

ETUCE position on Erasmus+ Programme 2028-34

Following consultation with ETUCE Bureau and HERSC, adopted by Committee on 26 November 2025.

Background information

[Commission's draft Regulation establishing Erasmus+ for 2028-2034](#) is under negotiations by the Council and the Parliament.

Erasmus+ 2021-28 budget (with €26.2 billion budget) was divided by:

- Key Action 1: Learning mobility of individuals
- Key Action 2: Cooperation among organisations & institutions
- Key Action 3: Support for policy development & cooperation
- Jean Monnet Actions

Erasmus+ 2028-34 (with proposed €40.8 billion budget) will be divided by:

- Pillar 1: Learning Opportunities for All - this integrates mobility
- Pillar 2: Capacity Building Support — integrates cooperation, networks, alliances, policy support and innovation across education, training, youth and sport.

Timeline:

- 16 July 2025 – publication by the European Commission
- 2025 autumn - First readings by Parliament & Council
- 2026 - Parliament and Council positions and informal triologue negotiations
- 2027 – adoption / EU elections

The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE), representing 121 education trade unions and 4.9 million teachers and education personnel across Europe, welcomes the Commission's intention to maintain a self-standing Erasmus+ Programme for 2028–2034. We also appreciate the continuation of the programme's name, which ensures visibility and recognisability across Europe's education community.

We note the proposed budget increase and we support the proposal for regulation concerning increasing inclusiveness of the participation in Erasmus mobility and projects, and expanding participation across different sectors of education.

At the same time, we set out in this paper a series of constructive proposals in response to the [Commission's draft Regulation establishing Erasmus+ for 2028-2034](#), to ensure that the Programme strengthens its educational and societal mission, protects its holistic nature, and guarantees meaningful involvement of teachers and their trade unions.

1. ETUCE welcomes the Commission's proposal to **maintain Erasmus+ as a stand-alone programme** and to embed cooperation and policy support, formerly Key Actions 2 and 3, within its new two-pillar structure. This is a positive outcome, as earlier MFF discussions suggested moving these activities to the Competitiveness Fund. Earlier ETUCE warned such a transfer would have reduced Erasmus+ to a mobility scheme and undermined its broader mission. We therefore welcome that the official regulation confirms Erasmus+ as a unified, holistic programme.
2. Erasmus+ should never be seen as a substitute for adequate national education investment. It must not create incentives for governments to reduce their public education budgets. Instead, Erasmus+ should be regarded as **complementary funding** as additional investment to reinforce efficient public education budgets. Sustainable national and EU-level investment is essential to deliver quality education for all.
3. ETUCE reminds that education is a human right and public good and the Erasmus+ Programme should not serve companies' interests. We believe that Erasmus+ should continue to support the **improvement of the quality of education** and promote **inclusive access** for all learners. It must strengthen investment to ensure the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights to achieve that everyone has the right to education, training, and lifelong learning across EU Member States and candidate countries. Therefore, we regret that the main objectives of the future Erasmus + presented in the draft regulation are lifelong learning and skills development for the labour market. We oppose its framing of the Programme as part of the **Union of Skills**, which risks reducing the programme to a tool for short-term labour market competitiveness. Education serves a broader societal role: it fosters democratic citizenship, equality, intercultural understanding, and social cohesion. These functions must not be compromised. ETUCE worries that the policies of the European Commission increasingly consider education from the **perspective of labour market needs (Union of Skills)** and it hands over the **governance** on EU skills

policies to companies (High-level Skills Board and STEM Education Planform). We are also concerned that the Union of Skills suggested to offer more EU funds, which are also public budget, for companies' use on skills development, while there are already increasing numbers of project calls which are open for companies under the Erasmus+ Programme.

4. ETUCE believes that the main aim of the Erasmus+ Program is and should remain as **promoting EU values and a sense of European identity, democracy, equality, human rights, intercultural dialogue, and respect for diversity**. Participation in mobility is not only about acquiring new skills for the labour market: the programme is an essential tool to advocate democratic values and EU citizenship against far-right policies. Erasmus+ must continue to support the teaching and learning of key competences, including citizenship, critical thinking and digital literacy. These competences are vital for enabling learners to engage as informed democratic citizens, to counter disinformation, and to strengthen the resilience of European democracy. We would like to see better quality assurance and regular monitoring of project promoters to ensure that institutions and organisation who apply for EU funds respect democratic values and human rights.
5. ETUCE considers inclusion and diversity, digital transformation, environmental sustainability, and democratic participation extremely relevant as objectives of Erasmus+ projects. We expected to see additional objectives added to the next Erasmus+ Programme, such as focusing on the **attractiveness of the teaching profession, supporting teachers' well-being, and ensuring the recognition of teachers' learning mobility as Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**.
6. **Erasmus+ governance** must be inclusive and transparent. Education trade unions should have a permanent role in the Erasmus Committee and in national governance structures. For the European Education Area to become a reality, ETUCE calls for better coherence and long-term impact across EU programmes. While Erasmus+ targets both institutions and individuals, the teaching profession is rarely recognised as a distinct entry point and is often grouped with private actors, which fails to reflect its status. It is therefore essential to re-establish the role of education trade unions, particularly ETUCE, in the governance of EU programmes and the Erasmus+ Committee. Representing millions of teachers with democratic structures and extensive networks, unions are uniquely positioned to deliver impact at European, national and school levels. Greater structural cooperation with the profession through unions would ensure stronger results and credibility. Due to the serious teachers' shortage in Europe which endangers quality and inclusiveness of

education, and in light with the upcoming EU Teachers Agenda, ETUCE requests to open specific calls under the Erasmus+ Programme to teachers' trade unions in their capacity as teachers' professional organisations and social partners in education, to support their work to enhance professional support to teachers.

7. ETUCE stresses that the success of Erasmus+ depends on the **participation of teachers and education staff**. ETUCE highlights remaining obstacles of mobility such as teachers' shortages. Administrative requirements and a lack of resources for trade unions are significant barriers to use Erasmus+ fund to achieving joint EU objectives. The new programme must ensure guaranteed access for teachers to mobility and cooperation projects, with appropriate replacement measures, language support, and recognition of mobility as working time. It would be important to revise the effectiveness and impact of the EU Teacher Academies other initiatives that promote continuing professional development on teachers. Therefore, we demand to ensure involvement of education trade unions in the leadership of projects on EU Teacher Academies as conditionality of project funding.
8. Concerning [teachers' mobility](#) via the Erasmus+ Programme:
 - a. Learning mobility contributes to the personal and academic development of teachers and trainers, and at the same time fostering their self-confidence. Mobility also helps teachers and trainers develop the capacity to influence and improve practices in their own education and training institutions, as well as in their wider national education and training systems. International mobility helps create a sense of belonging to the European teacher community. Therefore, **participation of teachers of all education sectors** in learning mobility via Erasmus+ should be better supported.
 - b. **Effective social dialogue** with trade unions on increasing mobility during continuous professional development via the Erasmus+ Programme would be essential. We regret that many education trade unions are not involved in consultation on decisions and allocations on national Erasmus+ budget, and cooperation with Erasmus+ National Agencies is lacking.
 - c. Teachers should be trusted and provided with the **professional autonomy** to know their own personal and professional needs and to choose their own mobility periods accordingly. Teachers must be entrusted to select how to implement new pedagogies acquired during mobility into their class structures.
 - d. There are still many **obstacles to the mobility of teachers and trainers**, including the shortage of integrated mobility periods in curricula, the overregulation of the teaching profession, different school year structures across

- Member States, the lack of language competencies, family responsibilities of the teachers, and difficulties in arranging adequate substitute teachers and trainers.
- e. Financial means are also barriers to mobility, thus the Erasmus+ funding should reflect the **real costs of participating in Erasmus+ mobility** for teachers and trainers. We have been requesting that the transferability of salaries and other benefits, including pensions, for teachers taking part in international mobility through their continuous professional development. These issues need to be addressed with the involvement of the education trade unions.
 - f. It is important to ensure the **formal recognition** of the outcomes of mobility periods, particularly of teaching and training periods abroad, in initial teacher and trainer education, for continuous professional development or for career progression.
 - g. Free and **high-quality career guidance** should be available for teachers wishing to access information on possible mobility opportunities, and assistance should be provided to teachers to arrange their mobility period and to find hosting institution.
9. ETUCE calls for **greater transparency in the national implementation of Erasmus+**. Between 2015 and 2017 a [joint project](#) of the cross-sectoral social partners and education sector social partners (ETUC, SGIEurope/CEEP, ETUCE and EFEE) investigated if social partners are well-informed about the EU funds, whether they use them, and about the social partners' decision making role on the EU funds, including the Erasmus+. The results revealed that the **social partners** know the most about the Erasmus+ Programme, but that have **limited involvement in the decision** making on allocation of the fund at national levels (eg by Erasmus+ National Agencies), and many trade unions do not have the resources (human and financial) to be project leaders. Therefore, National Agencies should be required to publish clear guidance on how priorities are set, budgets allocated, and how social partners, including education trade unions are involved in programme design, implementation and evaluation. Such transparency would strengthen legitimacy, accountability, and the overall effectiveness of Erasmus+.
10. All in all Erasmus+ is one of the EU's most successful initiatives. Its impact stems from its holistic nature, bringing together mobility, cooperation and policy dialogue in a single programme. The new Regulation must preserve this integrated character, support holistically quality of education, and ensure meaningful participation of teachers and their trade unions. Therefore, ETUCE calls on the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament to

- ensure Erasmus+ strengthens quality and inclusive access to education while remaining a **complementary EU investment, not a replacement for national public funding;**
- ensure **transparent governance** and guarantee **strong participation of teachers** and education personnel.
- reinforce Erasmus+ as a driver of **European integration and citizenship**, and as a promoter of **EU common values** through projects in schools, universities, and educational organisations.