



Policy paper on the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028-2034

— *outcomes from the EU Youth Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, September 2025*

The Danish Presidency of the Council of the European Union appreciates the opportunity to share the following policy paper regarding the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028-2034¹. The policy paper presents recommendations adopted by youth delegates during the EU Youth Conference, which took place in Copenhagen, Denmark, 21 - 23 September 2025.

Recommendations by the youth delegates:

Safeguarding a youth chapter with an earmarked budget of 15%

Volunteer-led youth organisations struggle accessing Erasmus+, because of lack of resources and capacities. A strong youth chapter with an earmarked budget of 15% is imperative to safeguard the youth-led and grassroots nature of youth organisations. This youth chapter should include micro grants and youth operating grants. Furthermore, it should be accessible to democratically elected youth organisations from EU candidate countries.

Distributing Erasmus+ 2028-2034 grants before the start of the mobility

According to the ESN survey V, two thirds of students are receiving their mobility grants after the start of the mobility opportunity. This creates and reinforces the economic disparage between students. Therefore, higher education institutions should ensure the Erasmus+ 2028-2034 grants are distributed to students before the start of their mobility.

¹ As elaborated on in the [Proposal for \(...\) establishing the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028-2034 \(...\) published by the European Commission on 16 July 2025](#).

Ensuring a dedicated space for youth volunteering and solidarity

A dedicated space should encompass the current core values of the European Solidarity Corps while distinguishing it from other skill-building mechanisms primarily focused on the labour market and recognising the importance of experiences acquired through volunteering for personal development and communities. This could be achieved through a dedicated Key Action Point, pillar, or any other method that ensures significant priority and relevance, potentially being part of a Youth Chapter of the Erasmus+ 2028-2034. This is in order for volunteering and solidarity to receive earmarked funding, attention and structural equality within the Erasmus+ 2028-2034, allowing it to become an umbrella target for budget allocation for diverse activities.

Addressing external challenges facing young people

We recommend keeping the existing Erasmus+ priorities as they are highly relevant, with some updates. Young people face a dynamic world where flexibility, trust, and active engagement are crucial. They are facing increasing disinformation and global instability. We recommend that Erasmus+ 2028–2034 prioritises adaptability as a broad horizontal priority which in programs can be adjusted and accurate to the need of youth civic society, ensuring young people can adapt and act effectively. This should be done by preparing youth workers, strengthening youth organisations, and creating dedicated funding, supporting standardisation of youth infrastructure, youth work and youth information.

Creating dedicated Erasmus+ 2028-2034 funding stream for soft skills and citizenship skills

While the Erasmus+ 2028-2034 rightly prioritises professional skills, a separate funding line must ensure sustained investment in soft skills and non-formal education. Citizenship skills — e.g. critical thinking, democratic participation, intercultural dialogue — cannot be fully developed through professional training alone. Erasmus+ 2028-2034 should therefore allocate specific funding for innovative initiatives such as digital citizenship games, non-formal traveling exchanges, and other initiatives that enable European youth to practice citizenship through intercultural cooperation. This balance safeguards European goals of creating active, responsible citizens alongside skilled professionals.

Simplifying the application and reporting process for Erasmus+ 2028-2034 opportunities

Young people face barriers in applying for Erasmus+ opportunities due to the complicated application process. Therefore, we recommend the mandatory provision of native plain language in all materials, including reporting materials. Furthermore, we recommend that the application and reporting process is individualised and simplified and proportionate to grant-size. This should be done by utilising less complicated forms, mentoring and oral application options as well as a support point, that can be accessed by phone and by e-mail to support individuals' needs. This can

lower entry barriers for youth-led and grassroots organisations and individuals as well as make Erasmus+ accessible beyond large institutions.

Promoting preparedness, resilience and peacebuilding through Erasmus+ 2028-2034

Nowadays, global conflicts and crises are affecting youth in both Europe and abroad. Young people and Europe are unprepared to face these crises. Therefore, we recommend more focus on resilience and peacebuilding within the Erasmus+ 2028-2034. This should be done by (a) introducing a dedicated program priority that enables access for youth organisations and volunteers to training for the development of skills necessary to address upcoming threats (b) strengthening access to the programs in neighbouring countries affected by extremism, shrinking civic spaces and other crises in order to create more resilient democracies on our borders.

Introducing Erasmus+ Youth as a distinct section within the Erasmus+ 2028-2034

Many young people confuse Erasmus+ youth opportunities with higher education programmes, which reduces youth engagement. To address this, Erasmus+ 2028–2034 should establish a separate Youth section, within which volunteering activities are kept as a key element, and this section should have its own budget allocation, branding, and communication strategy. Youth work has unique approaches and values that differ from formal education. Clearer visibility would make opportunities easier to understand and more attractive for young people outside higher education. This should be supported by dedicated outreach campaigns, separate programme materials, and consistent branding that highlights non-formal education, mobility, as well as youth participation opportunities.

Background on the EU Youth Conference

The EU Youth Conference brought together youth delegates from EU Member States, countries of the European Economic Area, EU candidate countries as well as from other non-EU-countries². In addition, representatives of International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations (INGYOs)³ and the European Youth Forum participated in the conference.

Eight working groups were formed during the conference, focusing on different aspects of the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028-2034. Each of the working groups formulated three recommendations, and through a subsequent plenary voting procedure, one recommendation was chosen from each working group by a simple majority. This policy paper presents the eight recommendations adopted by the national youth delegates at the conference.

² Non-EU countries: Armenia, Belarus, Kosovo.

³ Association des États Généraux des Étudiants de l'Europe (AEGEE-Europe), All Together in Dignity Fourth World (ATD Fourth World International), Erasmus Student Network (ESN), The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI) Youth & Student Organization (IGLYO) and World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM).