

Motion

Ensuring good governance and youth participation in the management of Erasmus+ National Agencies

signed by: National Youth Forum of Bulgaria (NYF)

co-signed by: Croatian Youth Network (MMH),
National Youth Council of North Macedonia (NYCNM)

Introduction

The Erasmus+ National Agencies have a key role in the development of the youth sector in the European Union (EU), ensuring that young people and youth organisations have equal access to quality opportunities for mobility, learning, capacity development and active citizenship. The European Commission delegates a significant part of its responsibilities related to the implementation of the Erasmus+ Programme, with the goal of bringing it closer to its beneficiaries and addressing the diverse needs of the youth and education sectors at national level. The role of the National Agencies involves:

- Selecting projects to be funded
- Monitoring and evaluating Erasmus+
- Supporting applicants and participants
- Working with other National Agencies and the EU
- Promoting Erasmus+
- Sharing success stories and best practices

Good and transparent governance of these structures is essential for the credibility of the programme, for the implementation of good practices and for ensuring equitable access to resources for young people across Europe.

Developing regular and structured communication channels with youth organisations and other stakeholders has been of great importance for improving information flow and mutual understanding. Regular disclosure of information through public reports, online platforms and stakeholder briefings has ensured transparency and built confidence in the collaboration between youth organisations and National Agencies.

It has also been a necessity for National Agencies to ensure that the perspectives of the youth sector are systematically integrated into their planning and decision-making. This involves actively seeking input from youth organisations and considering their feedback. By doing so, National Agencies are making more informed and relevant decisions.

Concerns

In some countries, youth organisations have raised concerns about limited transparency in decision-making, unclear communication channels, and insufficient consultation mechanisms with National Youth Councils. It should be certain that such cases are clearly addressed so that concerns and potential harm to the programme or to youth organisations using it are prevented. Such concerns include the following:

- These practices can lead to unequal treatment of applicants, where certain organisations may benefit from informal networks or biased evaluations, thereby compromising the fairness and integrity of the programme;
- There is a risk of politicising the management of European programmes for youth empowerment, education and cooperation, which could potentially undermine their core values of inclusion, equal access, and merit-based support;
- Youth organisations and National Youth Councils have limited opportunities to participate in decision-making processes on the management and strategic priorities of the Erasmus+ programmes. This exclusion restricts meaningful stakeholder engagement.

In light of these challenges, it is essential to reinforce transparency, accountability and stakeholder participation within the work of the National Agencies. This is also a necessity for ensuring the future of the Erasmus+ programme and its impact for the development of youth throughout Europe. When decision-making processes within the National Agencies lack clarity and inclusiveness, they undermine trust and create barriers for organisations to engage with opportunities that are giving them fields to develop and be empowered. Preventing such issues could guarantee that the programmes remain a driver of a positive change.

Therefore the European Youth Forum:

- Reaffirms that the National Agencies must operate under transparent and accountable governance structures, and financial guidelines and administrative procedures must be applied equally to all.

- Reiterates the importance of including democratic National Youth Councils and independent youth organisations in advisory and consultative bodies of the Erasmus+ National Agency in their respective countries.
- Calls on the European Commission to set clear and enforceable standards for transparency, stakeholder participation and accountability in the management of National Agencies.
- Urges the European Commission to establish a monitoring mechanism to ensure an appropriate level of inquiry in the countries where there is suspicion of an arbitrary allocation of Erasmus+ funds.
- Encourages stronger cooperation and exchange between National Agencies, the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), and youth sector representatives to improve communication, trust and accessibility.



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