

**Brussels, October 2018 - Erasmus+: Lifelong learning and social inclusion must lay the foundation for the programme's future**

The Lifelong Learning Platform: European Civil Society for Education welcomes the European Commission's [proposal](#) for the next Erasmus+<sup>1</sup> programme (2021-2027), including the commitment to double the budget, widen access to smaller organisations through "small-scale partnerships" and improve outreach to learners with fewer opportunities and resources. Building on prior statements<sup>2</sup>, we nevertheless perceive two main areas of the proposal which require clarification and further commitment to ensure the programme delivers a high impact and added value for Europe's learners.

**A true lifelong learning programme:**

LLL is glad to see that the **lifelong learning approach** is highlighted in the proposed Regulation but we need to see **how to concretely put this into practice**. The lifelong learning approach and cross-sector cooperation (formal, non-formal and informal learning environments) should be incentivised and supported more throughout the programme's actions, also by utilising the potential of European networks to identify and upscale good practices from local, regional and national levels.<sup>3</sup> Lifelong learning cannot be addressed solely by post-graduation policies - it is a set of competences and attitudes that must be incorporated into all stages, sectors and forms of education. Erasmus+ can support this by further promoting the exchange of innovative practices between these, as well as with sectors beyond the education field. This cross-sector cooperation is needed more than ever to address society's challenges and enhance citizens' personal and professional development. It can also reinforce the programme's social dimension by enabling formal education institutions to collaborate more with Civil Society Organisations, gaining from their expertise in working with vulnerable, hard-to-reach target groups.

**A clear commitment to reach out to learners with fewer opportunities and resources:**

We call for more **concrete mechanisms** to be put in place to ensure the participation of learners and supporting staff from disadvantaged groups. Social inclusion needs to be a **guiding principle across all actions of the programme**, not only for learning mobility. For example, when implementing the partnerships for excellence we must bear in mind that excellence is a fluid concept that depends on the needs at local, regional and national level. A bottom-up, inclusive approach is therefore needed to give all learners and institutions the possibility to define what this excellence means in their own context. Concrete mechanisms could include: a) better pre-financing for such

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<sup>1</sup> LLLP considers '+' a necessary addition to its title to ensure continued visibility of all programme sectors

<sup>2</sup> [Joint contribution of Erasmus+ Coalition on the Future of Erasmus+](#)

<sup>3</sup> [See here for the added-value of European CSOs](#)

individuals to support pre-mobility preparations b) Adjusting travel grants to the socio-economic background of the individual (for students, for example, this could be based on family income) c) Adjusting travel grants to the cost of destination - not only based on national living costs but living costs in specific regions and cities - as well as for learners residing in remote regions d) Additional financial support for accompanying measures for individuals with fewer opportunities e) Incentivising participation of individuals with specific needs by reducing administrative burden and through targeted financing to ensure accessibility to such individuals.

In summary, lifelong learning and social inclusion must be the driving factors behind the Erasmus+ successor. Making this a reality also calls for **ambitious investment**, called for by numerous stakeholders supporting the [ErasmusX10 Campaign](#) as well as the European Parliament's and European Economic and Social Committee's calls for a tripling of the budget. Symbolic budget increases will not be enough to ensure the EU's most iconic and impactful programme reaches beyond Europe's elite and delivers on the high expectations of Europe's citizens and policymakers.

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*The Lifelong Learning Platform (European Civil Society for Education) is an umbrella that gathers 43 European organisations active in the field of education, training and youth. Currently these networks represent more than 50 000 educational institutions and associations covering all sectors of formal, non-formal and informal learning. Their members reach out to several million beneficiaries.*

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