

ERASMUS+ COALITION

FOR STRONG EU PROGRAMMES FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH AND SPORTS

Erasmus+ Coalition joint statement on the revised proposal for EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027

The European Commission's [revised proposal](#) for the next long-term EU budget (2021-2027) brings both hope and disappointment. The strong commitment to European cooperation and public investment demonstrated by its proposed allocation of 1.1 trillion euros, along with 750 billion euros for recovery instrument *NextGenerationEU*, is a positive sign for the future of Europe. Addressing the social and economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis, as well as the green and digital transitions, certainly requires ambitious public investment. In this regard, Europe cannot afford to leave people behind by failing to adequately channel such investment into funding programmes which have a tangible and positive impact on their lives while also helping to tackle the above challenges and contribute to the EU's recovery. However, compared to the Commission's original proposal from 2018, the revision surprisingly reduces the allocation to such programmes.

These programmes fall mainly under the MFF sub-heading "*Investing in People, Social Cohesion and Values*": European Social Fund+, Erasmus+, European Solidarity Corps, Creative Europe and the Rights and Values programme (within the Justice, Rights and Values Fund). When assessing the new draft budget, we see that **the figures for these programmes are cut in comparison with the 2018 proposal and fall below those put forward by the European Parliament**. This lack of ambition is striking given that investing in people, and in initiatives that bring direct benefit to people's lives, is crucial to promote and ensure citizens' faith in a social Europe as well as enable their full participation in society. While the recovery plan's focus on the immediate effects of the economic slowdown is important, **we should remember that a democratic, sustainable and socially cohesive Union, in the long-term, cannot be built on industry and infrastructure alone but on the values, solidarity and competences of its people**. Indeed, the [main priorities](#) of the new Commission and the European Council's 2019-2024 [Strategic Agenda](#) are unlikely to be delivered without ambitious and continued investment for this MFF sub-heading.

Erasmus+ stands out as a particular case in the revised proposal. This is because of the Commission President's previous pledge to support the **European Parliament and European Economic and Social Committee's call for tripling the programme compared to the current**

period. However, in the revision the proposed budget - at 24.6 billion euros in 2018 prices - amounts to a decrease of 1.8 billion euros or 7% from the original proposed envelope of 26.4 billion euros. Even though this is above the reduced envelope of 21.2 billion euros proposed by the European Council in February, it is far from increasing the budget of the new programme to the necessary levels, as [argued](#) by the Parliament's Culture and Education Committee.

We stress that this revised budget allocation will not be enough to deliver on the ambitious and much needed goals of the future programme for learning mobility, cooperation between organisations and support for policy reform across all sectors, not to mention its contribution to implementing the European Education Area, EU Youth Strategy and the European Green Deal, among other priorities. Moreover, the programme's contribution to building a European sense of belonging for the future of Europe should not be neglected after such a crisis. **Valuable new features such as the programme's Inclusion and Diversity Strategy, whose actions aim to ensure broader access and participation, will have little impact without significant additional funding.** Erasmus+ projects with provisions for people from disadvantaged backgrounds or with specific support and assistance needs related to disability tend to be the first hit when less budget is available. A more ambitious budget would help to alleviate this, ensuring a richer diversity of experiences in the programme and showcasing more profoundly the reality of different backgrounds in its final outcomes. Reaching and supporting such target groups likewise requires investment in the outreach and capacity building of beneficiary organisations and managing authorities which, if not attained, will widen further the participation gap. Beyond the inclusion dimension other ambitions for the programme, including those related to 'greening' measures and digitalisation, are equally unlikely to be realised without substantial additional resources.

Together the Erasmus+ Coalition urges the Member States to demonstrate a more ambitious commitment to the social, personal and professional development of people through education, training, youth, volunteering and sport by raising further the proposed budget for this flagship programme. Otherwise, genuine inclusion and access will be sacrificed and we will lose out on incredible innovation from these sectors, driven by citizens and civil society at national and European level, to the detriment of Europe's societies and economies.

[The Erasmus+ Coalition](#), set up in 2015 by the [Lifelong Learning Platform](#) and [European Youth Forum](#), is an informal alliance of civil society and stakeholder organisations with extensive experience in working with Erasmus+ and previous generations of the programme. Both organisations, together representing all categories of programme beneficiaries, coordinate dialogue between the EU institutions and civil society organisations across Europe. The Coalition meets regularly to discuss issues of common concern in the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme.



For more information:



Lifelong Learning Platform

Brikena Xhomaqi, *Director*
brikena.xhomaqi@llplatform.eu
 Andrew Todd, *Policy and Advocacy Coordinator*
andrew.todd@llplatform.eu



European Youth Forum

Alfonso Aliberti, *Policy and Advocacy Team Leader*
alfonso.aliberti@youthforum.org
 Judit Lantai, *Policy Officer*
judit.lantai@youthforum.org