

Interim Evaluation of the European Education Area

Contribution of the
Erasmus Student Network



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Introduction to ESN's contribution to the interim evaluation of the European Education Area

The Erasmus Student Network (ESN) is the largest organisation representing and supporting mobile learners in the European Union and beyond. ESN works on every aspect and stage of the mobility experience, from the promotion of mobility opportunities to the reintegration of mobile learners after their experiences by creating vibrant alumni communities that give back to their societies. Through its research and policy activities, ESN has become a key actor in European discussion about learning mobility and the internationalisation of education, but ESN is way more than an alumni engagement and advocacy organisation. **ESN's key activity across its 44 countries and more than 500 local student organisations are dedicated to the support of current, future and prospective mobile learners.** Every year ESN local volunteers support more than 350.000 thousand of them, working closely with all the institutions and stakeholders involved in mobility.

The vision for the European Education Area (EEA) was set by the Commission in 2017. Later on, in 2019, the Commission's President, Ursula von der Leyen, committed to making the EEA a reality by 2025. The Erasmus Student Network is pleased to see many positive developments and steps taken by the European Commission towards achieving the European Education Area by 2025. Even though the EEA spreads over all sectors of education, in this contribution paper ESN focuses mostly on the field of higher education as one of the six dimensions of the EEA, and shares its feedback and recommendations.

EEA targets in higher education

Concerning higher education, the EEA's framework has set only one target, striving for at least 45% of 25-35 years-olds to have a higher education qualification by 2030. According to the Education and Training Monitor 2022, this share is 41.2% , and that appears to hold significant potential. However, there is a considerable gender imbalance, with women leading the progress made in tertiary education attainment. Furthermore, there are notable gaps between countries' progress, with eight still remaining below 40%.¹ Socio-economic differences in

¹ Education and Training Monitor 2022

learners' backgrounds represent another important factor for education, with children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds lagging behind. **ESN agrees that more efforts should be made towards equity in education, both at EU and national level, in order to move steadily towards achieving any of the EEA targets.**

While ESN believes that it is imperative to improve access to education for everyone, at all stages of education, and fully encourages lifelong learning, **ESN also believes that learning mobility should be incorporated into the lifecycle of education and should become part of the curriculum.** The European Education Area plays a vital role for the EU's political priority to promote the “European way of life”, and that could only be achieved through making learning mobility the norm in education. In this sense, **ESN recommends that mobility targets are brought back.**

The renewed **European learning mobility framework**, which is among the strategic EEA initiatives in the pipeline, should be backed by a set of indicators and targets that will allow to measure progress, improve the use of data and analyse the effectiveness of public policy. In 2011, the Council Recommendation² on benchmarking of learning mobility created a set of targets that were unfortunately not achieved but paved the way for clear improvements that would have been even higher had not the COVID pandemic arrived. These targets should be adapted to the reality of each sector. **The Erasmus Student Network recommends the creation of a target of 40% of Higher Education graduates in the European Union by the end of 2030 with a learning mobility experience of at least 2 months abroad, and the creation of a new youth mobility indicator that measures participation in any kind of mobility opportunity, including non-formal and informal learning.** Progress on the targets should be published annually in a revamped edition of the Mobility Scoreboard.

EEA Goals and Initiatives in the Higher Education

The EEA aims to create closer and deeper cooperation between higher education institutions (HEIs), joint curriculums, seamless mobility and transnational cooperation between HEIs. ESN welcomes the ambitious higher education package and embraces the EEA initiatives in the sector, deriving from the [European Strategy for Universities](#).

² Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 “Youth on the move”

European Universities Initiative

ESN is fully supportive of the European Universities Initiative (EUI) and celebrates the progress achieved by many of the alliances. ESN is engaged in a majority of alliances through the ESN local associations, and is witnessing many good practices in student engagement. The political ambition surrounding the European Universities is high, often looking up to the initiative as to a revolutionary solution to significantly boost the competitiveness of European higher education, research and innovation globally, in a relatively short period of time. There are several considerations that need to be taken into account to unlock the full potential of the alliances:

- **Facilitating seamless learning mobility:** ESN acknowledges the transformative potential of European Alliances, and firmly believes in the power of the Initiative to contribute to a progressive advancement in achieving seamless mobility, removing barriers to mobility such as portability of grants and automatic mutual recognition of learning outcomes. **The European Alliances should be perceived as a space for testing out different approaches, mechanisms and initiatives in making seamless mobility possible.** If successful, these initiatives could be spilled over to other HEIs, or even the entire higher education sector, increasing even further the impact and significance of the Alliances. The focus should be on facilitating student mobility by enabling flexible learning pathways, improving the use of ECTS, and focus on the learning outcomes.
- **Access to international opportunities and student outreach:** One of the major challenges that the alliances face concerns outreach to students. Even though the alliances create new learning and mobility opportunities, the initiative is still not largely popular among students and this calls for an enhanced approach in communication and outreach. In line with the student-centred approach rooted in the European Universities Initiative, ESN emphasises the importance of engagement and collaboration with student organisations and representatives when planning and conducting outreach strategies and activities. **Peer-to-peer networks should have a crucial role in raising awareness and improving access to learning opportunities, encouraging participation and providing support.** Access to information is considered

a major factor for inclusive education and learning mobility³, and the alliances' efforts in implementing effective promotion is crucial for this objective.

- **Student engagement:** ESN reiterates the importance of advanced student participation in the alliances' development and implementation. Many good examples in establishing student governance structures within the alliances already exist, allowing student boards to participate in the decision-making processes. These opportunities strengthen the sense of belonging for students participating in mobility programmes, and **can have a stronger multiplier effect and facilitate knowledge transfer, retention and dissemination.**
- **Automatic recognition of learning outcomes:** The European University Alliances could have a **key role in advancing automatic recognition and making higher education more flexible.** EUAs are in a unique position to develop systems to obtain administrative data from mobilities taking place between their HEIs, and to involve academics in identifying potential challenges and bottlenecks. This could lead to building mechanisms for effective and continuous decision-making in recognition, reaching new levels of synergy and deeper trust between HEIs. ESN believes that as part of the ongoing discussions on a monitoring framework for the European University Alliances, it is very important to understand which initiatives the Alliances have already put in place to facilitate credit recognition, and whether they have achieved progress.
- **Financial sustainability of the alliances:** In the ongoing discussions on the future of the Initiative from the perspective of ensuring resources for the financial sustainability of the Alliances, ESN advocates for a 7-year funding framework, emphasising its potential to reduce bureaucratic hurdles and enhance alliance efficiency. This proposal recognises the benefits of providing alliances with a stable financial outlook, allowing them to focus more on their core missions. ESN proposes a mechanism for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to request additional funding during mid-term reviews based on their quantitative and qualitative performance indicators. This strategy will encourage HEIs to continually strive for excellence and align funding with tangible outcomes.

³ Allinson K., Gabriels W.,(2021). Maybe it will be different abroad; student and staff perspectives on diversity and inclusion in student exchanges. SIEM Research Report, siem-project.eu

- **Monitoring framework:** ESN welcomes the co-creation process of the monitoring framework which the European Commission has undertaken. ESN highlights the importance of **setting clear priorities in the analysis of the alliances**, evaluating existing practices of alliance members for advancing in key aspects to student mobility, such as credit recognition, grants portability, community engagement initiatives, etc.
- **Collecting evidence:** ESN believes that more data about the performance of the alliances should be gathered and made public. This would enable more active and fruitful cooperation with non-university stakeholders, including students, for the further development and quality functioning of the alliances.
- **Legal status for the European University Alliances:** ESN embraces the ambition for a legal framework governing European University Alliances, recognising the potential for deeper student integration through a more student-centric approach to administrative processes and regulatory matters. The legal status will allow better grant portability, automatic recognition of learning outcomes, simplified internal and external quality assurance processes, and improved communication at all levels to ensure informative value for all stakeholders. ESN also encourages the inclusion of pathways for meaningful student participation within these legal frameworks, advocating for such in the legal statutes of European Universities.

The Erasmus Student Network believes that if these recommendations are further explored and implemented, the full potential of HEIs as central actors in education, research, innovation and service to society will be fulfilled.

Automatic recognition of qualifications and study periods abroad

Automatic recognition of learning outcomes from a period of study abroad is one of the core elements that will encompass the achievement of the European Education Area by 2025. ESN has been monitoring closely the progress in automatic mutual recognition of periods of study abroad, and has developed several recommendations based on its own research through the [SIEM research report \(2021\)](#), [ESNsurvey - XIV edition \(2022\)](#), and preliminary data from the

[ESNsurvey XV](#)⁴, which has collected 23.000 responses from mobile students, full-degree students and non-mobile students involved in higher education in academic years 2021/2022 and 2022/2023.

To create a full picture of the current state of play, it is important to highlight that the correct use of ECTS is supposed to make education more flexible and student-centred, removing administrative barriers and facilitating seamless mobility. However, data from non-mobile learners point to the role which the lack of proper implementation of the 2018 Council Recommendation has on their perceptions of blocking factors to go on mobility. In that sense, **45% of students considered that the lack of flexibility in their degree programmes was blocking their participation**, especially in the case of students from fewer opportunities backgrounds. Besides the broader perception of the level of flexibility, **lack of recognition for the time spent abroad is considered a barrier to participation in mobility by 30% of non-mobile student** respondents in the SIEM research report (2021).

Unfortunately, students' concerns become a real problem, as data from ESNsurvey - XIV edition (2022) shows that **only 71.37% of respondents report receiving full credit recognition of their mobility period**, although considerable differences between countries exist. Furthermore, the most recent ESNsurvey - XV edition (2023⁵) illustrates that the concerning trends in recognition are consistent. While choosing their mobility destination **students consider "Matching courses which can be recognised by my home institution" (66%) as a key factor for their decision**, making recognition the second most important factor, only behind the affordability of the hosting city. Moreover, it's important to note that **42% of the respondents shared that their courses needed to be changed during exchange**.

In order to avoid biases or challenges related to the lack of understanding of "full automatic credit recognition" the ESNsurvey allows open box responses for further elaboration. The analysis of the qualitative data from the ESNsurvey XV identifies the following major issues with automatic mutual recognition:

- Lack of flexibility in degree programmes,
- Trust issues between partner universities,
- Recognition decisions influenced by individual professors,

⁴ The publication of ESNsurvey XV preliminary report follows shortly after the EEA call for evidence closes.

⁵ <https://esn.org/news/esnsurvey-xv>

- A lack of understanding of how the ECTS system works,
- Limited access to information about available courses, and insufficient pre-departure support for preparations related to the learning agreement.

The data shows the existence of systematic challenges, which the EEA struggles to address.

ESN acknowledges the complexity of the topic and understands that there is no silver bullet to solve all the existing issues, but believes that recognition should remain at the very core of the European and national policy agenda in the Higher Education field. **Therefore, ESN recommends:**

- **Enhanced role of the European University Alliances** in advancing automatic mutual recognition and making education more flexible. Alliances are in a unique position to gather administrative data from mobilities taking place between their HEIs, and to involve academics in identifying potential challenges and bottlenecks.
- **Higher education institutions** should provide better support when choosing the mobility destination and when preparing the learning agreement. Informing students how the Bologna process and tools work, and providing information on how credits and grades are transferred will significantly decrease the percentage of students who have to make amendments to their Learning Agreements.
- **Universities should be transparent about the criteria for recognition** that they apply, keeping a track record of the decisions made for recognition, and applying them with an ambition to advance the internationalisation of higher education.
- **Recognition should be based on learning outcomes over specific courses.** Learning outcomes gained through participation in civic engagement activities should be recognised as well. Encouraging students to engage with local communities would fulfil universities' service to society and will stimulate active citizenship.
- **Embedding mobility windows in the learning programmes.** Higher education institutions should be more ambitious and when developing or adapting degree programmes, mobility windows should be part of the learning path, meeting the needs of students and catching up with fast-paced trends in a globalised world with a constantly changing labour market.

- Strengthen monitoring for **national legislation for recognition**, which is a key condition to achieve full automatic recognition of learning periods abroad in Europe. In order to achieve systemic progress, a **top-down approach, where European commitments are followed by national legislation and proper guidance on institutional level also needs to be considered.**
- **Student associations and representatives should be involved in the monitoring process**, especially in countries with lower rates of recognition and satisfaction with the academic experience, by adapting the ECHE monitoring mechanisms at the national level to make them more inclusive.

ESN presents a deeper analysis of the current state of play in automatic mutual recognition in higher education in the policy brief [“How to ensure Automatic Mutual Recognition of Learning Periods Abroad for all students?”](#).

Making learning mobility a reality for all: towards a strengthened the Erasmus+ programme

The Erasmus Student Network has [contributed to the call for evidence for the renewal of the learning mobility framework](#) by providing an extensive analysis of the progress made since the publication of the Youth on the Move Council Recommendation in 2011, a comprehensive “state of play” on learning mobility in Europe with a special focus on Higher Education, and a final set of recommendations that also incorporate direct wording proposals that ESN expects to see in the Council Recommendation.

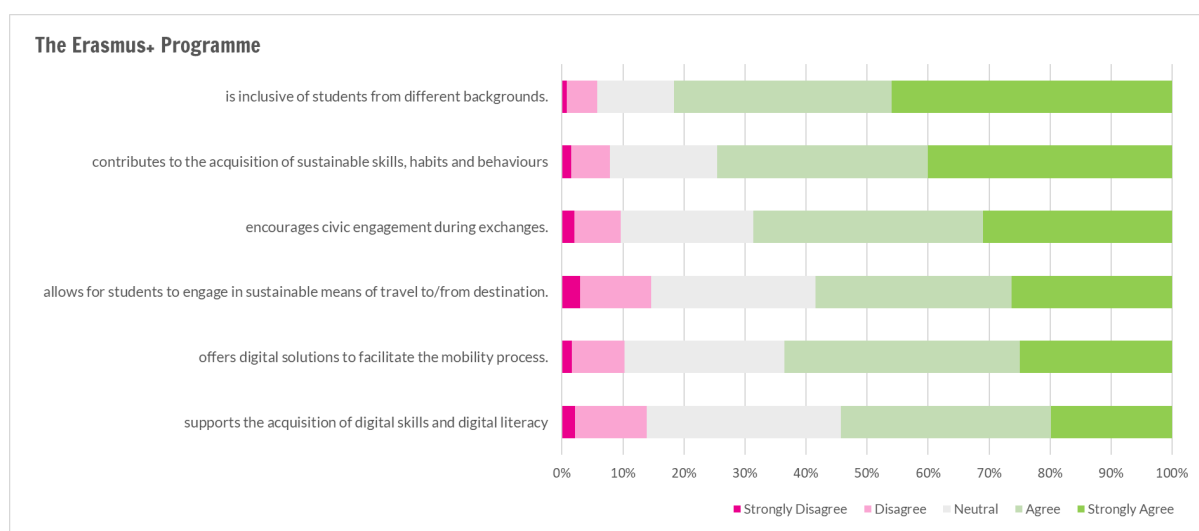
Three concepts constitute the bedrock of ESN’s policy posture towards learning mobility, as described in the General Policies of the organisation: **more mobility, better mobility and more accessible mobility**. The Erasmus Student Network believes in international opportunities for all, with a special focus on the removal of barriers for those who face particular challenges to participate.

In the next pages, ESN analyses the current state of play regarding the priorities and funding of the Erasmus+ programme, followed by a set of recommendations for the improvement of the

current programme. The analysis is based on most recent data from the [ESNsurvey XV](#)⁶, which has collected 23.000 responses from mobile students, full-degree students and non-mobile students involved in higher education in academic years 2021/2022 and 2022/2023.

The priorities of the programme

The 4 horizontal priorities of the Erasmus+ programme have contributed to making it more strategic and to continue boosting its societal role. The results of the ESNsurvey XV show that both Erasmus+ participants and students who did not take part in the programme yet consider the programme lives up to its priorities.



Graphic: Perceptions of Erasmus+ students of the priorities of the Erasmus+ programme. Source: preliminary report ESNsurvey XV

Despite the positive perceptions of students, ESN believes that there is a clear **lack of transformative measures to implement the democratic participation and sustainability priorities, which hinders the full potential of the programme.** As an example, the results of the ESNsurvey show that only 10% of students engage in volunteering activities during their Erasmus+ mobilities. This lack of engagement with the local community, which continues to be one of the main issues with the programme, could be tackled with **better structural support to student and alumni organisations on the ground, better recognition of volunteering opportunities and an enhancement of the tools used to track the learning process of**

⁶ The publication of ESNsurvey XV preliminary report follows shortly after the EEA call for evidence closes.

students, such as the learning agreement, which at the moment does not include any reference to the actual competencies learned abroad, but only the courses.

Concerning environmental sustainability, overall 75% of respondents agree and strongly agree that the programme helps participants acquire sustainable skills and habits. Looking deeper into the results from the [Green Erasmus research](#) (2022), and comparing it with the means of transportation used by students, there is a certain gap between attitudes and practice among Erasmus students when it comes to the adoption of more environmentally sustainable habits and behaviours. **Furthermore, the introduction of the green top-up, although welcomed as a programme novelty, did not lead to a substantial increase in the use of sustainable means of travel among mobility students.**

On the topic of digitalisation, overall 64% of respondents agree and strongly agree with its positive impact. Despite the significant steps towards digitalisation in the new programme period, there are areas where enhancement can be made. In particular, **more focus on dissemination and usability of the Erasmus+ App is necessary to make it work for students.** ESN believes that the central point of digitalisation should be to facilitate participation in Erasmus+ through administrative simplification, and to streamline all procedures so students are not discouraged to take part in an Erasmus+ exchange because the process lacks clarity.

Erasmus+ grants

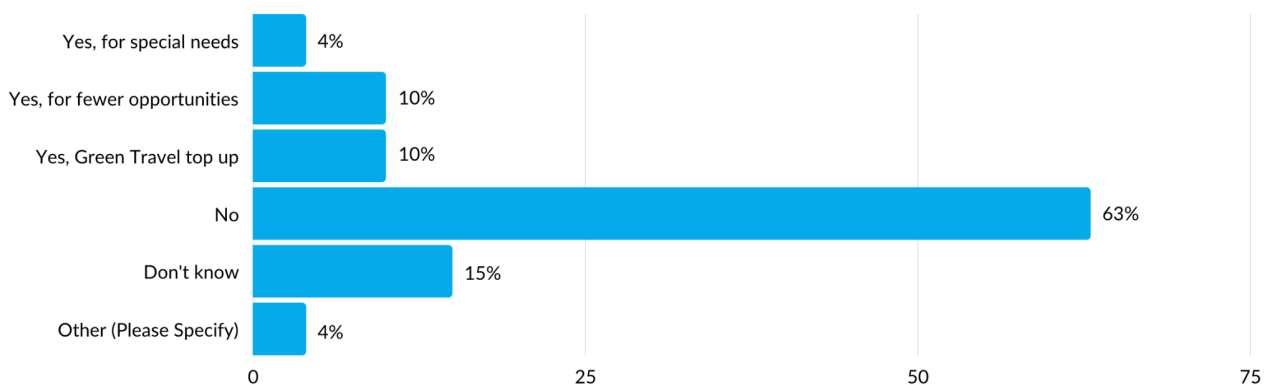
The Erasmus+ programme cannot be inclusive, if there are no decent grant levels which allow students from different backgrounds to participate in the programme. ESN believes that there are 3 key elements that ensure a quality grant:

- **Clarity in the information and processes to receive the funds:** students should be able to easily understand how their grant will work when it will arrive and what they need to do to receive it.
- **Adequate amount that covers most of the living costs:** low grants make the participation of students with less financial means extremely difficult.
- **Timing of the reception of the grant by the student:** students that receive their grant late can not properly cover initial costs if they don't have other sources of income.



Graphic: Scholarship per month. Source: preliminary report ESNsurvey XV

Data from the ESNsurvey XV (2023) indicates that the average grant amount has increased significantly, now standing at nearly €100 more than what was reported in the Erasmus+ Annual Report 2020 (€374): €468. This increase can be attributed to the implementation of top-ups and grant increases by National Agencies, representing a positive development. However, it conceals substantial variations among countries, which are not always linked to differences in purchasing power but rather reflect the opacity of the grant determination system outlined in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide.



Graphic: Use of top-up grants by Erasmus students. Source: preliminary report ESNsurvey XV

The top-up system incorporated in the Erasmus+ programme is one of the most important novelties compared to the previous one. **The fewer opportunities for top-up grants seem to be having an important impact, with an average of 10% of the students reporting receiving one.** Students who receive the top-up report fewer financial difficulties covering their living expenses, pointing to the partial success of the initiative. Unfortunately, a comparative analysis of different programme countries shows remarkable differences, confirming the fears of a

fragmented grant system that makes Erasmus+ programme opportunities too different depending on where people study.

Receiving the grants before the beginning of the mobility experience is fundamental to facilitating the participation of students with fewer financial resources. However, despite efforts by the European Commission to ensure students receive the grant before embarking on their mobility, 36.8% still reported receiving the grant within 30 days after arrival, and 26% received it more than 30 days after arrival. Severe differences exist between countries, with students in South-European countries receiving their grants more than a month after arrival, which is totally unacceptable.

Main suggestions to improve the current Erasmus+ programme

1. Ensure **pre-departure grant payments to all Erasmus+ participants**, changing the grant agreement and ensuring enforcement through the monitoring of the ECHE and the final reports of mobility projects.
2. **Overhaul the governance system of the Erasmus+ programme at the European and national levels**, enshrining the **participation of students and alumni representatives in the decision-making processes related to opportunities for students** (such as the distribution of funding, grant levels and others) in a potential revision of the Erasmus+ regulation and in the next programmes.
3. **Review the system to allocate Erasmus+ funding to Higher Education institutions in the Erasmus+ programme guide**, moving from a system solely based on past performance to an increased focus on institutional inclusion and more support to HEIs with smaller rates of participation.
4. **Develop sector-specific strategies for the implementation of the participation in democratic life Erasmus+ priority**, including specific funding for engagement and mobility promotion initiatives implemented by alumni for Erasmus students through calls coordinated by National Agencies.
5. Create new incentives for Higher Education Institutions to better implement the principles of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education and the priorities of the

Erasmus+ programme, such as a **new way to allocate extra organisational support to reinforce inclusive mobility, in line with the SIEM technical recommendations**⁷.

6. Prioritise **higher grants for students who need the funding by increasing the use of the fewer opportunities top-ups**, and publishing an official report on the different uses of the top-up. Prioritise a more widespread use of this tool.
7. **Review the support measures for sustainable travel** and other sustainability-related measures, implementing the changes proposed in the [Green Erasmus petition](#).
8. Strengthen the ECHE monitoring in the aspects related to full automatic recognition, with a **bigger focus on capacity building and the progress achieved over the programming period**, and by expanding the circle of stakeholders involved in the monitoring process to **student associations and representatives**.
9. Increase the role of the European University Alliances in advancing automatic recognition and making education more flexible, by developing their role in **gathering administrative data from mobility taking place between their HEIs**, and by involving academics in identifying potential challenges and bottlenecks.

Strengthening the global dimension of the EEA

ESN is delighted to see that the international dimension of education has an important place in the European Education Area. The Erasmus+ programme has played a significant role in strengthening the relations of the European Union with the neighbouring countries and the rest of the world. The most significant instrument of the EEA to facilitate international mobility and partnerships, and to build capacity in third countries is the international credit mobility (ICM).

According to the Erasmus+ Annual Report from 2022, in 2021 only 8% of the mobility activities were international, from or to non-programme countries⁸, while at the same time the demand for international credit mobility is high. In the beginning of the roll-out of the new programme period, the delay in approving the budget for international mobility caused many missed learning opportunities for a number of students, in combination with the impact of Covid-19 and the pressure on the education sector. However, a closer look at the implementation of ICM

⁷ [Erasmus Student Network \(2022\). For more inclusive & engaging Erasmus+ mobilities](#)

⁸ Erasmus+ Annual Report (2022)

reveals that there is a positive trend in certain aspects. Data from the ESNsurvey - XIV edition (2022) illustrates that ICM participants:

- have **higher satisfaction rates with the services provided by host and sending HEIs** than participants within programme countries,
- are **less likely to receive their grant payments before mobility** (only 16.95%), but for them it is more likely than for programme country mobilities to receive their grants within 30 days after the beginning of the mobility period (65.40% of ICM students, compared to only 35% for programme),
- the **recognition of credits is overall better** for ICM students.

This progress should not lead to complacency. There is still a lot of work to be done with regards to management, student support, and a bigger focus should be placed towards balancing the flow of outgoing and incoming students through the ICM.

ESN firmly believes that the European Education Area should be built by creating strong cooperation with other countries and continents, enriching the intercultural opportunities for young people. In this sense, ESN is delighted to see that significant efforts are made to widen opportunities for involvement of neighbouring countries, such as opening the European Universities Erasmus+ call in 2023 which allocated funds to support the participation as full partners of higher education institutions from the Western Balkans countries not associated to the Erasmus+ programme. Furthermore, ESN fully appreciates that North Macedonia and Serbia are fully associated with the Erasmus+ programme, but also believes that **the rest of the Western Balkan countries should also be fully affected with it**. Education and learning mobility can foster integration and support these countries on their way to EU accession.

At the same time, ESN raises a bit of caution on the integration model of the Western Balkan countries in the Erasmus+ programme. The financial mechanism of the Erasmus+ programme is built in a way where students from the Erasmus+ partner countries receive higher financial contributions compared to the Erasmus+ programme countries. Changing the status from partner country to a programme country will result in a lower scholarship for students from Western Balkans countries. Therefore, we believe that the European Commission should take in consideration the socio-economic status of the population of Western Balkan countries and offer adequate Erasmus+ scholarships for the students. Allocating more funds, particularly

from IPA III and the NDICI, is important to ensure sufficient support for academic cooperation and enhanced mobility opportunities between Erasmus+ programmes and partner countries.

European Solidarity Corps

The European Solidarity Corps (ESC) programme plays a pivotal role in fostering mobility opportunities within the European Education Area (EEA). The EEA envisions a seamless educational experience across and beyond Europe, facilitating knowledge exchange, cultural understanding, and personal growth. ESC aligns perfectly with this vision by providing young Europeans with the chance to engage in various volunteering, traineeship, and job placement experiences. Furthermore, ESC contributes to the formation of a more cohesive and interconnected European society, promoting solidarity and shared values among its participants.

Acknowledging the current status quo, it is crucial to recognise that Higher Education Institutions predominantly facilitate students interested in Erasmus+ studies and internships. However, as the ESC gains traction and becomes increasingly significant, there lies **an opportunity for HEIs to expand their purview and inform students about different mobility opportunities**. HEIs can work towards gathering pertinent information on ESC opportunities and requirements, ultimately positioning themselves as a valuable information hub for students seeking mobility experiences.

Co-creating the EEA

The European Education Area is being implemented based on the commitment of EU's Member States to work together towards a goal, larger than what they could achieve by themselves. The EEA does not only aim to increase Europe's global role in education and research, but it also aims to achieve common goals and strengthen European education systems, creating synergies where possible and necessary, while at the same time respecting the subsidiarity principle of the EU. It can only be successful if **Member States fully commit to the goals laid out, and execute national and regional measures to pave the way for progress**. The European Commission should support Member States and higher education institutions in creating a

policy framework allowing for seamless and ambitious transnational cooperation between higher education institutions in Europe.

The European Commission's progress report from 2022 points out the initiatives that have been put into action to engage with stakeholders in co-creating the EEA. In fact, there have been several Working Groups, online tools and communities of practice, such as the Education for Climate community, to engage with stakeholders. **ESN welcomes the partnership approach adopted by the Commission, in line with the good governance principle.** At the same time, ESN calls for further expansion of the efforts for engagement. While online communication allows participation even from remote areas, it does not have the same effect as in-person meetings and discussions. Those should not take place only in Brussels, but following the good example of the European Education Summit, **high-level meetings and discussions on the future of European education should be happening all around Europe**, engaging with educators and learners from all kinds of backgrounds and regions. Only through directly involving citizens working on the ground in the field of education and training, the building of the EEA could be as successful as it is ambitious, and address the needs and challenges, building a deeper understanding of national and regional differences. **National authorities should have a key role in outreach and engagement in this project.**

Main research and policy contributions by the Erasmus Student Network with relevance to the European Education Area

- Contribution to the European Parliament Erasmus+ 2021-2027 implementation report, "[The experience of higher education students. Contribution of the Erasmus Student Network](#)", 2023.
- [How to ensure Automatic Mutual Recognition of Learning Periods Abroad for all students?](#), 2023. A short policy brief condensing ESN's perspective on the recognition of learning periods abroad.
- Contribution of ESN to the call for evidence for the Council Recommendation on a new Learning Mobility for all, "[More Mobility. Better Mobility](#)", 2023. This contribution to the call for evidence builds on ESN's main research and policy work over the last few years, including an analysis of the progress made since the publication of the Youth on the Move Council Recommendation in 2011, a comprehensive "state of play" on learning mobility in Europe with a special focus on Higher Education, and a final set of recommendations that also incorporate direct wording proposals.
- ESN launched a [reaction paper to the Youth Action Plan in EU external action](#) in 2023.
- In March 2023, ESN, together with the European Students Union and the European University Foundation published a [joint review](#) of the first years of the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027.
- Erasmus Student Network (2022). [Understanding the experience and needs of exchange students in challenging times. ESNsurvey - XIV edition](#). In its 14th edition, the ESNsurvey collected more than 10,000 answers in 2021.
- Erasmus Student Network (2022), [For more inclusive & engaging Erasmus+ mobilities](#). Technical recommendations to adapt the Erasmus+ documents involved in Erasmus+ student mobilities
- [The Social Inclusion and Engagement in Mobility Research report](#) has been a breakthrough in the existing literature and data collection in the field of inclusive mobility among students from fewer opportunities backgrounds. It collected more than 12000 answers from students, almost 1000 from HEI staff and a number of focus groups and study visits. The final set of recommendations targeting all stakeholders can be a source of inspiration for new inclusion measures in Erasmus+.
- During the first year of implementation of the new Erasmus+ Programme, 2021-2027 ESN published a [reaction to the framework of inclusion measures of the new Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programmes](#). This document provides ESN's analysis of

some of the critical steps in the new framework and recommendations on their implementation.

- The [GreenErasmus research report](#) published in 2022, and carried out as part of the GreenErasmus project coordinated by ESN, compares over 10.000 students' consumer behaviour, travel behaviour, and daily life habits while at home and during their mobility.
- The Survey called "[Student exchanges in times of crisis: research report on the impact of COVID-19 on student exchanges in Europe](#)" collected responses from 22,000 international students and trainees in Europe, who provided information about their mobility experiences during the pandemic.
- The [ESNsurvey 2019](#) research report under the title "**Active citizenship and student exchange in light of the European elections**" explored the impact of Erasmus+ on the civil, social and political participation of young people in Europe. Even though the Survey shows that Erasmus+ Alumni have higher interest and are more likely to vote in European elections than the European average, students who are currently on exchange reportedly vote less, due to procedural barriers. Furthermore, the ESN Survey proves that students with an exchange experience are far more engaged in civil society organisations than the average European youth and that EU students with an exchange experience wish for more rights as EU citizens and for more European civic education in schools.