

Erasmus plus

EU long-term budget: Infosheet

Erasmus+

What is Erasmus+?

Erasmus+ is one of the biggest European Union (EU) programmes funded through the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). In other words, the EU's budget for the next 7 years, that supports education, training, youth, and sport across Europe. It provides opportunities for students, teachers, young people, and youth organizations to volunteer, train, study or collaborate internationally, helping participants develop skills, gain experience abroad, and promote cultural exchange and inclusion. Alongside it, the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) is a distinct EU programme that funds volunteering and solidarity projects for young people.

Some important facts

- Young people represent around 15% of the EU's population, yet only around 2% of the MFF is directly allocated to youth-related programmes.
- Erasmus+ reaches approximately 1% of young people in Europe (some estimates go up to 15% when counting indirect reach).
- The Youth Sector in Europe has delivered 2,571 projects coming from 96,288 youth organisations in the past 5 years across EU Member States.
- Demand for Erasmus+ consistently exceeds funding that is available.
- Young people with fewer opportunities make up 35% of Erasmus+ youth participants and over 50% of European Solidarity Corps (ESC) projects, showing how youth organisations help create inclusion, skills, and opportunities for all.
- Many young people from intersecting backgrounds, such as rural areas, lower socio-economic backgrounds, migrant backgrounds, and youth with disabilities, however, still face structural barriers to participation.

Why does it matter?

Erasmus+ is often perceived as a student mobility programme, but it is much broader. It funds youth exchanges, youth participation activities, youth work, grassroots sport initiatives, adult education, and vocational training. Together, Erasmus+ and the ESC are two of the EU's main instruments supporting non-formal education, civic engagement, solidarity, and democratic participation.

Erasmus+ is not only about mobility. It supports:

- Civic engagement
- Democratic participation
- Volunteering
- Youth work
- European identity and solidarity

It is one of the few EU programmes consistently supporting non-formal education.

EU context

Erasmus+ is the EU's programme for education, training, youth and sport, funded directly from the EU's general budget. For the current period (2021–2027), it has around €26–€26.5 billion, while the ESC, a related volunteering programme that runs separately with its own budget, brings the combined total to about €27.7 billion.

An important consideration for decision-making of Erasmus+ is that the budget and the content of the programme are decided in two different processes.

The budget of Erasmus+ is decided as part of the EU's long-term budget negotiations, whereas the content of Erasmus+ is decided by the Erasmus+ 2028–2034 Regulation.

For context, EU budgetary decisions like this aren't made by the Commission alone: the Commission makes a proposal, but it then has to be agreed on by both the Council of the EU (representing the 27 Member States' governments) and the European Parliament (the directly elected body representing EU citizens) before it becomes law.

The new EU long-term budget proposal (2028–2034)

On 16 July 2025, as part of its proposal for the next long-term EU budget (2028–2034), the European Commission proposed merging Erasmus+ and the ESC into one programme worth €40.8 billion. As it is part of the discussions on the overall budget of the EU, this is negotiated by the heads of state and government of the EU Member States.

The next Erasmus+ 2028–2034 regulation

On 16 July 2025 as well, the Commission published its proposal for the next Erasmus+ regulation, which outlines the details of how the programme will look like in the future. As it is mainly about youth and education matters, this is mainly negotiated by the ministries of youth and education of the EU Member States, and Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) working on those topics.

What does this mean for you?

The Erasmus+ programme offers far more than just academic exchanges and formal education. By utilising the Erasmus+ budget, it supports a wide array of initiatives, including learning mobility, local campaigns, youth participation activities and various projects accessible to all young people.

Eligible applicants can access several Youth Grants through Erasmus+, such as:

- **Youth Exchanges**
 - Erasmus+ mobility projects that bring together young people from different countries for non-formal learning, cultural exchange, and collaboration outside formal education.
 - They aim to empower young people (including those with fewer opportunities) to build life and professional skills, develop a European identity and shared values, challenge prejudices, and participate actively in society and democratic life.
- **Youth Participation Activities**
 - These grants fund non-formal activities that empower young people to engage in democratic life at all levels.

- The goal is to foster civic participation and provide platforms for youth to influence the decisions that impact them.
- **Partnerships for Cooperation**
 - These partnerships help organisations improve the quality and relevance of their activities, expand partner networks, and build transnational capacity. By exchanging methods and developing new practices, they boost internationalisation and foster the sharing of innovative ideas.
 - The goal is to enhance institutional practices and build cross-sector capacity to address shared priorities in education, training, youth, and sport through transnational collaboration.

What happens next?

- **European Commission**
 - The European Commission published its proposal for the next Erasmus+ Regulation 2028-2034 in July 2025.
- **Council of the EU**
 - After the Commission's proposal, the Council (EU Member States) met to discuss their opinions and priorities for the Regulation.
 - In May 2026 the Council approved its official position.
- **European Parliament**
 - After the proposal, the European Parliament Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) organised consultations and meetings between the different political groups, and drafted its position on the Regulation.
 - The European Parliament position will be voted officially in plenary in October 2026.

Moreover, heads of state and government of EU Member States will meet in a European Council meeting in October 2026, when it is expected that a preliminary agreement on the EU long-term budget (and the budget of Erasmus+) will be reached.

Want to learn more?

- [EU Youth Programme Unpacked: How Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps Enable Youth Civic Space](#)
- [More Erasmus = More Europe Campaign](#)
- [More ambition for Europe's future, but not as much for Erasmus+](#)
- [Funding Opportunities](#)
- [Start your Erasmus+ journey](#)
- [Erasmus+ programme guide 2026](#)

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