



EUROPEAN EDUCATION AND CULTURE
EXECUTIVE AGENCY (EACEA)

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

ON ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME AND EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

I. BACKGROUND

The Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes (2021-2027) play a key role in developing more inclusive and cohesive societies in Europe, capable of growing in diversity. They promote equal opportunities and equal access, inclusion, diversity and equity through their actions.

The Erasmus+ regulation¹ defines ‘people with fewer opportunities’ as *‘people who, for economic, social, cultural, geographical or health reasons, due to their migrant background, or for reasons such as disability or educational difficulties or for any other reason, including a reason that could give rise to discrimination under Article 21² of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, face obstacles that prevent them from having effective access to opportunities under the Programme’*.

The Erasmus+ Programme Guide³ states that: *“When designing their projects and activities, organisations should have an inclusive approach, making them accessible to a diverse range of participants”*. Similarly, the European Solidarity Corps has introduced shorter and more flexible formats that can adapt to more diverse needs and strengthens its focus on Inclusion and Diversity.

The Inclusion and Diversity measures have been outlined in two main documents: the Commission Implementing Decision - framework of inclusion measures of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps 2021-27⁴, adopted in October 2021, and the Implementation guidelines - Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy (Strategy)⁵.

The Strategy outlines eight types of barriers in accessibility and outreach, as follows: disabilities, health problems, barriers linked to education and training systems, cultural differences, social barriers, economic barriers, barriers linked to discrimination, geographical barriers. They encompass barriers that may be faced by people of different ages and from diverse cultural, social and economic backgrounds, people with disabilities and migrants, as well as people living in less developed, remote and rural areas.

The framework of inclusion measures emphasises the importance to provide specific financial support for people in need of additional support, personalised accompanying measures, and more flexible formats. It also sets up the space and mechanisms for projects dealing with Inclusion and Diversity related issues. Dedicated chapter to Inclusion and Diversity has been included in the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Annual Work Programmes and Annual Reports.

Two SALTO (Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities) Resource Centres work together to support the priority of Inclusion and Diversity across all programme fields: one in the

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/817/>

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT>

³ <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-programme-guide>

⁴ <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/document/commission-decision-framework-inclusion-2021-27>

⁵ <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/document/implementation-guidelines-erasmus-and-european-solidarity-corps-inclusion-and-diversity-strategy>

field of education and training⁶, and one in the field of youth⁷. They contribute to raising the quality and impact of projects and activities, focusing on the Inclusion and Diversity.

The European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) is closely monitoring the implementation of the Inclusion and Diversity measures for the programmes' actions under its direct management. To better address specific access challenges and raise awareness on various options and support mechanisms on Inclusion and Diversity, EACEA has developed its own Inclusion and Diversity Action Plan (Action Plan), building upon the Commission strategic framework.

To facilitate the implementation of the Action Plan, a Network of inclusion officers has been established, composed of representatives from the units dealing with Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, as well as from the horizontal units dealing with the information and communication, training activities, monitoring and reporting. A coordinator of this Network has been designated.

II. VISION AND MISSION

EACEA will fully embrace the Inclusion and Diversity priority through promoting and implementing Inclusion and Diversity measures in the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes to best address the needs of participants with fewer opportunities.

EACEA ensures that the Inclusion and Diversity measures will be implemented through its own capacity building, awareness raising and communication activities, its support for applicants and beneficiaries, and targeted activities within the programmes' actions.

Efforts are made to enable more people with fewer opportunities to benefit from the programmes and facilitate full access to the programmes for the widest possible range of organisations working with people with fewer opportunities.

EACEA has a common understanding of the importance of Inclusion and Diversity in its everyday work and each staff member follows the common Inclusion and Diversity practices, which are set up in this Action Plan.

The Action Plan aims to be a practical tool to inspire, guide and promote practices that have proven to be effective in ensuring access to programmes for people with fewer opportunities, as well as in building inclusive and diverse environments.

Actions are grouped together, they are not divided by programme, as they are relevant to both the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes.

⁶ <https://saltoinclusion.eu/about/>

⁷ <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/inclusion/>

III. OBJECTIVES

EACEA has set up the following objectives for the 2021-2027 programming period:

1. To raise further EACEA staff awareness on Inclusion and Diversity and increase their competences in supporting the implementation of projects involving people with fewer opportunities and related to Inclusion and Diversity;
2. To provide support to applicants and beneficiaries in order to improve the projects' design and projects' implementation, as regards Inclusion and Diversity;
3. To increase the awareness towards Inclusion and Diversity among applicants, beneficiaries and stakeholders, in order to increase the number of participants with fewer opportunities;
4. To strengthen the image of Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps as inclusive programmes through reinforced communication and information activities.

In pursuing its mission, EACEA is guided by the commitment to establish a dialogue and constructive discussions with all stakeholders. EACEA will collaborate with the Commission, SALTO Resource Centres, Erasmus+ National Agencies, Erasmus+ National Offices (ENOs), Erasmus+ National Focal Points (ENFP), EU Delegations, organisations working on behalf of people with fewer opportunities, with the aim to maximise the impact of the Inclusion and Diversity actions in a most efficient way. Particular attention will be given to people, organisations and regions/territories that have been less involved in the two programmes so far.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

In pursuit of the above objectives, EACEA builds its Action Plan on four pillars, each one implementing a set of actions:

1. Capacity building

Each newly recruited employee dealing with Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps will be required to familiarise oneself with the Inclusion and Diversity Action Plan and implement it in the daily work. The Action Plan will be also mentioned during the induction for newcomers and they will be directed to the EACEA Inclusion and Diversity page.

EACEA project officers will attend Inclusion and Diversity trainings – seminars, webinars, workshops, provided as part of EACEA training activities. Heads of units will monitor the progress of their staff in learning about Inclusion and Diversity, and recommend improvement measures, if necessary.

A horizontal network of inclusion officers has been established for implementing and updating the Action Plan annually. The network includes representatives from EACEA.A units dealing with Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, as well as Units R1 and B4, as regards communication and awareness raising, training, monitoring and reporting activities. The inclusion officers will have an advisory role to colleagues in their units.

Experts cooperating with EACEA as lecturers, speakers or trainers, can be selected from among persons working in institutions and organisations dealing with the topic of Inclusion and Diversity.

2. Support to applicants and beneficiaries

EACEA implements a holistic, cross-sectoral approach to Inclusion and Diversity, considering the possible barriers that different target groups may face and seeking a broader involvement of people, organisations and territories/regions.

People are at the centre of this approach, but EACEA will also focus on newcomer organisations, as well as on areas/regions characterised by socio-economic disadvantages that are underrepresented in the programmes.

Our approach is cross-sectoral and synergetic because it is applied across all actions under direct management, encompassing all levels and forms of education – from schools to higher education, adult education, vocational education and training (VET), as well as youth and sport.

Inclusion and Diversity are part of the criteria to allocate funding. The requirement of addressing Inclusion and Diversity is included under ‘relevance’ in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide⁸. Under ‘quality’ the proposal is assessed as to the extent to which the activities are designed in an inclusive way and open to people with fewer opportunities.

To enable the participation of organisations that do not have yet any experience, the application process has been simplified and Inclusion and Diversity aspects emphasised. For instance, applicants are asked how they will make their projects inclusive, rather than simply asking how many people with fewer opportunities would be reached.

Each higher education institution, by signing the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education, commits to ensuring equal access and opportunities to participants from all backgrounds, including those with fewer opportunities. It is also important to ensure that the joint long-term strategies of European Universities Alliances include Inclusion and Diversity measures, taking into account the diversity of students and academics, providing support also for the education of refugee students, academics and institutions of host countries.

Equity, Inclusion and Diversity are among the main objectives of the Capacity Building Actions. For instance, among the expected impacts of Capacity Building in Higher Education, there are: improved access to and enhanced quality of higher education (in particular for people with fewer opportunities and in less developed regions), as well as increased participation of higher education institutions located in remote areas.

In the sport sector, projects encourage involvement of people with disadvantaged social and economic background, people with disabilities. For instance, under the „2022 calls“ nearly 10% of the actions are related to Inclusion and Diversity. The „small scale partnerships“ format gives opportunities for participation of newcomer organisations with no or little experience in the programme. The #BeInclusive EU Sport Award recognises the power of sport to improve inclusion and non-discrimination of disadvantaged groups.

⁸ [2023 Erasmus+ Programme Guide](#)

EACEA provides support to applicants and beneficiaries during all phases of the project cycle, in order to extend the outreach to people with fewer opportunities.

Concrete measures will be implemented, such as: face-to-face meetings or events with specific target groups with fewer opportunities; cooperation with organisations working with people with fewer opportunities as intermediaries to reach out to particular target groups. Best practices in Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps on Inclusion and Diversity topics will be promoted or further scaled up.

We will encourage the creation of an ambassadors' network of former participants with fewer opportunities that can help promote the programmes among people with fewer opportunities, acting as role models and sharing their experiences.

Specific training for applicants and beneficiaries will be aimed at encouraging project applications and improving project management competences of project coordinators, as well as their knowledge in the Inclusion and Diversity topics. Inclusion and Diversity aspects will be discussed during meetings and workshops with beneficiaries, as well as in the monitoring activities.

EACEA monitors the key performance indicators (KPI) that demonstrate the expected impact on improving the social involvement of people with fewer opportunities and improving the capacity of organisations to work on Inclusion and Diversity transnationally and using a cross-sectoral approach. If necessary, EACEA will encourage beneficiaries to implement the actions to address the needs of people with fewer opportunities in their projects in a more efficient and effective way.

A detailed description of the actions and measures on Inclusion and Diversity is presented in the attached table.

3. Information and communication, awareness raising

Clear and comprehensible language for information and communication will be used. A dedicated Intranet page on Inclusion and Diversity will be created.

EACEA will seek to introduce solutions suitable for the visually and hearing impaired on its website. The possibility to use a 'read aloud' function for the EACEA website is being explored. An automatic machine translation of the website into all official EU languages is already available.

The selection of venues for information and promotion events will consider the needs of persons with disabilities. Upon request, sign language translation can be provided during events.

EACEA will prepare appropriate and accessible communication and information materials and will use various outreach activities and communication channels, actively engaging with organisations working in the field of Inclusion and Diversity. The aim is to increase awareness about the opportunities and support under Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes.

EACEA will produce leaflets in an accessible online format. Online leaflets would bring the same accessibility benefits as the EACEA website, e.g. automatic machine translation, large print, the option to have the text read aloud. The leaflets will also contain information on how to benefit from the funding available to support people with fewer opportunities.

Appropriate selection of lecturers for events can be made among persons working in the institutions and organisations dealing with the topic of Inclusion and Diversity or among persons trained in the topic.

Finally, EACEA will promote the theme of Inclusion and Diversity through public awareness campaigns and dissemination of best practices, and Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps ‘project stories’, as well as promotion of testimonials, “ambassadors”, etc.

V. Platforms and tools

Online platforms and available tools ensure improved accessibility, to make participation easier for all, but especially for participants with fewer opportunities, e.g. visually, hearing impaired or people with low digital competences.

The Project Results Platforms under Erasmus+⁹ and the European Solidarity Corps¹⁰ provide access to information and results of all funded projects. Useful information on Inclusion and Diversity might be found through searching by keyword, year, country, etc.

The implementation of the Action Plan will be supported by the activities of the European School Education Platform (ESEP)¹¹, consolidating the European Education Gateway and eTwinning. EPAL¹² also offers specific solutions for people with fewer opportunities and promotes inclusive education through blog or news posts, education materials, events.

The Eurydice Network¹³ produces a vast amount of information, comparative thematic reports, studies devoted to specific topics. Eurydice has recently published several reports related to Inclusion and Diversity in education:

- ✓ Comparative report „Equity in school education in Europe“ and Brief related to the report¹⁴
- ✓ Comparative report „Towards equity and inclusion in higher education in Europe“¹⁵.
- ✓ Short report „Supporting refugee learners from Ukraine in higher education in Europe“¹⁶
- ✓ Short report „Supporting refugee learners from Ukraine in school education in Europe“¹⁷
- ✓ „Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe“¹⁸

Through Eurydice reports Erasmus+ projects focused on Inclusion and Diversity can be promoted using the Eurydice social media channels. Eurydice National Descriptions contain

⁹ <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects>

¹⁰ <https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/projects/>

¹¹ <https://school-education.ec.europa.eu/en>

¹² <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en>

¹³ <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/>

¹⁴ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/517ee2ef-4404-11eb-b59f-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

¹⁵ <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/publications/towards-equity-and-inclusion-higher-education-europe>

¹⁶ <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/publications/supporting-refugee-learners-ukraine-higher-education-europe-2022>

¹⁷ <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/publications/supporting-refugee-learners-ukraine-schools-europe-2022>

¹⁸ <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/publications/key-data-teaching-languages-school-europe-2023-edition>

information related to Inclusion and Diversity, as for example Special Needs Education, counselling and other support measures at all levels of education.

The Youth Wiki¹⁹ comparative maps and the Youth Wiki National Descriptions²⁰ also deal with a variety of topics that are highly relevant to Inclusion and Diversity, e.g. access, promoting social inclusion, promoting intercultural awareness and combating discrimination among young people²¹.

The Eurydice and Youth Wiki actions on Inclusion and Diversity can be further promoted.

VI. Synergies with other programmes and funds

EACEA will promote existing synergies between different programmes among the beneficiaries, in order to support them in the identification of further support that could be accessed by people with fewer opportunities. Good practices concerning synergies with Cohesion Policy Funds and Horizon Europe will be documented and disseminated, in order to exploit their full potential.

The goal is to increase the impact of EU investments related to Inclusion and Diversity, including through a closer involvement of people with fewer opportunities, reducing inequalities, thus ensuring an inclusive lifelong learning approach.

VII. Monitoring and reporting

EACEA will monitor the progress in terms of the number of newcomer organisations to the programmes, number of participants with fewer opportunities and number of inclusion-themed projects granted in both Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes.

In addition, the mid-term evaluation of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps (2021-2027) shall also assess their overall effectiveness and performance of the programmes, including the delivery of the Inclusion and Diversity measures.

In the years to come, we will continue to work on the Action Plan, to deliver on it and to update it as necessary. If successful, it may be extended also to the other programmes managed by EACEA. We foresee a review in 2024, with a possible update in 2025.

¹⁹ <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki>

²⁰ <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/countries>

²¹ <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/comparative-overviews/social-inclusion/promoting-intercultural-awareness-and-combatting-discrimination/2021>

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN OF ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME AND EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS UP TO 2027²²

Objectives, pillars of the Action Plan	Actions	Responsible	Indicators
Capacity building - improving skills of EACEA staff to implement Inclusion and Diversity activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training to new EACEA employees and update training for staff, internal workshops on Inclusion and Diversity • Set up EACEA Inclusion and Diversity Network on Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes, organise quarterly meetings • Participate in the European Education Area Working Group ‘Equality and Values’ and Commission Task Force on Equality • Cooperate with the SALTO Resource Centres, National Agencies, National Erasmus+ Offices, Erasmus+ National Focal Points on Inclusion and Diversity aspect • Participate in Commission meetings/events focused on Inclusion and Diversity; • Contribute to the initiatives of the European Inclusion and Diversity Month, annually • Provide input to the Commission Inclusion and Diversity related policy documents, upon request 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EACEA Director • Heads of Departments • R1, I&D network members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of EACEA employees trained on Inclusion and Diversity aspect • EACEA Inclusion and Network set up; • at least 4 meetings of the Inclusion and Diversity Network annually – notes of meetings, documents • provided input to the initiatives of the European Inclusion and Diversity Month, to the Commission Inclusion and Diversity related policy documents, upon request
Communication and information, awareness raising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a dedicated Intranet page on Inclusion and Diversity • Ensure accessible website, apply solutions suitable for the visually and hearing impaired • Prepare publications, leaflets in an accessible online format, giving more visibility to the Inclusion and Diversity aspect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heads of Departments • R1, B4, EACEA Communication network members, Inclusion and Diversity network members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intranet page on Inclusion and Diversity created • Website suited to visually and hearing impaired • Ensured automatic machine translation of the website into all

²² The Action Plan covers the whole period until 2027, since the prevailing part of the actions are either annually repetitive or require more than one year to be implemented.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include subtitles when producing and disseminating videos • Cooperation with institutions, organisations, NGOs working with people with fewer opportunities • To contribute to the Commission social media campaigns on Inclusion and Diversity under Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes' calls • Promote examples of projects supporting Inclusion and Diversity • Provide up-to-date information on funding opportunities to support Inclusion and Diversity 		<p>official EU languages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of publications in accessible formats designated for people with fewer opportunities. • Number of meetings with external institutions working with people with fewer opportunities • Input to Commission social media campaigns through facebook, twitter posts
<p>Support measures for applicants and beneficiaries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give more visibility to the Inclusion and Diversity aspect in the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps' Programmes Guides • Continue implementation of the already established Inclusion and Diversity measures • Increase the focus on Inclusion and Diversity in future Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes' calls by further integrating Inclusion and Diversity into the award criteria (relevance and quality). • Regularly monitor the inclusiveness and accessibility in Erasmus Mundus actions through the designated mobility tool • Explore the opportunities for promoting and scaling up best practices like Erasmus Mundus Master Programme on Special and Inclusive Education; the EUni4all-network, consisting of more than 60 inclusive universities, etc. • Under Cooperation partnerships – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ensure through assessment and monitoring processes that project activities address Inclusion and Diversity and are open to people with fewer opportunities; ○ encourage participation of newcomers and grassroots organisations; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EACEA I&D network • Coordinator of the EACEA I&D network • Heads of Departments • Units A1-A6, R1, B4, Communication Network, I&D network members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion and Diversity topic in included in meetings with beneficiaries and applicants, where relevant • Inclusion and Diversity into the award criteria (relevance and quality) of the direct management actions • Share (%) of participants with fewer opportunities in Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps' projects • Data on mobility participants and projects generated from the IT systems • Developed set of Inclusion and Diversity related indicators for the purpose of internal monitoring – use of the

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage project activities in support of integration of migrants and displaced persons during information events and project monitoring activities (e.g. kick off meetings); • Under Capacity building Actions give special attention to inclusion of less developed countries, including the migration priority countries; • Enhance the promotion of Erasmus+ funding opportunities in the regions underrepresented so far through the networks of NAs, ENFPs, NEOs, with the support of EU Delegations • Create ambassadors' network for dissemination of best practices • Monitor closely the implementation of sport-related pilot projects/ preparatory actions dealing with Inclusion and Diversity, such as the pilot project on Inclusion and Community integration in the EU of migrant youth affected by humanitarian crisis and war. • Provide support to applicants and beneficiaries through the whole project cycle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ face-to-face consultation meetings ○ monitoring visits, development of Inclusion and Diversity - related indicators ○ special emphasis on Inclusion and Diversity dimension at info days, workshops, webinars with applicants, beneficiaries and stakeholders; • Monitor closely the involvement of young people with fewer opportunities and identify the areas where further measures are needed • Organise the new #BeEqual award (sub-category of #BeInclusive award) • Dedicate the topic of Jean Monnet policy thematic networks in 2025 or 2026 to Inclusion and Diversity; • Continue providing General Online Training, Online Language Support, administrative assistance, to ensure quality volunteering experiences for participants with fewer opportunities under European 		<p>developed Erasmus+ Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of disseminated best practices • Examples of success stories, role models that successfully implement Inclusion and Diversity activities • First #BeEqual Award in 2023
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	Solidarity Corps		
Accessible Platforms and Networks, Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue providing access to information and results, related to Inclusion and Diversity, through the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Project Results Platforms. • European School Education Platform and EPALE offering specific solutions for people with fewer opportunities. • Produce Eurydice studies or data, reports on Inclusion and Diversity • Promote good practices of eTwinning projects related on Inclusion and Diversity • Promote further Eurydice and Youth Wiki actions on Inclusion and Diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heads of Departments • Units A6, B6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative and effective solutions implemented that can help to extend outreach to people with fewer opportunities • Produced comparative report on „Promoting diversity and inclusion in schools in Europe“– September 2023 • Produced report on Equity in schools • Structural indicators on Equity in schools and Higher Education, and on Early leaving of Education and Training
Monitoring and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of projects focused on Inclusion and Diversity • Establish a framework for monitoring and reporting actions related to Inclusion and Diversity • Implement a review of the Action Plan in 2024 • Analyses of implemented actions with proposals for improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the inclusion network, Units A1-6, R1, B4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erasmus+, European Solidarity Corps tables of projects funded, number of projects annually • Action Plan review in 2024 • Action Plan update in 2025 • No of people with fewer opportunities participated in Erasmus+ projects • No of people with fewer opportunities participated in European Solidarity Corps' projects