



1st Erasmus+ Annual Conference Austria

Vienna, 06 May 2015

Recommendations to the European Commission

The first joint Erasmus+ Annual Meeting of the Austrian National Agencies for education (OeAD-GmbH) and youth (Interkulturelles Zentrum) held on 6 May 2015 in Vienna addressed the theme of "mobility", as the core issue of Erasmus+.

The goal of the event was to take a critical look back at the first one and a half years of the Erasmus+ programme and discuss the following questions: Is the programme on the right track to achieving its main goals, especially with regard to mobility? Are all target groups being reached? Is it becoming too narrow? Is it becoming too impersonal?

The following ideas/recommendations were formulated by the more than 180 participants in an interactive setting. Unless otherwise noted, the recommendations pertain to the field of education and youth.

I. Frequently expressed desires in relation to programme administration

Simplified programme administration

1. Shorter, easier-to-understand forms (application forms, reports, etc.)
2. Simplified processes
3. Increase in the budget immediately, not just in 2017
4. Simpler, better functioning IT tools in order to reduce administrative work
5. Provision of barrier-free documents/IT tools (e.g. mobility tool) for the performance of Erasmus+ projects
6. More application deadlines in the education field

II. Theme-specific recommendations

Mobility and quality assurance

1. The new programme has made the situation more difficult for smaller project coordinators (e.g. small adult education associations, elementary schools, kindergartens, music universities), as these are competing directly against large institutions, which often have experienced coordinators from previous central projects. Administration and execution of large projects is very difficult for

many institutions, as they do not have the necessary resources for this.

→ The European Commission should create a separate application option for smaller projects.

2. The quality of the advanced training offered in Erasmus+ has declined to a partial degree. A user-oriented assessment system is not adequate for quality assurance.
→ The European Commission and the national agencies must take action and carry out quality assurance (including via Transnational Cooperation Activities).
3. The instructors and staff need advanced training to be able to adequately promote and support "Mobility with quality" (evaluation of mobility, support for outgoings and incomings, etc.).
→ The European Commission should set more clear requirements; persons at the schools, colleges, etc. who are involved in implementing the programme should be offered increased access to advanced training in the field of "Mobility with quality".
4. The quality of mobility is also reflected in the acquisition of intercultural skills.
→ The European Commission should resort to existing instruments for the assessment of intercultural skills.

Mobility and Credit & Recognition

1. At present, there are many transparency and recognition instruments, but there are too few synergies.
→ Participants' desires clearly run toward consolidation of the existing instruments (instead of new developments).
2. Erasmus+ Youth: Project organisations desire support (e.g. by a mentor) in the formulation/documentation of learning results, which are incorporated into the transparency tools (e.g. for Youthpass).
→ The European Commission should support such efforts.

Enhancing employability through mobility

1. Stronger promotion of the benefits of transparency tools at enterprises.
→ The European Commission should support such efforts.
2. Cross-sectoral communication: It would be important to inform labour market institutions and the business world (e.g. Public Employment Service Austria, chamber of commerce) in the Member States about Erasmus+ and to explain the meaning of the programme; EC lobbying in the individual countries would also be helpful.
3. Stronger visibility efforts for target groups highlighting the advantages of the programme (target groups: parents, youth, employers, HR managers, enterprises).
→ The European Commission should support such efforts.

Mobility and language

1. OLS should be made accessible for younger target groups (e.g. for apprentices on two-week mobility programmes).
→ Support of the European Commission for such offerings.
2. The learning of "smaller languages" should also be supported in mobility. The programme should generally provide more encouragement and motivation to learn languages.
→ Participants' desires clearly run toward stronger initiative and promotion work by the European Commission.
3. OLS should supplement language courses, it is not able to replace them.

Mobility to promote equal opportunity and inclusion

1. Improved visibility/marketing of barrier-free receiving institutions (e.g. on E-Twinning, Education Gateway, Epale).
→ The European Commission should promote and support this.
2. Special support options for people with special needs are generally too little known. For example, for a VET trainee using a wheelchair it is possible to assume the actual costs (no lump sum amounts) after prior review.
→ The European Commission should promote these options more.
3. At all levels, there needs to be stronger visibility of the special support options in Erasmus+ for people from socially and educationally-disadvantaged backgrounds.
→ The European Commission should support such efforts.
4. The national agencies and the European Commission should offer networking options for sending institutions in order to facilitate stronger sharing of experience.
5. Offering of workshops/guidelines for applicants and project coordinators in order to initiate inclusion in mainstream projects.
→ The European Commission should support such efforts.