



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH, SPORT AND CULTURE

Youth, Education and Erasmus+
The Director

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NOTE FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE ERASMUS+ AND EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS NA DIRECTORS

Subject: COVID-19 – Measures for the implementation of the programmes in the coming months

Further to the notes already issued in relation to the pandemic, this guidance note aims to provide a general framework of measures to be put in place by National Agencies and beneficiaries to optimise the implementation of the programmes in the coming months.

I. CONTEXT

While mobility is still at the heart of both the Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps programmes, the exceptional circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic and the serious restrictions to physical mobility that are currently in place will continue to affect the timeline of implementation of mobility actions in the coming months. In this period of uncertainty and restrictions to physical travel, National Agencies and beneficiaries must be put in the condition to respond to the current situation.

In light of this, the following approach is proposed with regard to activities carried out in 2020 (projects selected under the 2020 call or in previous years).

II. ERASMUS+

1. PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

Measures to increase the flexibility in responding to emerging priorities in the COVID-19 context

To address the most pressing needs for learners and young people during these extraordinary times when physical mobilities are restricted, the Commission, with Member States, are exploring means to invest unused 2020 individual mobility funding for decentralised actions.

To pull resources together and succeed in channelling these much-needed funds in the most effective way possible, National Agencies are asked, as a precautionary measure, **not to commit more than 80%** of the funds available **for all project selections under Key Action 1¹**, which are not yet finalised at the time of the present note.

2. BLENDED MOBILITY

KA1, KA2 (Learning, Teaching and Training activities) and KA 3 youth

Learners:

Erasmus+ learners could be offered the possibility to start their activity through virtual activities (any type of virtual activity which fits with the scope of the mobility, such as distance learning organised by the host institution, virtual training, online volunteering, etc.), to be combined with a physical mobility abroad at a later date if and when the situation allows for it. Where applicable, participants would be able to benefit from language learning opportunities through the Online Linguistic Support tool before the start of their virtual period, until the end of their mobility. In terms of recognition, both virtual and physical periods would count towards recognition of learning outcomes² or professional skills gained.

In school education, planned class exchanges for primary and secondary schools can kick-off through collaboration in the eTwinning platform. Among many other features, eTwinning allows teachers to set up virtual classrooms where pupils can engage with their peers from other countries.

Staff:

As regards the short-term mobility of staff (teachers, professors, trainers, youth workers, etc.)³: a full period of virtual mobility would be considered eligible, if the conditions to invoke the force majeure persist.

Funding rules:

In terms of funding, in continuity with current exceptional measures in place, beneficiaries would be entitled to receive financial support (e.g. the organisational support under KA1 mobility in education and training) from the programmes, regardless of whether the participants carry out their mobility virtually, physically, or as a combination of both. When appropriate, lower grants would be provided - to cover costs of participants - in case beneficiaries opt for replacing part of the physical period abroad with virtual activities.

¹ As in current procedures, project reserve lists can be established.

² For example, through European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits for higher education students

³ Or in situations whereby participants are not able to have a period of physical mobility abroad due to the impact of COVID-19 (for example, in the case of students that will soon graduate and cannot start their mobility abroad at a later stage)

3. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

KA 2 Education and Training, Youth

In order to minimise the negative impact caused by the pandemic on some project activities, and to facilitate the project continuity, beneficiaries would be allowed to carry out the activities (project meetings, multiplier events, activities to produce intellectual outputs, joint staff training, class exchanges, etc.) virtually. Project beneficiaries would have greater flexibility as it regards the transfers between the different budget categories within the project.

Funding rules:

In terms of funding, in continuity with current exceptional measures in place, beneficiaries would be entitled to receive financial support from the programmes even if they carry out project activities virtually. When appropriate, lowered grants would be provided - to cover costs of participants - in case beneficiaries opt for replacing part of the physical activities with virtual activities.

4. IN-COUNTRY ACTIVITIES

KA 3 Youth Dialogue Projects

To enable the programme to continue running and be fully activated during the crisis and the recovery period, formats such as in-country activities (i.e. activities taking place in the same country as the country of residence of the participants) could be further supported.

Under Erasmus+, national activities can take place under Key Action 3, Youth Dialogue projects. National Agencies would be allowed to increase their national Erasmus+ funds for Youth Dialogue Projects. This approach could generate more opportunities for organisations and young people to get involved in the programme and foster in-country participation in response to the COVID-19 crisis. If appropriate, an increase of projects in the reserve lists for this action is recommended at this stage.

III. EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

1. BLENDED ACTIVITIES

Volunteering, traineeships and jobs

European Solidarity Corps participants could be offered the possibility to start their activity through virtual activities with the same modalities described for blended mobility under Erasmus+ (section II.2 of this note).

2. IN-COUNTRY ACTIVITIES

Volunteering, Traineeships, Jobs and Solidarity Projects

Based on the uptake of in-country activities during the first years of implementation of the Corps, National Agencies would be allowed to partially increase the funds allocated to these activities while still ensuring compliance with the ceilings set in the legal basis for in-country activities for the entire programming period⁴. If appropriate, an increase of projects in the reserve lists for this action is recommended at this stage.

Volunteering teams in the COVID-19 context

Amongst the Corps activities, volunteering teams bring strong benefit to the communities and could be a particular relevant and strategic instrument to intervene and address the impact of the current pandemic (for example by contributing to bridge inter-generational and social divides exacerbated by the crisis).

Considering the current exceptional context, where physical cross-border participation is not possible due to COVID-19, National Agencies could support volunteering teams with solely physical in-country participation and, where possible, a transnational dimension without or with limited physical mobility (e.g. virtual participation of young people from other countries).

IV. OPERATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEASURES

When appropriate, the Commission will proceed with the revision of relevant reference documents and will provide further guidance on the operational modalities of this approach.

Kind regards,

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⁴ Art. 9 para. 2 of the European Solidarity Corps Regulation (No 2018/1475)