



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

FOR A GREEN AND SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME

EAEA Statement

April 2020

The plans for a Green Deal of the European Union were set out in the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, The European Council, The Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and The Committee of the Regions from December 2019. All European programmes – including the Erasmus+ programme – will support the agenda through a number of measures. The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) welcomes the draft report of the European Parliament on effective measures to ‘green’ Erasmus+, Creative Europe and the European Solidarity Corps and calls for a green Erasmus+ programme that puts social inclusion at the forefront.

Non-formal adult learning contributes to active citizenship, social cohesion and the sustainable development of the environment, economy, but also communities and society at large by promoting a wide range of skills and competences. The Erasmus+ programme is fundamental to supporting innovation and cooperation in the adult education sector, particularly in regions and countries where adult education structures are not strongly developed, by fostering transnational exchange of experience and expertise.

Life skills – including ‘green skills’ and environmental capabilities and competences for a more sustainable lifestyle – are at the heart of EAEA’s approach. EAEA has, for many years, been actively promoting the global development goals, from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals and the European Agenda 2030.

Boosting citizens’ environmental skills while ensuring social inclusion as a priority

We welcome the European Parliament's proposal to make the Erasmus+ programme more environmentally sustainable, as this will also help to strengthen the environmental capabilities of European citizens. To achieve this, the promotion of these competences and skills could be one of the priorities of the calls for projects.

At the same time, social inclusion must remain a top priority. More environmentally sustainable projects must also be socially sustainable, with the aim of achieving the best possible quality of project results. Accessibility of the programme to all citizens must be a guiding principle in all actions and calls for proposals financed by EU funds.

Using the potential of digital technology for meetings and events

Under Erasmus+ there is a great potential for reducing greenhouse gas emissions caused by frequent travel in projects to transnational partner meetings and learning opportunities. They could be replaced by online

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meetings and training where possible. The Coronavirus crisis has shown that online meetings are appropriate for continuing joint work on projects as a consortium and that online learning can be an appropriate substitute for face-to-face learning. The same funding rules should apply to online meetings and training as to physical meetings and training, i.e. as if all participants were in one place.

Additional support to leave no-one behind

Where face-to-face meetings and learning opportunities are essential, particularly when training disadvantaged groups, more sustainable means of transport to host countries should be covered by project grants to ensure that these costs are not passed on to learners or beneficiary organisations. The Erasmus+ programme could also support more sustainable events and transnational meetings by providing additional funding for all measures taken by applicant organisations and project partners to make their event and meeting provision 'greener'.

Experience and evidence from adult learning providers in Europe shows that adult learners often need to take time off work to participate in learning mobility. As 'green mobility' generally takes more time, additional travel time should be funded by the Erasmus+ programme to avoid leaving even more vulnerable groups of learners behind. This should also apply to support staff accompanying physically or otherwise impaired learners. However, more travel time requires additional financial support from the Erasmus+ programme.

Synergies with other programmes

A number of EU-funded programmes, such as the LIFE programme, Horizon2020 and DEAR, are promoting a greener and more sustainable Europe. Synergies should be sought with these programmes and resources should be pooled. Moreover, access to these programmes should be facilitated through a central information and application tool used for all programmes.

Avoid administrative burdens

The European Union must ensure that 'greening' does not impose any additional administrative burden on applicant organisations, which must ensure that all project activities meet certain sustainability criteria. This also applies to the National Agencies, especially when assessing KA1 and KA2 applications. Clear rules for the assessment of sustainability criteria must be established and communicated to the National Agencies and potential applicants.

The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) is the voice of non-formal adult education in Europe. EAEA is a European NGO with 130 member organisations in 43 countries and represents more than 60 million learners Europe-wide.