operational framework for both the green and digital priorities through dedicated implementation strategies <sup>16</sup>, and is working on a participation strategy, addressing citizenship and engagement in democratic processes.

## European added value

### Erasmus+ 2014-2020

The 2014-2020 programme delivered **substantial European added value**, thanks to its volume, wide scope, broad fields, variety of target groups and geographical coverage. This makes Erasmus+ unique **across Europe and beyond**, and unmatched in scale, scope, and ability to foster collaboration among diverse beneficiaries, influencing the implementation mechanisms of other EU programmes, in the Member States and beyond.

The programme also generated added value for individuals and organisations who took part in it, compared with those who did not, with benefits ranging from improved skills and academic performance to enhanced opportunities for cooperation across borders, creation of networks, and increased internationalisation.

Erasmus+ 2014-2020 was found to play an essential role in raising awareness of shared EU values and EU topics, with stronger results in youth activities. For example, participation in the Youth Dialogue is positively associated with increased active citizenship and involvement in democratic life, while participation in the European Voluntary Service is associated with a positive feeling towards the EU, compared to non-participants. Through Jean Monnet Activities, the programme supported the development and spreading of knowledge on European integration matters for a better understanding of the functioning of the EU.

Erasmus+ 2014-2020 conveyed added value by promoting European policy cooperation and coordination, fostering peer-learning and supporting evidence-based policy development, which would not be achievable through national resources alone. Added value is also conveyed through cooperation between Member States and third countries associated to the programme, providing equal participation opportunities and supporting some of these countries in their EU accession preparations. Although only limited to the higher education and youth fields, the activities involving non-associated third countries facilitated cooperation with organisations across the world, contributed to build capacity and to strengthen the EU's role as global actor on the international scene.

### Erasmus+ 2021-2027

The interim evaluation shows that **Erasmus+ creates significant European added value** compared to what could be achieved by Member States and other countries at regional, national and international level. Erasmus+ funds over half of credit mobility in the Member States. In countries like Cyprus and Ireland, it finances 100% of short mobility and more than 90% in 11 other countries <sup>17</sup>. Without Erasmus+, it is likely that the benefits deriving from the programme for individuals and organisations would be drastically reduced.

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<sup>16</sup> The implementation guidelines for the [green](#) and [digital](#) strategies were published in November 2024.

<sup>17</sup> Source: Eurostat data.



Internationalisation of education, training, youth and sport sectors would be reduced to close to zero in several countries, especially in the youth and sport sectors.

The **2021-2027 programme has increased its added value** compared to the previous programming period, effectively addressing emerging needs and expanding its reach towards new target groups such as adult learners and sport staff, yielding significant benefits for individuals and organisations who take part in the programme, compared to those who do not. Its added value becomes clear when it comes to promoting **common EU values, a shared European identity, intercultural understanding and fostering a European sense of belonging, as well as for creating future-proof skills.**

Erasmus+ also spreads its **significant effects internationally**, at a higher degree than its predecessor. The programme provides full access to the associated third countries and plays an essential role in many of these countries providing access to learning mobility and cooperation opportunities, as well as to opportunities and support for policy development. This is particularly valuable in the perspective of some of these countries' **preparation for EU accession**. The enhanced **international dimension** supports people-to-people contacts, cooperation with institutions and organisations across the world, capacity building, and promotes EU values and international relations globally. The interim evaluation points out that the international dimension of the programme should be reinforced. This is key to continue supporting the EU's strategic priorities, through further cooperation with non-associated third countries and synergies with EU policy objectives and strategies in international cooperation, such as the Global Gateway.

- The programme will continue supporting EU's strategic priorities through synergies with external policy instruments and strategies like the Global Gateway, A New Agenda for the Mediterranean and the upcoming Pact for the Mediterranean.
- The Commission will consider options for the possible association of third countries to the programme, in particular the candidate countries and potential candidates.
- In addition to expanding mobility opportunities within Europe, the Commission will also explore increasing the possibilities for mobility experiences and cooperation opportunities with industrialised third countries and third countries with emerging economies, with a view to attracting global talents to address skills shortages and strengthen EU competitiveness.

## Efficiency and simplification

### Erasmus+ 2014-2020

The management structure of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 relying on a combination of direct and indirect management modes has proven **efficient and fit for purpose**, with good coordination and communication mechanisms. The distribution of resources, accounting for full-time equivalents and administrative expenditure, appeared balanced between both programme management modes, considering the volume of budget and number of projects managed under each type of management.

**The evaluation confirms the key role held by national agencies in supporting the implementation of the programme at national level**, shaping support activities on the basis on specific needs and national priorities, and giving tailored assistance to participants and organisations during the project lifecycle. Their role was particularly important during the COVID-19 pandemic and widely recognised by stakeholders.

The 2014-2020 programme funded around 160 000 projects for a total of EUR 17.5 billion. Despite a 40% budget increase compared to its predecessor programmes, **the programme was not able to fully satisfy the high demand** across the different sectors, resulting in low success rates. It is estimated that around EUR 8.9 billion additional budget would have been necessary to fund more than 44 000 quality proposals which were rejected for lack of funds.

The programme was assessed as **cost-effective**, but to varying degrees for its key actions. **Key action 1 confirms high cost-effectiveness**, providing substantial benefits to a large number of learners and staff in Europe and beyond. The limited comparability of other interventions with similar objectives underscores its EU added value. When – despite limitations - this comparison is carried out, the cost of the programme (EUR 16 per day/learners and EUR 180 per day/staff <sup>18</sup>) appears highly competitive. The cost-effectiveness of key action 1 is further enhanced by the absence of significant areas of inefficiencies, coupled with the use of simplified cost options and high demand.

The cost-effectiveness of key action 2 was more challenging to evaluate as a whole, given the variety of its outputs across programme sectors. Considering this variety, key action 2 helped achieve programme objectives at organisational level, contributing among others to foster international cooperation with third countries in higher education and youth, reinforcing cooperation with business and enhancing internationalisation. These benefits, together with the high demand, show good cost-effectiveness.

Similarly, a comprehensive assessment of the cost-effectiveness of key action 3 is hindered by the highly diversified character of these activities, made of multiple sub-actions with small budgetary envelopes. These activities are considered valuable due to their unique role in supporting European policy coordination in programme fields, the implementation of EU tools, and the creation of networks, which could not be achieved without the programme intervention.

The generalised use of unit costs in key action 1, which accounts for the largest share of programme funding, has enhanced the efficiency of the whole programme. However, the use of real costs for some activities under key action 2 and key action 3 made management and reporting more complex for both beneficiaries and implementing bodies, leading to some inefficiencies. The monitoring system of the programme also showed some limitations due to inadequate coverage of specific areas of the programme intervention, and difficulties to link the measurement of system level indicators to the intervention.

## Erasmus+ 2021-2027

**Learning mobility activities (key action 1) confirm high cost-effectiveness** <sup>19</sup>. Compared to the average cost of mobility (EUR 22 per day/learner and EUR 215 per day/staff member <sup>20</sup>), these activities brought significant benefits to learners, staff and their organisations. In its initial phase, the programme was affected by mobility restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the demand for mobility surged <sup>21</sup> once activities resumed. This

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<sup>18</sup> Staff mobility is more costly due to a shorter average duration and higher subsistence costs.

<sup>19</sup> This applies also to international credit mobility supported through the budget contribution from external policy instruments.

<sup>20</sup> As in the 2014-2020 period, staff mobility is more costly due to shorter average duration and higher subsistence costs.

<sup>21</sup> Except for the demand of learning mobility of adult learners, which was limited at the beginning of the current programming period.

raised concerns as to whether the budget would be sufficient, in particular, to further increase the access of people with fewer opportunities. The extension of the accreditation scheme, giving organisations a simplified access to funding every year to implement their planned mobility activities, has reduced costs for the assessment of key action 1 proposals, the time required for project selection, as well as for submitting grant requests, increasing the cost-effectiveness of key action 1 compared to the previous period.

Evidence indicates **cost-effectiveness of cooperation activities among organisations and institutions** (key action 2). Cooperation partnerships and small-scale partnerships are recognized as cost-effective. The demand for funding under key action 2 is high, calling for increased budget allocation as well as for simplifying the requirements for application, implementation and reporting of actions under direct management, enabling wider participation of small organisations.

Based on qualitative evidence, the evaluation highlighted **long-term and systemic benefits of actions supporting policy development and cooperation** (key action 3). However, there was insufficient evidence on their cost-effectiveness due to the longer-term and policy-oriented nature of their outcomes. Similarly, the evaluation of the **Jean Monnet Actions** revealed limited evidence at this point in time, particularly for newly introduced initiatives in school education and in vocational education and training (VET). Nonetheless, perceptions of positive cost-effectiveness have emerged from stakeholders' consultations.

Despite the general appreciation for the budget increase of the 2021-2027 programme compared to its predecessor (around +76.5%)<sup>22</sup>, the **current programme budget is still not sufficient to fund all quality projects**. For instance, demand for mobility in accredited projects for schools doubled from 2021 to 2022 and more than doubled from 2022 to 2023, with an average success rate of just 17% in 2023 for indirectly managed actions under key action 2. In the period 2021-2023, around 72 000 projects have been granted a total budget of EUR 9.8 billion. Programme monitoring data show that it would have been possible to grant more than EUR 5 billion of additional budget to more than 29 400 additional quality proposals scoring above the quality threshold but rejected for lack of funds (of which EUR 2.2 billion to 3 800 quality proposals under direct management and EUR 2.9 billion to 25 600 quality proposals under indirect management).

The **simplification measures** introduced in the 2021-2027 programme to reduce administrative burden and to widen access to the programme, are viewed positively by stakeholders and have helped streamline the funding rules and minimise administrative costs associated with participation and management. These measures include simplified forms of grants for some activities, such as lump sum contributions for partnerships, the introduction of new types of smaller grants such as small-scale partnerships, and the extension of the accreditation scheme. Given the different level of demand across actions/sectors from country to country, under the current programme, national agencies have higher flexibility to transfer funds between budgetary allocations to address specific needs, ensuring optimal budget absorption. The evaluation suggested that programme procedures could be simplified further in order to further reduce the administrative burden.

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<sup>22</sup> The total MFF envelope of the 2014-2020 programme was EUR 16.2 billion and the indicative envelope of the 2021-2027 programme is EUR 28.6 billion. These amounts include funding from external policy instruments.

- The Commission will further streamline programme rules across its various actions, keeping in mind the specific needs of different sectors, and will explore further measures to simplify access for small and newcomer organisations.

Concerning the programme **management support tools**, the previous set of IT tools used for actions under indirect management, based on outdated technology, needed to be upgraded to meet the evolving demands of Erasmus+. The introduction of new IT systems at the start of the current programming period aimed to address these needs, but their deployment resulted in many inefficiencies in project application, management and reporting stages. Evidence suggests that this hindered programme implementation at the start of the current programming period. Substantial corrective measures have been introduced and multiple issues have been resolved. Such efforts and corrective actions are to be continued.

The programme's **monitoring mechanisms** were found to be appropriate and proportionate, demonstrating improvements throughout the two programme generations in terms of clarity of roles and responsibilities. The indicators used for the 2021-2027 programme provide an effective and comprehensive monitoring framework, even if the emphasis continues to be more on quantitative data, while qualitative data for the analysis of results and impacts is less systematically collected. Areas for improvement include making monitoring activities more systematic and streamlined, improving consistency and clarity of the tools and templates used for reporting results. The evaluation also highlighted some research gaps in key areas of the programme, such as the one of EU values. It also stressed a need to better capture longer-term outcomes for all dimensions of the programme to facilitate its final evaluation through more comprehensive data collections, reducing overreliance on *ad hoc* survey data and enabling higher comparability and cross-country analyses with contrafactual methodologies.

The **anti-fraud** strategies and measures currently in place were assessed as appropriate and robust.

- The Commission will continue to systematically tackle remaining issues with regards to the current IT tools for actions under indirect management.
- To enhance the assessment of the programme long-term causal impact, the Commission will reinforce its monitoring and evaluation system, including enhancing the feeding of its impact indicators. To do so, it will assess options to enable the collection of administrative data on mobility participants' outcomes and perform more longitudinal studies with contrafactual methodologies across its intervention areas.

## Relevance

### Erasmus+ 2014-2020

The programme showed relevance with EU priorities and emerging challenges, adapting over time. It reacted well to the migration crisis of those years, putting emphasis on intercultural dialogue and prevention of radicalisation, supporting integration of refugees by leveraging the role of education. The increased emphasis on digital transformation in the last years of the programme implementation was instrumental to enable a more effective reaction to the challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic. By increasing its relevance and adapting to the changing world, the programme paved the way for its successor, supporting measures that have become more and more relevant over years. This was the case e.g. of the pilots of the European University alliances and Centres of Vocational Excellence, of digital tools like Selfie or blended mobilities.

## Erasmus+ 2021-2027

Erasmus+ 2021-2027 is seen as highly **relevant to the socio-economic needs and challenges** in Europe and beyond, reflecting both high-level EU priorities and emerging issues from recent crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia's full scale invasion of Ukraine, doing better than its predecessor.

The four transversal priorities introduced in the 2021-2027 programme are widely viewed as relevant both at European and national levels and contributing substantially to further enhance Erasmus+ alignment with EU priorities. Through these priorities, the programme strongly emphasises the **digital and green transition**, supporting the development of digital and green skills and the digitalisation and greening of education systems in programme sectors.

Erasmus+ was also found to be very **responsive** to the diverse **needs of its participants and beneficiary organisations across its various sectors**. The enhanced focus and efforts to reach people with fewer opportunities are generally acknowledged, while the use of blended learning and digital tools is seen as a positive step to reach a broader socio-economic range of participants. The programme effectively attracts a wide range of stakeholders, although larger, better-resourced organisations often find it easier to navigate the funding and application processes. Despite the improvements and measures introduced since 2021, further efforts towards greater accessibility and inclusiveness are needed to facilitate access for all.

The programme is responding to **emerging needs related to new challenges posed by technological developments**, in particular the emergence of generative artificial intelligence and the provision of skills to boost **EU competitiveness**. The number of projects and initiatives in the areas of artificial intelligence, digital safety and digital well-being is constantly increasing. Similarly, the programme is investing in supporting the development of future-proof skills to tackle the challenges of competitiveness, as highlighted in Draghi<sup>23</sup> and Letta<sup>24</sup> reports. In this sense, the funding of learning mobility appears key to ensure that the younger generations are equipped with the right skills to face the challenges of a rapidly evolving context, and proof of continuous relevance.

- To further strengthen its contribution to EU competitiveness, the programme will continue supporting the building of skills for life and for jobs, and their circulation through e.g. learning mobility and deepened transnational cooperation, in line with the Union of Skills communication.

Erasmus+ is widely recognised across the education and training, youth, and sport sectors. Awareness remains higher in higher education, showing the need for more targeted communication strategies to raise awareness on opportunities for all sectors. Similarly, the evaluation underlined the potential for additional improvements to promote access to groups which are hard to reach.

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<sup>23</sup> M. Draghi (2024), The future of European competitiveness.

<sup>24</sup> E. Letta (2024), Much more than a market.



## Coherence

### Erasmus+ 2014-2020

The 2014-2020 programme confirms to have good internal coherence, thanks to the strong learning dimension embedded in its activities. The pilots of the European University alliances and the Centres of Vocational Excellence in the last two years of the programming period strengthened its cross-sectoral dimension and appear consistent with its objectives.

The final evaluation of the 2014-2020 programme also confirms its high external coherence. The programme complemented other policy areas and funding instruments with similar objectives, creating synergies in particular with the European Social Fund (ESF) and Horizon 2020.

### Erasmus+ 2021-2027

Erasmus+ 2021-2027 demonstrates **strong internal coherence**, with a clear and consistent structure for its stakeholders, a high degree of complementarity of key actions and an increasing focus on cross-sectoral collaboration. The internal coherence of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 has improved compared to the 2014-2020 period, with a more streamlined and consistent structure facilitating better implementation and improved accessibility. Coherence would still be improved by addressing the separate handling of Jean Monnet Actions to avoid confusion among stakeholders.

The programme **external coherence is high** in relation to **other EU programmes** with similar or complementary objectives, such as ESF+, ERDF (including Interreg) or Horizon Europe. Complementarities concern the programmes' objectives, their design and implementation. Although opportunities for synergies have been reinforced under the 2021-2027 programming period, they so far still appear underutilized. These also include the Seal of Excellence and the new possibility for Member States to transfer funds from shared management programmes, including those funded by ESF+ / ERDF, to Erasmus. Consulted stakeholders showed limited awareness of the Seal of Excellence under Erasmus+, while to date the transfer option has been used by Germany only. Further opportunities for enhancing external coherence are identified in relation to the scope, focus and complementarities with the European Solidarity Corps.

- For the post-2027 programming cycle, the Commission will explore ways to further reinforce the coherence between Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps.
- The Commission will work with national authorities and national agencies to strengthen coordination and cooperation with other EU funding instruments, enhance synergies and develop mechanisms to identify successful synergy practices and foster their replicability.

## Conclusions

Both programme generations have proven successful in delivering a strong European added value, playing a key role in the fields of education, training, youth and sport. While areas for improvement have been identified, both the final and the interim evaluations confirm that Erasmus+ performs strongly across the five evaluation criteria and fulfils its objectives effectively. These findings provide a solid basis for continued implementation of the 2021-2027 programme and lay the groundwork for the post-2027 reflection.