

## ERASMUS+ Multiannual Indicative Programme

This single Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) covers the ERASMUS+ actions financed by the EU external action instruments Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI-GE)<sup>1</sup> and Instrument of Pre-accession III (IPA III) for 7 years (2021 – 2027).

The funding corresponding to the Instrument of Pre-accession III (IPA III) in this multiannual indicative programme is subject to the entry into force of the IPA III Regulation without significant modifications, and of the subsequent adoption of the necessary implementing acts by the Commission in accordance with the procedure provided for by the applicable basic act.

The MIP reflects the particular needs and priorities of the regions covered and ensures consistency with the thematic policy and regional strategic documents. The overall indicative contribution of the NDICI-GE and IPA III, broken down by region, has been provided by the responsible services based on the needs assessments carried out in the programming exercise.

### **Executive summary (max. 1 page)**

Erasmus+ is the EU education, training, youth and sport flagship programme whose external action dimension aims at cementing links between the European Education Area and the rest of the world, strengthening societal links through educational exchanges and mobility, capacity building and peer learning. As such, Erasmus+ is an essential tool to promote people-to-people connectivity worldwide and to build a positive image of Europe in the world, spreading its fundamental values.

Building on the experience and lessons learnt from the past years' EU support in third countries not associated to the programme, the objectives of the new Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027 will be strongly aligned with the EU's geopolitical priorities, where applicable firming up joint action with Member States through a Team Europe approach, and focusing in particular on the areas of green deal, digitalization, inclusion and EU values. The international dimension of the Erasmus+ programme will follow specific strategies per region which should be aligned with the relevant political priorities established in country, multi-country and regional programmes. By prioritising specific areas, the EU will enhance human development across the different regions and will facilitate EU policy dialogue and public diplomacy actions.

### **Erasmus+ priorities supported by EU external action and indicative financial allocations**

<b>Erasmus+ Priority Areas</b>	<b><i>Indicative amount (in MEUR)</i></b>
International Credit Mobility	1064
Capacity Building in Higher Education	613
Capacity Building in Vocational Education and Training	160
Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degrees	159
Capacity Building Youth	50
Jean Monnet	42

<sup>1</sup> Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe, [OJ L 209, 14.6.2021](#)

Virtual Exchanges	39
National Erasmus+ Offices	17
Alumni	10
Erasmus+ Focal Points	9
Capacity Building Sport	5
eTwinning+	6
<b>TOTAL allocated for 2021-27</b>	<b>2174</b>

## Key results

The Erasmus+ international dimension aims to strengthen societal links through enhanced mobility and education exchanges and capacity building, nurturing social resilience, human development, employability, active participation and ensuring regular channels for people-to-people cooperation and a stronger voice for Europe in the world.

Through EU external action Erasmus+ will principally aim at: enhancing skills, competences and employability of students and staff of higher and vocational education institutions, youth and sports organisations of third countries not associated to the programme ; reinforcing their capacities, quality and relevance for the labour market and society; increasing cooperation of institutions and exchange of good practices across different regions; strengthening young people's networking, innovation, participatory and leadership skills; fostering dialogue between the academic world and society, including local and state level policy-makers, civil servants, civil society actors and education stakeholders.

## 1. Overall context

Education and training, youth and sports represent critical building blocks of human development and key ingredient to achieve EU global priorities. Education systems are vital in preparing the next generation of citizens, leaders, researchers, entrepreneurs and workers, as well as an important policy tool to reduce child labour and promote women's and girls' empowerment. The higher education sector in particular will equip youth with the skills, knowledge and values they need to actively shape their societies' responsiveness to common challenges such as climate change, digitalization, peace, migration, the search for more inclusive growth models and the need to tackle gender inequalities.

In this context, Erasmus+ is the EU education and training, youth and sport flagship programme whose external action dimension aims at cementing links between the European Education Area and the rest of the world, strengthening societal links through educational exchanges and mobility, capacity building and peer learning. As such, Erasmus+ is an essential tool to promote people-to-people connectivity worldwide, to present a positive image of Europe in the world and spread its fundamental values, to attract and develop talent and strengthen the human capital base based on reciprocity and a level playing field.

## 2. The overall EU's strategy

To promote collaboration between education institutions outside the EU, as well as between those institutions and EU-based ones, Erasmus+ should be increasingly used in a targeted way to build capacities and use its actions to strategically engage with young and future leaders in third countries not associated to the programme. Erasmus+ should also leverage the role of

higher education institutions in training future primary and secondary school teachers, e.g. by strengthening the integration of EU values, digital and green topics across subject matters, and teaching in multilingual and multicultural classrooms.

Building on the experience and lessons learnt<sup>2</sup> from the past years' EU support to higher education in third countries not associated to the programme<sup>3</sup>, it is proposed that the objectives of the future actions of the Erasmus+ programme supported by the external instruments be strongly aligned with the EU's geopolitical priorities established in bilateral and regional Multiannual Indicative Programmes (MIPs), where applicable firming up joint action with Member States, and focusing in particular on the following fields:

- **Smart:** Digital media literacy and skills are a must have. Erasmus+ can strengthen capacities of higher education and VET institutions to play an active role in the digital transformation of today's society and labour market.
- **Green:** Education systems are crucial in delivering the external dimension of the Green Deal, potentially enabling a profound change in peoples' behaviour and skills. Erasmus+ should be a major tool to strengthen the role of higher education and VET institutions in building the necessary skills sets for circular economy of citizens, workers, policymakers and entrepreneurs, facilitating lifelong learning for a fair and green transition, as well as to promoting the role of education institutions as change agents in societies.
- **Inclusion:** Erasmus+ should strengthen the role of education institutions to build capacities of future citizens, policy-makers and experts to ensure inclusive growth and participation in society as well as to contribute to reflections on how to make education systems themselves more equitable. Mechanisms should also be put in place to ensure better participation of those with fewer opportunities<sup>4</sup> in Erasmus+ programmes (i.e. among students, teachers and researchers), among others by strengthening selection criteria to take better account of social and economic disadvantage and gender.
- **Values:** In a more competitive global environment, EU support to education should be better leveraged globally to promote and safeguard EU values. Through Erasmus+, the EU can help laying the foundations for strengthening active citizenship and building specific expertise of future policy-makers in areas such as democracy, human rights and multilateralism.

The external action instruments will (co)fund priority areas selected for financing by the EU in each region, out of the priority areas described in the overview table provided in annex 1.

Erasmus+ will support the priority areas selected taking an inclusive approach in all regions. This will aim at enlarging the participation of representatives of less developed sub-regions and individuals with fewer opportunities, as well as ensuring a gender balance.

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<sup>2</sup> The mid-term and ex-post evaluations of Erasmus EU's support to higher education in partner countries show that the international dimension of the programme has clearly contributed to human development in third countries not associated to the programme with high effectiveness and value for their stakeholders. However, conclusions pointed inter alia to challenges in relation to inclusiveness and a need for simplification both in terms of management of the external action contributions and of application processes. Moreover, evolving priorities and communication requirements have demonstrated the need to enhance monitoring, reporting and evaluation systems for the external action contributions.

<sup>3</sup> As defined in articles 19 and 20 of [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/817](#).

<sup>4</sup> This term refers to the most disadvantaged or vulnerable groups and in the poorest countries, including individuals belonging to minorities, internally displaced persons, refugees, individuals with disabilities, socio-economically disadvantaged individuals, etc.

### **3. Regions**

The programme supports mobility, accessibility and internationalisation strategies of higher education and VET institutions. It also helps improve the relevance of contents to the needs of the economic sectors and enhance the skills and employability of learners and young people. By prioritising specific areas, the EU will enhance human development across the different regions and complement its interventions at country level. To do so, the Erasmus+ programme will follow specific strategies per region which should be aligned with the relevant political priorities established in country, multi-country and regional MIPs. This will facilitate the full integration of Erasmus+ into Delegations' policy dialogue, public diplomacy actions and country cooperation portfolio, and create synergies with other EU partnership initiatives, including Talent Partnerships.

#### **Americas and the Caribbean**

##### **Regional context**

The Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region counts currently with the largest number of young people in its history (107 million aged between 15 and 24), 20% of its total population. Two thirds of the Caribbean population are under the age of 30. The number of students in higher education programmes has nearly doubled in the past decade across LAC. While access is still unequal, there has been remarkable progress, particularly among low and middle-income groups. Despite this positive trend, on average the poorest 50% of the population only represent 25% of students in higher education. Key figures include: 1.3% of GDP invested in higher education, with an upward trend, average annual growth rate of graduates is 4.6% (2010-2017); 15% is online education; 52% is private education; 57% female graduates (2017); Only 1% participation in postgraduate studies and PhDs.<sup>5</sup> The Caribbean states are among the top 20% of countries in the world with tertiary-educated migrants as youth unemployment rates are very high - 28 to 50% of all unemployed- with female rates usually significantly higher in spite of generally better education achievement.

The COVID-19 pandemic is putting in danger the future of a whole generation in LAC and the losses in education and human capital can undermine prospects for the region's socio-economic recovery. Support to the Higher Education Sector but also to Vocational Education and Training (VET) targeted to relevant areas can contribute to shape a modern agenda and economic growth in tune with priorities for inclusive and sustainable development. In this regard, stronger accent should be put on inclusion and employability, paying special attention to increasing digital and green skills. The VET sector, in particular, can help to ensure a better flow and adaptation between the worlds of education and employment, notably in priority areas such as the green/blue and digital economy, enhancing the relevance, accessibility and responsiveness of LAC VET institutions and systems as drivers of sustainable socio-economic development.

The results achieved by the Erasmus+ programme over 2014-2020 in the LAC region have been highly satisfactory. The demand of participation in the different international actions was much higher than the offer available. However, main challenges to be addressed are:

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<sup>5</sup> World Bank "At a Crossroads: Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean". September 2017

- to improve the access to and quality of higher education, in particular for those with fewer opportunities in the region;
- to work towards growing regional integration and comparability to help mobility for students, staff and researchers and academic cooperation;
- the academic offer should better correspond to the needs of the labour market. The academic world should develop a stronger link and cooperation with the private sector and other societal actors, promoting internationalization, innovation and entrepreneurship.

The Erasmus+ programme targets young people with a wide range of economic, social and demographic background, making it a powerful and cost efficient tool to reach a new emerging US and Canadian generation.

Changing demographics of the US make the ties of shared European cultural heritage become less salient for increasing parts of the population. This creates a need for the EU to engage with these important audiences and build relationships around the alignment of shared values. The United States is the third most populous country in the world with just over 330 million residents of which 43.5 million are aged 15-24. In Canada, the population aged 15-24 years stands at 4.3 million, out of a total population of nearly 38 million people. Canada ranks second among OECD nations in the number of college and university graduates with 63% of people aged 25-34, only after South Korea. The figure stands at 50.4% for the US. The US is the most popular country in the world for attracting students from other countries, according to UNESCO, with 16% of all international students going to the US. In North America, the amount of resources dedicated to higher education features an average of 5% of GDP. There are currently 21 million students in post-secondary education in the USA and Canada and projections for 2029 show a similar amount of students, with no significant growth or reduction foreseen.

Successful experiences of cooperation with US and Canadian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have been registered under all Erasmus actions and in particular in the cases of student and staff mobility, as well as Jean Monnet actions which have proved a successful tool for EU public diplomacy across the Atlantic. The demand has consistently been several times higher than the available funds, giving a positive signal towards building a strong and prosperous transatlantic alliance.

### **Regional strategy**

Preliminary priority areas for cooperation with this region include: the green transition and digital transformation; sustainable and inclusive economic recovery, including regional integration; governance, migration, democracy and human rights, peace and security as well as social cohesion, fighting inequalities and promoting human development.

The recent Communication “European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean: joining forces for a common future” identifies investing in people as a key element of the EU-LAC partnership. It underscores the need to continue investing in human capital, knowledge and innovation to meet the demand of the evolving labour markets, as well as to strengthen regional dialogue among academia and policy-makers. The Caribbean Protocol of the post-Cotonou Agreement (under adoption) provides for cooperation intended to strengthen academic development, enhance collaboration among key institutions, facilitate the mobility of students, staff and academics between the Caribbean and the EU and reinforce enrolment and quality in tertiary education and technical and vocational training.

The Joint Communication: “A new EU-United States Agenda for Global Change” stresses that for people on both sides of the Atlantic, transatlantic ties are a vital element in our societies, identities, economies and personal lives. The Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) conclusions on the US adopted on 7 December 2020 highlight that our partnership is deeply rooted in relations between people and thus continued investment in people-to-people contacts, through cooperation in science, research and development, education, will be essential, as well as linking young people and future leaders to promote mutual understanding and the values and principles that we share.

The statement adopted at the last EU-Canada summit held on 14 June 2021 underlines the importance of higher education exchanges through Erasmus+ for the internationalization and quality of both education systems, long-lasting people-to-people contacts, as well as for securing the long-term growth of our economies and the well-being of our peoples. The Strategic Partnership Agreement signed in 2016 between the EU and Canada recognises the importance of promoting education, youth and people-to-people contacts to foster relationships and the importance of encouraging and facilitating exchanges at all levels to foster dialogue and enrich the EU-Canada relationship.

In line with the above foreign policy priorities, EU’s strategic interest under Erasmus+ towards the US and Canada is two-fold:

- 1) to strengthen people-to-people ties between the EU and the US and the EU and Canada;
- 2) to improve the understanding of the EU, its functioning, values and policies, and above all its significance for the US and Canada as a partner.

### **Regional priorities**

The Erasmus+ actions will follow the political priorities formulated under NDICI-GE, as well as specific external key action priorities for the sub-regions and countries in the region, as follows: For Latin America and the Caribbean the actions will include Capacity Building in Higher Education, International Credit Mobility, Erasmus Mundus Joint Master’s Degrees, Jean Monnet Action and Capacity Building in Vocational Education and Training.

For the USA and Canada the actions will include International Credit Mobility and Jean Monnet. Participation in Erasmus Mundus Joint Master’s Degrees will continue to be supported by the global envelope.

#### **Priority 1: International Credit Mobility**

Over the period 2021-2027, the “International Credit Mobility” (ICM) action in the region should focus on learners’ mobility when relevant.

#### **Priority 2: Erasmus Mundus Joint Master’s Degrees**

This type of degree seeking mobility is essential to allow increasing high-level professionals in areas crucial to the development of LAC countries.

#### **Priority 3: Capacity Building in Higher Education**

The 3 strands of Capacity Building projects will be supported in the LAC region: access to cooperation, partnerships for innovation and structural reforms projects. This action will continue to support the EU-LAC Common Higher Education Area, enhancing its regional dimension and thus will be open to all LAC countries, including High Income Countries (HICs) of the LAC region.

#### **Priority 4: Capacity Building in the field of VET**

Capacity Building in the field of vocational education and training (VET) sector action will help to better respond to the needs of the labour market and support the economic growth in the LAC region. To have strong impact at system level, the mobility of VET staff will be prioritised. To enhance the regional dimension this area will be open to all LAC countries, including HICs of the LAC region. As this is a new action for the LAC region, depending on the demand and when possible, priority will be given to regional projects or projects in low to middle income countries.

**Priority 5: Jean Monnet**

Jean Monnet Action will be key for the EU to promote research on regional integration and promote regional integration processes in LAC.

**Priority 6: Alumni**

The alumni network in LAC will be reinforced enhancing their level of participation playing the role of ambassadors of Europe and European programmes.

**Priority 7: Focal Points**

In order to better engage with the third countries not associated to the programme in the region, support will be provided to Erasmus+ focal points in LAC.

Priority areas in Americas and the Caribbean		Indicative amounts and budget share		
		Subregional amounts EUR millions	Total amount EUR millions	%
1	Capacity Building in Higher Education		66,5	34%
	LA	62		
	Caribbean	4,5		
	USA & Canada			
2	International Credit Mobility		65,4	33%
	LA *	28		
	Caribbean	6,4		
	USA & Canada	31		
3	Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters Degrees		36,0	18%
	LA *	35		
	Caribbean	1		
	USA & Canada			
4	Jean Monnet Action		12,3	6%
	LA *	5		
	Caribbean	0,3		
	USA & Canada	7		
5	Capacity Building in Vocational Training		13,8	7%
	LA	12		
	Caribbean	1,8		
	USA & Canada			
6	Alumni Association		1,0	1%
	Latin America & Caribbean	1		
	USA & Canada			
	Erasmus Focal points		1,0	1%
7	Latin America & Caribbean	1		
	USA & Canada			
<b>TOTAL allocation AMERICAS 2021-2027</b>		196	<b>196,0</b>	<b>100%</b>
	* 30% max for Brazil & Mexico together			

## **Sub-Saharan Africa**

### **Regional context**

Africa is home to over 1 billion people, a figure that will increase to 2 billion in 2050 due to its demographic structure: with 77% of its population below the age of 35 and 40% under the age of 15, Africa is the region of the world with the youngest population. Within the next 15 years, some 375 million African young people are expected to reach working age. They are Africa's greatest asset to transform the continent's political, social and economic prospects, a critical role that is highlighted in the Agenda 2063, the continental strategic framework for inclusive and sustainable development.

Despite a massive increase in enrolment rates over the last decades, less than 10% of African 18-24 year olds are involved today in some form of post-secondary education or training and Africa only represents about 6.4% of global tertiary education enrolments. The increase in enrolment has not addressed the issue of inclusivity, and equitable access to higher education remains a key concern. Similarly, while the number of universities in Africa has been multiplied by 20 over the last 50 years, with an ever growing number of private universities opening, quality of higher education remains a key concern. If it has improved in the recent years, it remains insufficiently integrated in international academic networks and continues to fall short of the necessary standards for catalysing knowledge-driven economies and societies, due to the insufficient relevance of curricula to meet the labour market opportunities, lack of qualified academic staff and weak governance and management mechanisms. The gender imbalance remains significant, both in the enrolment rate of girls and young women and in the proportion of female teachers, academia and staff at all levels.

Those challenges, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, are not limited to higher education but also have an impact on the entire education system, including vocational education and training.

The priority in Africa is therefore to develop more inclusive and sustainable education systems that reflect better the needs of the local societies and of economies and to enhance networking among educational institutions. This requires strengthening the management and governance of the education sector at all levels, stimulating closer engagement with economic actors and supporting exchanges of practices that can drive quality and innovation.

Addressing those challenges and providing young people with education, training and skills and preparing them for future opportunities is therefore central to the Africa and the European Union partnership.

### **Regional strategy**

In order to enhance its strategic partnership with Africa, the EU has fully recognised the importance of "investing in people", in particular in youth. To deliver on this priority, in its 2020 Joint Communication "Towards a comprehensive strategy with Africa", the EU has therefore proposed to scale up EU-Africa academic cooperation, including on technical and vocational education and training, facilitate the mobility of students, teachers, trainers and support capacity building for improved learning and intensified educational and research partnerships. Finally, as highlighted in the European Council Conclusions of October 2020, the EU is also committed to harness the potential of digital and knowledge economy in its engagement with Africa. The EU support will help address several key issues affecting the education and skills sectors while intensifying educational networks and dialogue.

In order to integrate the continent in a rules-and-values-based international order and to deliver on the EU priority of human development in sub-Saharan Africa, and most specifically on youth empowerment, quality education and skills development, the Erasmus+ programme offers a number of opportunities for African higher education and VET institutions.

### **Regional priorities**

#### **Priority 1: International Credit Mobility**

Through academic, staff and student mobility scholarships, the Erasmus+ programme will increase the prospects for African students to enhance their skills and employability while staff mobility will contribute to their personal and professional development and to enhance the quality and relevance of contents and delivery processes. Taking a strategic approach to the international mobility will be important considering the different contexts in the region.

#### **Priority 2: Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degrees**

Alongside short-term credit mobility, the best African students will also have the possibility to apply for the integrated Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degrees" action that will enable them to study in at least two EU Member States or third countries associated to the Erasmus+ programme in areas of common priority interest.

#### **Priority 3: Capacity Building in Higher Education**

The mobility actions that have an impact at individual level for the scholarships beneficiaries will be complemented by Capacity building actions that benefit higher education institutions. The "Capacity building for Higher Education" (CBHE) action will support exchanges between higher education institutions from sub-Saharan Africa and EU Member States or third countries associated to the programme, with a view to reform higher education institutions - and systems – and enable universities to become full actors in knowledge creation and in the complex processes of innovation. For instance, projects will support engagement of higher education institutions with the private sector and ensure the increased quality, relevance and alignment of learning with the needs of the labour market, e.g. by supporting entrepreneurship skills and also digital skills. Projects will also strengthen management and governance of the education sector from ministries down to the individual institutions. Special attention will be paid to projects improving equitable and gender-balanced access to African higher education institutions, in particular for people with fewer opportunities. Based on lessons learnt from past periods and in order to increase impact, strong emphasis will be put on regional projects involving higher education institutions from several sub-Saharan African countries.

#### **Priority 4: Capacity Building in the field of VET**

In the VET sector, capacity building actions will foster cooperation between VET schools/training providers from sub-Saharan African countries and EU Member States or third countries associated to the programme. By facilitating the exchanges of experience and knowledge transfer between VET providers in a key priority area for cooperation with Sub-Saharan countries, it is expected that the Erasmus+ programme will contribute to enhancing the relevance, accessibility and responsiveness of African VET institutions and systems as drivers of sustainable socio-economic development. To have a strong impact at system level, the mobility of VET staff will be promoted. Actions including the promotion of entrepreneurship and digital skills will be also prioritised, in order to bring their full potential to job creation and sustainable growth.

### **Priority 5: Jean Monnet**

Through the Jean Monnet action, the Erasmus programme will also strengthen the role of the EU as global player, by promoting European Studies in the region's third countries not associated to the programme and sharing the European Experience on integration.

### **Priority 6: Alumni**

Erasmus + will promote a greater engagement with alumni, who will be privileged interlocutors for EU Delegations, can become "role models" for their fellow nationals and will play the role of ambassadors of Europe, European programmes and of the European integration model in an increasingly competitive multilateral world.

### **Priority 7: Focal Points**

Based on lessons learnt from the participation of African institutions to the Erasmus+ programme over the period 2014-2020, it will be important to improve the access to the programme for the countries that benefited less and the participation of the least developed African countries. For this purpose, Erasmus + focal points will be supported for the promotion of the actions of the programme and to provide support to potential candidates during the application process.

### **Priority 8: Virtual exchanges**

In line with the EU "digital transformation" priority and with the EU policy commitment to support African youth empowerment and opportunities, the Erasmus+ programme will support "virtual exchanges". This action will enable African young persons to access high-quality international and cross-cultural (formal and non-formal) education and will improve access to online learning resources for African staff and students. Projects under this action will also foster international collaboration and exchanges by fully grasping the potential of digital tools through an innovative approach.

**Indicative amounts per priority areas for Sub-Saharan Africa** are indicated below:

<b>Priority areas in Sub-Saharan Africa</b>	<b>Indicative amount in EUR million</b>
International Credit Mobility (ICM)	281.2
Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters' Degrees (EMJMD)	45.5
Capacity building in Higher Education (CBHE)	160
Capacity Building Vocational Education and Training (VET)	49.7
Virtual Exchanges	13
Jean Monnet	10.8
Alumni	4
Erasmus+ Focal Points	6
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>570.2</b>

### Sub-Saharan Africa geographic target:

In order to ensure a fair access to Erasmus+ for all Sub-Saharan countries including those with smaller populations, the Least Developed Countries shall access at least an indicative amount of 35% of the programme funding, a special emphasis shall also be put on EU migration priority countries and no country shall access more than 8% of foreseen funding under each heading.

## **Asia and the Pacific**<sup>6</sup>

### **Regional context**

The sub-regions covered under the “Asia” heading are South Asia, East Asia, and South-East Asia. Asia, hosting five of the most industrialised countries as well as eight least developed countries, is a huge continent full of contrasts, challenges and opportunities. With 4.2 billion people, it is the most populated region in the world (expected to peak around 5.2 billion people in 2050). While youth is expected to rise to 65% of Association of Southeast Asian Nations’ (ASEAN) total population by 2030, up from 24% in 2010, the population is rapidly ageing in others (notably China). Overall, there is a continued shift of Asia becoming the global economic centre of the world. However, SDG progress is uneven and inequalities have increased. According to the Asian Development Bank, young people’s socio-economic prospects in Asia are severely challenged due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Youth will be hit harder than adults in the immediate crisis. In addition, forced suspension of education and training, will affect youth’s transitions to and within labour markets. In a region as diverse as Asia, there is no single solution to curb high and increasing inequalities. However, a well-educated population is fundamental for all spheres of development.

Central Asia’s population will increase over the next decade, from 70 million inhabitants in 2021 to 80 million by 2030. Similarly, Afghanistan’s population – now also included in this sub-region – will rise from 38 million to 48 million. This could exacerbate existing structural weaknesses of the region, notably the limited employment opportunities and the need to provide the growing population with quality social services, notably health and education.

Countries in the Middle East region (Iran, Iraq, Yemen and the Gulf countries) are in very diverse situations, ranging from high income and oil rich countries to least developed and conflict-affected countries. According to the UN, the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to be deep and long-lasting. Due to the twin shock of the pandemic and low oil prices, the region’s economy is expected to contract, with the impact of these shocks being felt by all countries and communities in the region. This will deteriorate the already precarious conditions of vulnerable groups, and women are likely to suffer significant consequences of the pandemic - notably with respect to access to education and employment opportunities. However, the response to the COVID-19 crisis represents an opportunity to address some of the long-standing structural weaknesses in the region related to the education system, youth, economic diversification and unemployment. It could be in fact an opportunity to promote a new vision for education that meets the ambition of the SDGs, addresses the mismatch between the education system and labour market needs and therefore develops special plans for youth reintegration into the education system and the job market. The Gulf rift opened a door for the EU with an opportunity to position itself as a geopolitical actor. The recent normalisation of

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<sup>6</sup> ‘Asia and the Pacific’ region includes the following sub-regions: Asia, Central Asia, Middle East and Pacific. See Annex 2 for detailed list of countries.

relations among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries can further provide the EU with an opportunity to increase regional cooperation, such as on education.

The Pacific region covers 17 states, including the two high-income economies of Australia and New Zealand, and 15 developing countries. Of these 15 states, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste constitute the majority of both the landmass and population (around 11.4 million people). The additional twelve Pacific Island Countries (PICs) fall squarely in the Small Island Developing States category. This makes the region very heterogeneous, as the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) are characterised by stagnating living standards, narrow economic and export bases, lack of economic diversification, inadequate infrastructure, and environmental degradation which all hamper deeper development.

### **Regional strategy**

In its recently adopted Communication “Connecting Europe and Asia –Building block for an EU Strategy”, the EU has put special emphasis on bringing forward “people to people” connectivity.<sup>7</sup> Through its people-to-people exchange approach, the Erasmus+ programme represents an adequate tool to promote EU values and expertise in the region.

Education, research and innovation, as well as science cooperation are important vectors for the development of joint and widely accepted technological standards and norms between European and Asian academic and science communities in all areas of connectivity. It will seek complementarities and synergies with upcoming Commission priorities on Science, Technology and Innovation for Development.

The Erasmus+ programme in Asia will thus focus on: Capacity building in the field of Higher Education (excluding High Income Countries (HICs)); International Credit Mobility; Jean Monnet; and Erasmus Mundus Joint Master’s Degrees.

### **Central Asia**

The EU-Central Asia Strategy “New Opportunities for a Stronger Partnership” provides opportunities for closer cooperation with the EU in the interests of both parties.<sup>8</sup> The EU is committed to partnering with Central Asia for resilience, prosperity and working better together. As mentioned in the Strategy, the EU is willing to cooperate in the development of skills, research and innovation, with special attention towards the youth. The development of skills will be key to Central Asia’s competitiveness and social cohesion. Promoting quality education will be all the more necessary as the COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected access to education, despite robust efforts by the governments to put in place virtual learning options. In line with the EU-Central Asia Strategy and aiming at further integrating Afghanistan with its neighbours, Afghanistan will be considered under the Central Asia envelope. The Erasmus+ programme in Central Asia will thus focus on: Capacity building in the field of Higher Education; and International Credit Mobility; and Erasmus Mundus Joint Master’s Degrees.

### **Middle East**

In this complex regional context, EU support is highly sought-after by Middle East partner countries, particularly in the form of know-how transfer. The Erasmus+ programme will allow the EU to support higher education, seen as a catalyst for diversification and sustainable development. Main objectives will focus on supporting further training of students and higher

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<sup>7</sup> [EEAS \(2018\)](#).

<sup>8</sup> [EEAS \(2019\)](#).

education institutions' teachers and staff, as well as through the exposure of higher education institutions to international practises. The EU should address the challenges linked to the political and security situation of the region, carefully balancing the promotion of students' mobility and capacity building of higher education institutions activities according to the specific situation of a country. In the HICs of this sub-region, the EU will put a specific emphasis on awareness raising activities such as through alumni networks and focal points. At the same time, the EU aims at encouraging increased participation such as to Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degrees, International Credit Mobility and Jean Monnet. This reflects the strategic aim of strengthening the mutual understanding with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in view of their importance from a geo-political perspective. The Erasmus+ programme in the Middle East will thus focus on: Capacity building in the field of Higher Education (excluding HICs); International Credit Mobility; and Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degrees and Jean Monnet.

**Pacific Island Countries**

Critical domestic challenges for almost all Pacific Island Countries (PICs) include reducing inequalities and vulnerability, promoting sustainable enterprises, consumption and production patterns and enhancing gender equality. In this context, investments in connectivity (people-to-people, digital notably) need to be further promoted given the remoteness of the PICs. ICM programmes have traditionally constituted the bulk of the Erasmus+ programme for PICs, notably bringing to benefits in terms of public diplomacy and internationalisation, among others. By providing further support to higher education, the Erasmus+ programme is well placed to answer the request from PICs for closer collaboration with the EU. Another important PIC concern is the creation of stable and reliable internal repositories of knowledge and competencies, avoiding "brain drain" and enhancing the domestic education systems. Finally, as concerns the two Pacific HICs (Australia and New Zealand), maintaining the continuity of the Jean Monnet programme is vital, due to its strong potential for public diplomacy and the promotion of the EU in the public discourse abroad. In addition, New Zealand's Jean Monnet network connects all of the country's universities, and constitutes the only full degree in European Affairs in the Asia-Pacific region. Alumni networks and focal points will contribute to ensure better dissemination of information on Erasmus+ opportunities in the region. The Erasmus+ programme in the Pacific region will thus focus on: International Credit for Mobility; Jean Monnet; and Capacity-building for Higher Education (excluding HICs).

**Regional priorities**

**Priority 1: International Credit Mobility**

For indicative purposes, approximately EUR 140 million (37.8% of the indicative NDICI-GE budget 2021-2027 for Erasmus+ in Asia) shall be reserved for this specific objective.

It will be split between the following sub-regions:

Asia	EUR 97 million (of which at least 25% for Least Developed Countries (LDCs), 15% max. for China and 10% max. for India, 25% max. for HICs and 25% for the remaining countries)
Central Asia	EUR 25 million
Middle East	EUR 8.2 million
Pacific	EUR 9.8 million (of which 86.5% max. for Australia & New Zealand together)

## Priority 2: Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degrees

For indicative purposes, approximately EUR 51.13 million (13.82% of the indicative NDICI-GE budget 2021-2027 for Erasmus+ in Asia) shall be reserved for this specific objective.

It will be split between the following sub-regions:

Asia	EUR 33 million (priority for LDCs)
Central Asia	EUR 13 million (priority for LDCs)
Middle East	EUR 3.93 million (priority for LDCs)
Pacific	EUR 1.2 million (priority for LDCs)

## Priority 3: Capacity Building in Higher Education

For indicative purposes, approximately EUR 161.7 million (43.7% of the indicative NDICI-GE budget 2021-2027 for Erasmus+ in Asia) shall be reserved for this specific objective, excluding Higher Income Countries (HICs).

It will be split between the following sub-regions, with priority to Least Developed Countries:

Asia	EUR 121 million
Central Asia	EUR 34.5 million
Middle East	EUR 5 million
Pacific	EUR 1.2 million

## Priority 4: Jean Monnet

It will be split between the following sub-regions:

Asia	EUR 6.54 million (of which 74.6% max. for HICs, 11.9% max. for China and 11.2% max. for India, 2.3% for the remaining countries)
Central Asia	EUR 0.15 million
Middle East	EUR 0.22 million
Pacific	EUR 4.2 million

## Priority 5: Alumni

For indicative purposes, approximately EUR 1 million (0.28 % of the indicative NDICI-GE budget 2021-2027 for Erasmus+ in Asia) shall be reserved for this specific objective.

It will be split between the following sub-regions:

Asia	EUR 0.7 million
Central Asia	EUR 0.2 million
Middle East	EUR 0.055 million
Pacific	EUR 0.045 million (with a focus on PICs)

## Priority 6: Focal Points and National E+ Offices

- **National Erasmus+ Offices for Central Asia**

As a continuation from previous programmes, Central Asia (not including Afghanistan) will continue to benefit from National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs). These will provide services to support the promotion of Erasmus+ opportunities, potential applicants and on-going beneficiaries, dissemination and Higher Education Reform Experts (HERE) activities. Support will also be provided to national authorities, EU Delegations and Commission services, such as participation in policy dialogue with EU Delegations and HQ.

For indicative purposes, approximately EUR 2.86 million (0.78% of the indicative NDICI-GE budget 2021-2027 for Erasmus+ in Asia) shall be reserved for this specific objective. Afghanistan will not be covered under this priority.

- **Focal Points**

For indicative purposes, approximately EUR 2.2 million (0.55% of the indicative NDICI-GE budget 2021-2027 for Erasmus+ in Asia) shall be reserved for Focal Points to be established in the rest of the Asia and Pacific region. Afghanistan will also be covered under this priority as it was not included in the Central Asia NEOs network in the past.

Budget will be split indicatively between the following sub-regions:

Asia	EUR 1.95 million
Middle East	EUR 0.14 million
Pacific	EUR 0.11 million

Indicative amounts in EUR million per priority areas in Asia and the Pacific	Asia	Central Asia	Middle East	Pacific	Total in EUR million
<b>1. ICM</b>	97.000	25.000	8.200	9.800	<b>140.000</b>
<b>2. CBHE</b>	121.000	34.500	5.000	1.200	<b>161.700</b>
<b>3. EMJMD</b>	33.000	13.000	3.930	1.200	<b>51.130</b>
<b>4. JM</b>	6.540	0.150	0.220	4.200	<b>11.110</b>
<b>5. Alumni</b>	0.700	0.200	0.055	0.045	<b>1.000</b>
<b>6. Focal Points</b>	1.950	0.000	0.140	0.110	<b>2.200</b>
<b>7. NEOs</b>	0.000	2.860	0.000	0.000	<b>2.860</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>260.190</b>	<b>75.710</b>	<b>17.545</b>	<b>16.555</b>	<b>370.000</b>
	70.32%	20.46%	4.74%	4.47%	

## **Neighbourhood and enlargement regions**

### **Eastern Partnership**

#### **Regional context**

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) is a joint policy initiative, which aims to deepen and strengthen relations between the European Union, its Member States and its six Eastern neighbours: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

Despite progress made over the last decades, EaP education systems still face many systemic challenges on all educational levels and underperform in preparing young people sufficiently. Governance for efficient and effective policymaking and policy implementation in the field of education has been improved in most partner countries but modernisation and innovation efforts at all levels of education and training need to continue. Policy decision-making is still characterised by highly centralised systems in most EaP countries, paralleled with fragmentation of responsibilities, unclear roles and lack of coordination mechanisms. The cost of corruption remains a systemic challenge with impact on the functionality of education as it limits access to and excellence of education. More effort has been put into teacher training and professional development.

Less advantaged population groups from rural and/or remote areas or ethnic minorities, often with a low-socio-economic background, have lower chances to successfully attend education. Youth unemployment remains at high levels. This is aggravated by the persistent phenomenon of young people not in employment, education, or training (NEETs), which remains substantial in all six countries and is particularly critical among young women, students from rural areas and/or students with a low socio-economic background. Employers complain about gaps in technical skills of young graduates as well as in key competences.

Support through the Erasmus+ programme will continue and enhance opportunities for academic mobility and capacity building in higher education and vocational education training.

#### **Regional strategy**

Cooperation and support from 2021– 2027 will be guided by the 2020 Joint Communication on the “Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020: Reinforcing Resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all”<sup>9</sup> which commits to investing in people, proposing a new deal for youth that highlights human capital development including education reform and opportunities for young people as a strategic priority. In November 2019, the Eastern Partnership (EaP) Ministerial Meeting on Education had already confirmed continued common commitment to reforms in the education sector. EaP representative Ministers emphasised the key role of Erasmus+ in fostering education reforms, enhancing internationalisation, promoting employability and competence development, and underlined the importance of policies and actions that will enhance inclusiveness and reduce the share of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET).

As part of the EaP New Deal for Youth, the Erasmus+ programme will further strengthen higher education institutions in a digitalised world through developing teaching, research and management capacity, harmonising educational structures to facilitate international mobility and comparability, quality assurance, and recognition of qualifications, and helping enhance the relevance of education for the labour market. In addition, Erasmus+ will be opened up to deliver on external action objectives in the areas of employability, vocational education and training as well as virtual exchanges. For Capacity Building in Higher Education projects,

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<sup>9</sup> Joint Communication on an Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020, JOIN(2020) 7 final

enhanced national ownership and the integration with policy dialogue need to be enhanced, requiring more involvement of the national authorities and EU Delegations. Similarly, efforts should be made to seek synergies with country programmes through new openings in the regulation (VET, Virtual Exchanges) and the investments through the EaP Investment Plan.

### **Regional Priorities**

The actions below are in line with the political priorities of the Governments in Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries.

#### **Priority action 1- International Credit Mobility**

For indicative purposes: A minimum of 40% of the funds should be allocated to students with fewer opportunities. The criteria will be further defined in the calls for projects.

#### **Priority action 2 - Capacity Building in Higher Education**

International cooperation projects based on multilateral partnerships between organizations active in the higher education field in both associated and non-associated countries.

Strand 1 will support smaller projects “fostering access to cooperation in higher education”.

Activities can include but are not restricted to: the adaption of curricula, short training modules for staff and students; exchange of academic and administrative staff; and access to preparatory activities for further/larger cooperation (e.g. in-service training, job shadowing, summer schools, seminars, study visits, etc.). The projects will be flexible and should combine activities with national and transnational character that increase organisations’ means to reach out to people with fewer opportunities.

Strand 2 will support medium-sized projects for “partnerships for innovation in higher education”.

To reach out to newcomers to Erasmus+ and make access to the programme more inclusive, Capacity Building in Higher Education projects will be accessible to unexperienced or less experienced HEIs and HEIs’ with smaller organisational capacity, from non-capital and/or rural and/or remoter EaP regions, and specifically support students/staff with fewer opportunities, refugees and students with special needs. Projects supported will be complementary to the EU bilateral and regional support to education and youth and national policies in the Eastern Partnership countries, where education reform is high on the political agenda.

#### **Priority action 3 - Capacity Building in the field of VET**

The inclusiveness of this action will be promoted in the design of the call.

As well as actions under Priority action 4 - Virtual Exchanges in Higher Education and Youth, Priority action 5 – EaP Alumni - regional chapter of Erasmus+ alumni organisation, and Priority action 6 - National Erasmus Offices (NEOs) in third countries not associated to the programme.

### **Financial overview - indicative amounts per priority area:**

<b>Region 2 - Eastern Partnership</b>	<b>Indicative amount (in MEUR)</b>
International Credit Mobility	126.00
Capacity Building in higher education(HE)	63.60
Capacity Building in the field of VET	14.40
Virtual Exchanges in HE and Youth	6.00
EaP Alumni	1.00
NEO	4.00
<b>TOTAL allocated for 2021-27</b>	<b>215.00</b>

## **South Neighbourhood**

### **Regional context**

The countries in this region have in common their young population representing a major part of their demographic structures. With approximately 60 percent of the overall MENA population under the age of 30, more than 105 million people are transitioning to adulthood (OECD). The phenomenon of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) is growing. NEETs represent around 30% of young people aged between 15 and 24 in Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, Palestine\* and Tunisia.

Among its objectives for the Neighbourhood South region, the European Union will support inclusive and sustainable economic growth, the digital sector, the green economy, water management and energy transition. Education and training are key to contribute to adapting the future workforce to the socio-economic challenges of the partner countries and generate jobs, targeting particularly youth. Besides, encouraging exchanges increase cultural understanding between the two shores of the Mediterranean and contributes to a climate of tolerance and security. Human development is at the centre of the European dialogue for the region and the Erasmus+ programme provides an opportunity to contribute to a sector wide approach on basic education, higher education, youth and vocational education and training.

### **Regional strategy**

The cooperation with the Southern Neighbourhood takes place against the background of the new Agenda for the Mediterranean<sup>10</sup> which aims to relaunch and strengthen the strategic partnership with the region. It is accompanied by an Economic Investment Plan for the Southern Neighbourhood.<sup>11</sup> Both documents address the economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic and building prosperity through inclusive growth.

The Erasmus+ programme as well as its predecessor (Tempus) in the NEAR South region has focused traditionally on strengthening the quality of higher education and mobility programs. Based on lessons learned from the previous programme and in line with the assessment of the geographical desks and the EU Delegations of the Southern neighbourhood of the challenges in the region, the period 2021-2027 will see a shift in priorities and conditions of the components of the Erasmus+ programme. The capacity building components in the areas of vocational training and youth are of equal importance as the one for higher education. There will be an increased focus on inclusiveness, labour market relevance and youth participation. The components of International Credit Mobility (ICM) and Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degrees (EMJMD) will foster exchange between European Neighbourhood South countries and the EU Member States.

The overall priorities of capacity building will focus on projects that aim to increase the access and quality of inclusive higher and vocational education as well as relevance and employability of the graduates in line with our bilateral dialogue and a green economy and digital tools. It will also support strategies that activate youth to find employment and participate in an open and democratic society, reflecting the rapprochement to EU values. In this way, the fundamentals are strengthened for the long-term political, economic and social stability and a prosperous relation with the EU, which supports the human capital development for social and economic

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\* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

<sup>10</sup> Joint Communication on a Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood, JOIN(2021) 2 final

<sup>11</sup> SWD(2021) 23 final

growth, engages with youth. Given the importance to create a sector wide dialogue in the countries of the NEAR South region, it is foreseen to engage with basic education, hence the foreseen continued engagement and expansion of the eTwinning plus component to the other countries in the Southern Neighbourhood. The eTwinning plus programme has proven to be value for money, reaching out to some 1000 teachers in 400 schools and 50,000 pupils in Jordan alone with a budget of merely EUR 300,000. It reinforces the EU support to the basic education sector and facilitates the support to digital teaching/learning at pre-university level in the region. It has proven to contribute to the resilience of education during the COVID-19 crisis.

### **Regional priorities**

**Priority Action 1 - International Credit Mobility** (max EUR 179 million or 53.4% of the total budget) with 1) an indicative ceiling of 15% of the budget per participating country; 2) an indicative amount of 65% of the funds allocated to students and 3) an indicative target of 50% of students with fewer opportunities benefitting from the grants (by promoting a clear focus on socio-economic criteria in selection criteria).

**Priority Action 2 - Capacity building for higher education** (max EUR 61 million or 18.2% of the budget) with a focus on projects that promote access and inclusive education for employment in the green economy.

**Priority Action 3 - Capacity building in the field of youth** (max EUR 30 million or 9% of the total budget) with a focus on youth participation in an open and democratic society and a special focus on the participation of women and groups with fewer opportunities.

**Priority Action 4 - Capacity building for vocational education and training** (max EUR 30.4 million or 9% of the total budget) with a focus on projects that promote access and inclusive education for employment.

**Priority Action 5 - Virtual exchanges** (max EUR 10 million 3% of the total budget)

**Priority Action 6 - Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degrees** (max of EUR 12.3 million or 3.6% of the total budget).

**Priority Action 7 – to support the implementation of the eTwinning plus programme** (max of EUR 5.9 million or 2% of the total budget) in the Neighbourhood South countries. The budget will support the **Partner Support Agencies** in Tunisia, Jordan, Lebanon to continue their work and provide an expansion into the other countries in the region such as Palestine, Egypt, Morocco and at a later stage other countries in the Southern Neighbourhood.

**Priority action 8: National Erasmus Offices (NEOs)** (max of EUR 6.4 million or 2% of the total budget in third countries not associated to the programme for the support to the National Erasmus Offices (NEOs) that will provide services to institutions to support and advocate the participation, reach-out and visibility around the implementation of the capacity building components of the Erasmus+ programme in the field of Higher Education, Vocational Education and youth in Neighbourhood South countries.

### **Financial overview - indicative amounts per priority area:**

<b>Region 3: South Neighbourhood Region</b>	Indicative amount (in MEUR)
International Credit Mobility	179.50
Capacity Building Higher Education	61.20
Capacity Building Youth	30.00
Capacity Building VET	30.40
Virtual Exchanges in HE and Youth	10.00
Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degree	11.60
eTwinning+	5.90
NEO	6.40
<b>TOTAL allocated for 2021-27</b>	<b>335.00</b>

## **Russia**

### **Context**

The EU's approach to Russia is guided by five principles reaffirmed by the European Council in May 2021. One of these principles specifically refers to promoting people-to-people contacts and engagement with civil society. Therefore, there has been a commitment on the EU side to facilitate public diplomacy and people-to-people contacts including academic cooperation under Erasmus+.

The Erasmus+ programme has made significant contributions towards the development of the higher education system and institutions in Russia. In particular, the programme has facilitated the modernization of curricula, has helped to modernize teaching methodologies, course content & facilities and to upgrade staff skills. Since 2015, there have been over 23 000 Erasmus+ academic exchanges of students and staff, ranking Russia as the primary third country not associated to the programme in terms of participation in Erasmus+ 2014-2020 International Credit Mobility.

Support through the Erasmus+ programme will continue and enhance opportunities for academic mobility, currently at a level of 4,000 annual mobilities, and capacity building. Russia has been the leading country in applications for Jean Monnet activities, and the objective will be to keep the amount of 150 projects for 2021-27. New actions include capacity building in vocational education and training sector to support the accessibility, relevance and internationalisation of VET institutions and their alignment with labour market needs as well as virtual exchanges which will explore new kinds of cooperation (virtual mobility, hybrid learning).

### **Strategy**

Higher education cooperation is a prominent example of the way the EU engages in developing people-to-people contacts with the Russian public as it provides EU and Russian societies with myriads of bridges to work, study, and train together. The education sector is one of the few remaining islands of cooperation (alongside with research, climate change, health) that demonstrate continuously high interest and much unlocked potential from the both sides.

Therefore, the strategy and the related objectives of the Erasmus+ programme for the 2021-2027 period should aim at preserving these bridges and further strengthening the contribution that the EU-Russia academic cooperation makes into the overall relations. Erasmus+ will also continue to facilitate enhanced international and national networking, sharing and mutual learning as well as joint programming.

Erasmus+ will foster a broader use of the Bologna tools<sup>12</sup> and improve the comparability of degrees and diplomas and quality assurance systems. Institutional cooperation between HEIs, as well as individual student and staff mobility will be further supported and potentially expanded by reaching out more to Russian regions and encouraging participation of HEIs with no or limited record of cooperation with the EU to date.

Erasmus+ will be opened up to deliver on external action objectives in the areas of vocational education and training as Russia places high priority on VET and is taking active part in the Torino process<sup>13</sup>. It will also help develop new approaches including virtual exchange as highlighted in the conclusions and recommendations of the EU-Russia Round-Table on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education sector.

### **Priorities**

#### **Priority action 1: International Credit Mobility**

ICM with Russia provides for impressive 4,000 annual individual mobilities between the EU and Russia, thus contributing to fostering people-to-people contacts. This activity should be at least maintained.

#### **Priority action 2: Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE),**

CBHE projects have made probably the most visible and sustainable contributions to curriculum reform and increased involvement of various stakeholders in the reform process of the Russian higher education sector. Through these projects, and in cooperation with EU experts, Russian universities were able to develop a number of new programmes or modernise existing programmes, introduce new methodologies, enhance university-enterprise cooperation and the position of the university in the society at large. They have also contributed to strengthening the infrastructure of the universities by the establishment of new laboratories and centres, including up-to-date co-working centres. CBHE activities are, therefore, in high demand in Russia and should be maintained at least at the same level as in the previous programme. Visibility and communication efforts should aim at helping Russian universities getting involved as partners as much as possible.

#### **Priority action 3: Capacity Building in the field of Vocational Education and Training (VET)**

It is suggested to include Russia into this action with the country taking active part in the Torino process and placing high priority on VET. The action will support the accessibility, relevance and internationalisation of VET institutions and their alignment with labour market needs.

#### **Priority action 4: Jean Monnet Activities**

For several years in a row, Russia has been the leading country worldwide (even counting the EU Member States!) as regards the number of applications for Jean Monnet activities. In the period 2015-2020, close to 150 Jean Monnet projects were started up or carried out by Russian universities. This is an evidence of a very strong interest in the Russian academic community

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<sup>12</sup> The [Bologna Process](#) is an intergovernmental higher education reform process that includes 49 countries and a number of European organisations. Its main purpose is to enhance the quality and recognition of European higher education systems and to improve the conditions for exchange and collaboration within Europe, as well as internationally.

<sup>13</sup> The [Torino Process](#) is a participatory process leading to an evidence-based analysis of the vocational education and training (VET) policies in a country.

in EU research. JM activities should, therefore, be maintained at least at the same level as in the previous programme.

**Priority action 5: Virtual Exchanges in Higher Education and Youth,**

There are strong mutual interests in exploring the new forms of cooperation (e.g. virtual mobility, hybrid education) that became particularly topical in the view of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the higher education sector.

**Priority action 6: National Erasmus Offices (NEOs) in third countries not associated to the programme.**

Support for the NEO in Russia should be maintained throughout the next programme (2021-2027) due to NEO excellent track-record and the unlikelihood that the Russian Federation will find the necessary funding to cover the NEO activities.

**Erasmus Mundus Joint Master’s Degrees (funded by Heading 2):**

There is high interest in EMJMD among Russian students, and Russia is continuously among the top participating countries. It is important to maintain this opportunity for bright Russian students to be exposed to European academic environment, European culture, values, etc.

**Financial overview - indicative amounts per priority area:**

<b>Region 4: Russia</b>	Indicative amount (in MEUR)
International Credit Mobility	70.00
Capacity Building Higher Education	27.00
Capacity Building VET	7.20
Jean Monnet	4.50
Virtual Exchanges in HE and Youth	3.80
NEO	1.30
<b>TOTAL allocated for 2021-27</b>	<b>113.80</b>

**Western Balkans**

**Regional context**

The Western Balkan region comprises of partners associated and not associated to the Erasmus+. The Republic of North Macedonia and the Republic of Serbia are fully associated to Erasmus+ and pay an annual entry ticket for their participation. IPA III will continue to support North Macedonia and Serbia in co-financing their entry tickets. As not associated to the Erasmus+ programme, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, and Montenegro participate only in actions that are open to international participation. In this programming period, the EU will further intensify its engagement with the region and progressively assist the full association of the Western Balkan partners to Erasmus+.<sup>14</sup>

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

<sup>14</sup> If needed Erasmus+ IPA allocation may be rechannelled to support partners in becoming associated to the Programme.

The region needs to invest in quality education and training systems to prepare its citizens for fast-paced technological, social and economic changes while providing them with strong key competences and skills for employment. Quality education is a key factor for securing growth and jobs and for addressing challenges linked to unemployment and skills mismatches. Employers complain about gaps not only in technical skills of young graduates but also in key competences. The digital and entrepreneurial competences need to be more effectively addressed. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the importance of investing in digital infrastructure for the future, as digital technology is a key component to support the new ways of living. Results of international surveys (e.g. PISA and TIMSS) demonstrate underperformance in key competences among pupils in secondary education. Outcomes have generally improved in the last two decades while still being below international benchmarks. About 80% of students across OECD countries scored higher than an average student in the Western Balkans. In general, girls outperform boys in reading and science.

On average, across the Western Balkans, education spending relative to GDP is much lower than that of OECD and EU countries. Not enough effort has been put into teacher training and professional development. Pedagogical methods in the Western Balkans are still largely traditional and associated with lower student performance. Governance of the education sector is a problem as there is a big gap between policy intentions and change on the ground due to weak institutional capacities. Additionally, the costs of corruption are high and impact on the functionality of education. The ongoing Education Sector Diagnosis, implemented through the UNESCO International Institute for Education Planning, aims to provide the Western Balkan partners with the evidence and priorities for reforms and improved governance, financing, access, quality and relevance of the education systems.

Vulnerable population groups from rural areas, from low socio-economic backgrounds and ethnic minorities have lower chances to successfully attend and complete education, while the phenomenon of NEETs (young people not in employment, education, or training) remains persistent and is one of the main challenges.

Between 2018 and 2020, the Commission reinforced its support to Erasmus+ by doubling the funding under the programme to help even more young citizens of the region to study and gain experience in the EU. As highlighted in the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans<sup>15</sup> – “support through the Erasmus+ programme will continue and enhance opportunities for academic mobility and capacity building, including in the vocational education and training sector”.

### **Regional strategy**

Investing in human capital and, in particular, supporting cooperation and potential of young people is crucial for the region's further development and a prerequisite for good neighbourly relations and reconciliation. This is core to the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans (EIP).

Specifically, the EIP underlines that “the EU will continue to support the development of evidence-based policies and reforms to address the main challenges and priorities of the education system in terms of governance, financing, quality, equality, and relevance, with a focus on adapting education systems to the digital transformation and to knowledge based economies. Special focus will be given to reforms promoting appropriate supply of relevant knowledge, skills and competences to tackle the existing mismatch between skills supply and

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<sup>15</sup> Commission Communication on An Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans, COM(2020) 641 final

labour demand, including through development of work-based learning in vocational education and training.”<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, there are both general support actions, and more specific component actions such as the Digital Education Action Plan, through which the EU is supporting the development and uptake of digital skills in the region to make the digital transformation as comprehensive and inclusive as possible. The region should also develop and implement digital education strategies while supporting teacher training as well as online education learning and content initiatives.<sup>17</sup>

The Commission is working with the region on a dedicated Agenda for the Western Balkans on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, which will further enhance human capital development and foster the development of a long-term sustainable innovation ecosystem and the transition to a knowledge-based economy. Through its update of the Skills Agenda for Europe, the Digital Education Action Plan, and the European Education Area, the EU will target the Western Balkans as a priority in its international dimension. This is in particular through the Erasmus+ Programme. Stronger participation of the Western Balkans in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is being enabled. Activities and support to innovative people-to-people formats that allow cross-cultural learning in the region and beyond and the affirmation of European core values are being promoted.

In addition, the EIP’s Green Agenda for the Western Balkans<sup>18</sup> details concrete recommendations on climate, environment, circular economy and fighting pollution. Education is key for positively affecting behaviours regarding the environment. For its successful implementation, the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans needs to be reflected in the reforms of the education systems.

In the new IPA III programming framework, Erasmus+ is under Window 2: Good governance, acquis alignment, good neighbourly relations and strategic communication (Thematic Priority 3), where it supports people-to-people contacts, public diplomacy efforts and cooperation opportunities for young people and youth workers as well as students and teachers. It also promotes intercultural dialogue and awareness of European values. Furthermore, it contributes to Window 4: Competitiveness and inclusive growth, as it aims to strengthen access to and quality of education, including vocational education, training and lifelong learning opportunities at all levels.

### **Regional priorities**

The main priorities of the IPA funding to Erasmus+ in the Western Balkans will be increased mobility and cooperation of students and learners, increased employability of young people in particular in green economy and technology sectors, as well as improved quality of the higher education systems.

The funding priorities for the Western Balkans shall be indicative and will be revisited every two years, especially taking into account the expected association of all Western Balkan partners to the Erasmus+ programme. When needed, reallocation of IPA funds among agreed Erasmus+ actions, including establishment of windows may be agreed in particular following

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<sup>16</sup> The Commission Communication on An Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans, COM(2020) 641 final, p 15.

<sup>17</sup> The Commission Communication on An Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans, COM(2020) 641 final, p 12.

<sup>18</sup> SWD(2020) 223 final

specific impact assessments. Other relevant activities directly linked to the achievement of Erasmus+ specific objectives (such as studies, meetings and consultations, exchanges of best practices, trainings, information sessions, communication and publication activities, and alumni related activities) may be funded with the agreement of DG NEAR.

#### **Priority action 1 - International Credit Mobility**

Through staff and student mobility, the Erasmus programme will increase the prospects for the Western Balkan students to enhance their skills and employability, while also contributing to their personal and professional development. The focus will be placed on student mobility. The inclusiveness of the action will be strengthened in the definition of indicators in the design of the calls for projects.

#### **Priority action 2 - Capacity Building in the field of Higher Education**

Aiming to improve the quality and diversity of higher education in the region and enhance its relevance for the labour market and the society, all three strands of the CBHE will be supported in the Western Balkans: fostering access to cooperation, partnerships for innovation and structural reforms projects.

Structural reforms projects shall be aligned to the third country not associated to the programme but can have a regional dimension as well depending on the nature and the scope of the reform aimed. The remaining two strands will have a regional dimension.

#### **Priority action 3 - Capacity Building VET**

It is expected that this action will support the accessibility, relevance and internationalisation of VET institutions and systems in the Western Balkans as a driver of sustainable socio-economic development by better alignment to labour market opportunities including entrepreneurial, digital and technology-based competences, skills matching in forward-looking economic sectors (e.g., green economy, environment and climate, and digital).

Mobility of learners will be encouraged.

#### **Priority action 4 - Capacity Building Youth**

This action will support the development of youth work in the Western Balkans and promote non-formal learning activities, especially targeting young people with fewer opportunities.

#### **Priority action 5 - Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degrees**

The action will enhance the attractiveness and excellence of higher education through a combination of institutional academic cooperation, and individual mobility for the European and the non-European students taking part in the programme. In the Western Balkans, particular focus will be on scholarships in the fields of climate change, environment and energy, digital technologies, engineering, sustainable growth and jobs, etc.

#### **Priority action 6 - Virtual Exchanges in Higher Education and Youth**

This action will enable young women and men from the Western Balkans to access high-quality international and cross-cultural (formal and non-formal) education and will improve access to online learning resources. Projects under this action will also foster international collaboration and exchanges by fully grasping the potential of digital tools through an innovative approach. Ongoing and future regional youth projects funded under IPA will also be able to apply for a Virtual Exchange component.

**Priority action 7 – Jean Monnet**

The action will promote excellence in teaching and research in the field of EU studies in the Western Balkans. It will strengthen the role of the EU by promoting European Studies and sharing the European experiences in the region.

**Priority action 8 – Sport**

This action will raise the capacity of grass-root sport organisations, promote social inclusion through sport, and foster cooperation through joint initiatives in the Western Balkans with a priority on inclusion and the integration of persons with special needs

**Priority action 9 - Alumni**

Support to the Western Balkan Alumni Association is provided for the continuation of their work.

**Priority action 10 – NEOs**

The action will support NEOs in the Western Balkans with the aim that they will be transformed into National Agencies when the Western Balkan partners become associated to the programme.

**Financial overview - indicative amounts per priority area:**

<b>Region 1: Western Balkans</b>	Indicative amount (in MEUR)
International Credit Mobility	201.68
CBHE	73.00
Capacity Building VET	44.45
Capacity Building Youth	20.00
Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degree	14.40
Virtual Exchanges in HE and Youth	6.50
Jean Monnet	3.20
Sport	5.25
Alumni	3.00
NEO	2.52
<b>TOTAL allocated for 2021-27</b>	<b>374.00<sup>19</sup></b>

<sup>19</sup> The amount is subject to amendment of the 2022 budget and the Financial Programming for IPA III for 2025.

#### 4. Overall Financial overview

<b>Erasmus + Priority Areas</b>	<b>Indicative amount (in MEUR)</b>
International Credit Mobility	1064
Capacity building in Higher Education	613
Capacity Building in Vocational Education and Training	160
Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degrees	159
Capacity Building Youth	50
Jean Monnet	42
Virtual Exchanges	39
National Erasmus+ Offices	17
Alumni	10
Erasmus+ Focal Points	9
Capacity Building Sport	5
eTwinning+	6
<b>TOTAL allocated for 2021-27</b>	<b>2174</b>

**Annex 1:** *Overview of Erasmus+ priority areas funded by EU external action*

**Annex 2:** *List of countries per region and sub-regions*

**Annex 1: Overview of Erasmus+ priority areas (co)funded by EU external action**

Action Title	Description	Objectives
<b>International Credit Mobility (ICM)</b>	Supports the mobility of individuals in higher education institutions (HEIs), between EU Member States or third countries associated to the programme and third countries not associated to the programme. Through ICM, European HEIs can set up mobility agreements with partners around the world to send and receive students and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help participants acquire key skills, support their professional and personal development, connect with different people and environments and deepen their understanding of other cultures</li> <li>• Increase the capacities, attractiveness and internationalisation of the organisations taking part.</li> <li>• Contribute to internationalisation through the individual experience of incoming and outgoing students and staff.</li> <li>• Improve the quality and relevance of higher education and be a catalyst in the reform of higher education systems.</li> <li>• Be an important tool of public diplomacy within Erasmus+, promote the EU's fundamental values and build a positive image of Europe around the world beyond participants</li> </ul>
<b>Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degrees</b>	EMJMD offered by higher education institutions established in Europe and other countries of the world foster higher education excellence and world-wide internationalisation. also enhance the attractiveness of European higher education in the world and attracts talent to its higher education institutions, through a combination of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• institutional academic cooperation, and</li> <li>• individual mobility for the European and non-European students taking part in the programme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance the international dimension of higher education through cooperation between institutions inside and outside Europe, and through mobility for the best students worldwide</li> <li>• Foster academic cooperation within the EHEA and beyond by supporting joint teaching and qualifications, quality improvements, and innovation excellence, all in the context of internationalisation</li> <li>• Improve the level of key competences and skills relevant to the labour market and society in Europe and elsewhere in the world by offering new study experiences worldwide to European and non-European students.</li> <li>• Provide European HEIs with more opportunities for structured and sustainable academic cooperation worldwide</li> </ul>
<b>Capacity Building in</b>	International cooperation projects based on multilateral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the quality of higher education in third countries not associated to the programme and</li> </ul>

<p><b>Higher Education</b></p>	<p>partnerships between organisations active in the higher education field in both Programme and third countries not associated to the programme.</p> <p>Three specific Strands are available under the action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fostering access to cooperation in higher education</li> <li>2. Partnerships for innovation in higher education</li> <li>3. Structural Reform projects</li> </ol> <p>Proposals will focus on certain priority areas defined at programming stage and reviewed every two years in the light of the results from the previous Calls and the need of adapting to emerging needs and new challenges.</p>	<p>enhance its relevance for the labour market and society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the level of competences, skills and employability potential of students in the higher education institutions (HEIs) of third countries not associated to the programme by developing new and innovative education and training programmes</li> <li>• Promote inclusive education, equality, especially gender equality, equity, non-discrimination and the promotion of civic-competences in higher education and training;</li> <li>• Enhance the teaching, assessment mechanisms for HEI staff, researchers, and students, quality assurance, management, governance, inclusion, innovation, knowledge base, and entrepreneurial capacities, as well the internationalisation of HEIs;</li> <li>• Increase the capacities of third countries not associated to the programme HEIs, bodies in charge of higher education and national authorities including Ministries of Education to modernise their higher education systems, particularly in terms of governance and financing, by supporting the definition, planning, costing, implementation and monitoring of reform processes benefitting from the expertise of relevant authorities from EU Member States or third countries associated to the programme</li> <li>• Improve the training of teachers and foster research based education and continuous professional development in order to impact the longer term quality of the education system in third countries not associated to the programme</li> <li>• Stimulate cooperation of institutions, capacity building and exchange of good practice, promoting the knowledge triangle;</li> <li>• Foster regional academic cooperation through joint initiatives</li> </ul>
<p><b>Jean Monnet Activities</b></p>	<p>Supports studies on the European integration process (through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Modules, Chairs, Centres of Excellence</li> <li>• Policy debate with academic world through networks and projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote excellence in teaching and research in the field of European Union studies worldwide</li> <li>• Foster the dialogue between the academic world and the society, including local and state level policy-makers, civil servants, civil society actors, representatives of the different levels of education and of the media</li> <li>• Generate knowledge and insights that can support EU policy-making and strengthen the role of the EU in a globalised world</li> </ul>

<p><b>Capacity Building in the field of Vocational Education and Training (VET)</b></p>	<p>International cooperation projects based on multilateral partnerships between organisations active in the field of VET in Erasmus+ EU Member States or third countries associated to the programme and third countries not associated to the programme. Proposals could focus on certain thematic areas as defined at programming stage. Examples of particularly relevant areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support VET schools managers to build relationships with employers and enhance autonomy</li> <li>• Quality assurance mechanisms</li> <li>• Key competences, including entrepreneurship and Digital and technology-based competences</li> <li>• Skills-matching in forward-looking economic sectors, including technological and digital sectors</li> <li>• Environment and climate</li> <li>• Inclusion of learners with</li> </ul>	<p>Support the accessibility, relevance and internationalisation of VET institutions and systems in third countries not associated to the programme as a driver of sustainable socio-economic development by better alignment to labour market opportunities. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reinforce the links between the third country not associated to the programme VET system and its labour market opportunities and the link between VET profiles and local/regional/national strategies and priorities impacted by skills, in particular those supported by other European Union actions, in order to ensure promote coherence;</li> <li>• increase the capacities of VET providers, bodies in charge of VET and national authorities to modernise their VET systems by supporting the definition, implementation and monitoring of reform processes;</li> <li>• increase the capacities of VET providers especially in the fields of management, governance, inclusion, quality assurance, innovation; and internationalisation;</li> <li>• support the exposure of staff, managers, policy makers and senior teachers to approaches bringing the labour market and VET closer (dual learning, curriculum development with private sector partners...);</li> <li>• improve the knowledge, technical, managerial and pedagogical skills of VET teachers and trainers;</li> <li>• integrate the input from teachers/trainers, VET learners students and employers, from private sector in particular, as well as social partners and other relevant stakeholders, into curriculum, profile design and training reform;</li> <li>• improve the level of competences, skills and employability potential of VET learners by developing new and innovative VET education programmes, especially those delivering key competences, basic language, and ICT skills;</li> <li>• foster cooperation across different regions of the world through joint initiatives.</li> </ul>
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	<p>fewer opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender equality</li> </ul>	
<b>Capacity building in the field of Youth</b>	<p>International cooperation projects based on multilateral partnerships between organisations active in the field of youth in EU Member States or third countries associated to the programme and third countries not associated to the programme.</p> <p>Proposals could focus on certain thematic areas defined at programming stage.</p> <p>Examples of particularly relevant areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities</li> <li>• Democracy, rule of law and values</li> <li>• Empowering and participation of young people</li> <li>• Dialogue with decision-makers</li> <li>• Peace and post-conflict reconciliation</li> <li>• Environment and climate</li> <li>• Employment, entrepreneurship and job creation</li> <li>• Digital skills</li> <li>• Anti-discrimination</li> <li>• Gender equality</li> </ul>	<p>Support international exchanges, cooperation and policy dialogue in the field of youth and non-formal learning, as a driver of sustainable socio-economic development and well-being of young people.</p> <p>Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise the capacity of organisations working with young people outside formal learning</li> <li>• Promote non-formal learning activities in third countries not associated to the programme, especially targeting young people with fewer opportunities</li> <li>• Support the development of youth work in third countries not associated to the programme, improving its quality and recognition</li> <li>• Foster the development, testing and launching of schemes and programmes of non-formal learning mobility in third countries not associated to the programme</li> <li>• Contribute to the implementation of the European Youth Strategy (2019-2027) including the 11 European Youth goals</li> <li>• Foster cooperation across different regions of the world through joint initiatives</li> </ul>
<b>Capacity building in the field of Sport</b>	<p>International cooperation projects based on multilateral</p>	<p>To promote universal values, personal and social development of individuals and to build more cohesive communities. Specifically:</p>

	<p>partnerships between organisations active in the field of sport in EU Member States or third countries associated to the programme and third countries not associated to the programme</p> <p>Proposals could focus on certain thematic areas defined at programming stage.</p> <p>Examples of particularly relevant areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integration of migrants, asylum seekers minorities and persons with special needs</li> <li>• Post-conflict reconciliation</li> <li>• Promotion of common values (e.g. anti-racism) and gender equality through sport</li> <li>• Enhance skills needed to improve the social involvement of groups with fewer opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise the capacity of grass-root sport organisations</li> <li>• Promote grass-root sport activities in third countries not associated to the programme</li> <li>• Promote values and social inclusion through sport</li> <li>• Foster cooperation across different regions of the world through joint initiatives</li> </ul>
<p><b>Virtual Exchanges in Higher Education and Youth</b></p>	<p>To expand the reach and scope of Erasmus through virtual exchanges, which are online people-to-people activities that promote intercultural dialogue and soft skills development.</p> <p>Virtual exchanges expand the reach and scope of Erasmus to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage intercultural dialogue and increasing tolerance through online people-to-people interactions, building on digital, youth-friendly technologies</li> <li>• Promote various types of virtual exchanges as a complement to Erasmus physical mobility, allowing more young people to benefit from intercultural and international experience;</li> <li>• Enhance critical thinking and media literacy, particularly in the use of the Internet and social</li> </ul>

	<p>make it possible for young people to access high-quality international and cross-cultural education without physical mobility. Virtual debating or training does not replace the benefits of physical mobility, but as a complement, it is beneficial in spreading European values.</p> <p>Virtual exchanges take place in small groups and are always moderated by a trained facilitator. They are easily adapted to form part of higher education degrees and youth projects.</p> <p>Proposals could focus on certain pre-identified priority thematic areas defined at programming stage</p>	<p>media, to develop resistance to discrimination and indoctrination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster the soft skills development of students, young people and youth workers, including the practice of foreign languages and teamwork, notably to enhance employability;</li> <li>• Promote citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through formal and non-formal education;</li> <li>• Strengthen the youth dimension in the relations of the EU with third countries not associated to the programme.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Alumni networks, ambassadors, role models</b></p>	<p>Support to Erasmus+ alumni associations in Higher Education through the Erasmus+ Student and Alumni Alliance (umbrella alliance) and its partner organisations Erasmus Students Network (ESN); the Erasmus Mundus Students &amp; Alumni Association (EMA); garagErasmus (gE); &amp; the Organisation for Cooperation, Exchange &amp; Networking: Student &amp; Alumni network of international exchange programmes (OCEANS).</p> <p>The organisations offer a dynamic platform for networking, professional development &amp;</p>	<p>Mobilise alumni as promoters to improve and expand participation in and inclusiveness of the programme, to communicate and give back to the wider society the benefits of the Erasmus programme and education in general, to build and maintain bridges with the EU.</p> <p>Activities could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of the programme and the EU; Public diplomacy.</li> <li>• Local community engagement and outreach;</li> <li>• Promotion of tools provided by European Commission</li> <li>• Network building</li> <li>• Back-to-School type of activities</li> <li>• Tracking students once they graduate from university, providing support &amp; mentoring</li> <li>• Strengthen synergies and coordination with the ongoing EU Alumni Engagement Initiatives implemented by FPI and DEVCO</li> </ul>

	<p>intercultural learning while promoting cooperation with European HE.</p> <p>While EAC supports the whole global network, support from external actions have so far topped this up targeting regional associations in Africa and Western Balkans.</p>	
<p><b>National Erasmus Offices (NEOs) and Erasmus+ focal points in third countries not associated to the programme</b></p>	<p>The role of NEOs and focal points is to ensure effective promotion of the international dimension of the Erasmus programme and provide local support to potential applicants in third countries not associated to the programme.</p> <p>Two strands will be supported:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continuation of the NEOs established in the framework of the previous programme(s) in the Western Balkans, Neighbourhood and Central Asia regions covering all international actions of the programme (so beyond higher education), with continued support to the Higher Education Reform Experts network.</li> <li>2. Focal points in the rest of the world so as to expand this support function globally same mandate but in this case, they would be</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote Erasmus international actions (e.g. through the organisation of info days) and to provide support to potential applicants during the application process.</li> <li>• Provide support in the organisation of activities related to the dissemination and exploitations of project results (i.e. cluster meeting with ongoing projects).</li> <li>• Ensure regular contacts with EU delegations and Erasmus stakeholders in their respective countries.</li> <li>• Contribute to policy dialogue activities in the country.</li> <li>• They will <u>not</u> be responsible for monitoring of funded projects.</li> </ul>

	<p>established on a voluntary basis, appointed and supported by national authorities. The EC will provide support, network opportunities and training.</p>	
<p><b>eTwinning</b></p>	<p>Online platform supporting school staff through collaboration projects, professional development and exchanges of experiences in Europe and beyond. The network is currently established in 35 Member States and 8 accession countries via National Support Organisations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to make it possible for schools to build pedagogical projects with other schools in other countries;</li> <li>• to promote innovative cooperation methods and transfer of quality educational approaches and to reinforce language learning and intercultural dialogue;</li> <li>• to contribute to the professional development of teachers through their active participation in collaborative projects, communities of practice and specific training activities;</li> <li>• to foster the updating of teachers' professional skills in the pedagogical and collaborative use of ICT;</li> <li>• to support and further develop the networking of schools and teachers between schools in Europe and neighbouring countries.</li> </ul>

## Erasmus + priority areas: indicative programme-level results and indicators

Programme level results	Indicators
Enhanced skills, competences and employability of students and staff of third countries not associated to the programme higher and vocational education institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of students and staff participating in Erasmus+ mobility actions (retraining, study periods, practical placements)<sup>20</sup></li> <li>• Number of Master degree students receiving scholarships through Erasmus+<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Number of students, learners, young people and staff involved in Erasmus+ capacity building actions</li> </ul>
Reinforced capacities, quality and relevance for the labour market and society of third countries not associated to the programme higher and vocational education institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of higher education institutions involved in Erasmus+ mobility actions<sup>21</sup></li> <li>• Number of higher education institutions, public and private entities professional associations, social partners and/or grassroots youth or sport organisations from third countries not associated the programme involved in Erasmus+ capacity building actions<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Number of new services/facilities provided under Erasmus+ capacity building actions</li> <li>• Number of third countries not associated to the programme introducing national, regional, EU or international standards for their educations systems through Erasmus+ support</li> </ul>
Young people's networking, innovation, participatory and leadership skills strengthened	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of online facilitated discussions between young people from youth organisations based in different countries, as part of youth projects</li> <li>• Number of Erasmus + students and alumni participating in committees, academic reviews, projects and professional organisations</li> <li>• Number of pilot projects and awareness raising activities organized by alumni associations supported by Erasmus+</li> </ul>
Excellence in teaching and research about European Union, with particular emphasis on the European integration process promoted in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of teaching programmes and multidisciplinary hubs in the field of European studies created in third countries</li> </ul>

<sup>20</sup> disaggregated by sending and receiving country, study field, gender, students with special needs and students coming from disadvantaged socio-economic background

<sup>21</sup> disaggregated by third country not associated to the programme

<p>third countries not associated to the programme.</p>	<p>not associated to the programme as a result of Erasmus+ funding</p>
<p>Dialogue between the academic world and society, including local and state level policy-makers, civil servants, civil society actors and education stakeholders fostered</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of projects involving stakeholders other than academic actors, including actors from local, regional, national public and private sector (employers, policy-makers), civil society actors or education stakeholders</li> <li>• Number of pilot projects and awareness raising activities undertaken by National Erasmus Offices and focal points supported by Erasmus+</li> </ul>
<p>Increased cooperation of institutions and exchange of good practices across different regions in priority areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of joint initiatives in priority areas developed across regions through Erasmus</li> <li>• Number of projects supporting innovation, cross-fertilisation and dissemination of information on EU policy (e.g. linked to the EU Green Deal, European Way of Life, Digital Education Action Plan, Social inclusion, European Education Area, etc.) in third countries not associated to the programme</li> <li>• Awareness and perception of the EU's support in the areas addressed by Erasmus+ in third countries not associated to the programme</li> </ul>

**Annex 2: List of countries per region and sub-regions**

<b>Asia and the Pacific</b>	
Pacific	Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu
Asia	Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Macao, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam
Middle East	Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen
Central Asia	Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

<b>Americas and the Caribbean</b>	
Latin America	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela
Caribbean	Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent & Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad & Tobago
USA & Canada	USA & Canada

<b>Sub Saharan Africa<sup>22</sup></b>	
Western Africa	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo
Eastern Africa	Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda

<sup>22</sup> For Erasmus+ actions, the 4 regions are considered as one macro-region.

Central Africa	Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome & Principe
South Africa – Indian Ocean	Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe

<b>Neighbourhood and enlargement regions</b>	
Western Balkans	Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo <sup>23</sup> , Montenegro
Eastern Neighbourhood	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine as recognised by international law
Southern Neighbourhood	Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine <sup>24</sup> , Syria, Tunisia
Russia	Russia as recognised by international law

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<sup>23</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

<sup>24</sup> This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue