



Erasmus+

Inclusion und Diversity

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Nationale Agentur für Erasmus+ Hochschulzusammenarbeit
Eliza Friederichs, Beate Körner, Elena Sangion, Frauke Stebner & Katrin Winter



Estonian Agency for Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps
Julia Duh, Kaja Kruusamägi & Birgit Peterson



The Higher Education Authority
Aoileann Ní Bhroin



Academic Cooperation Association
Martin Bogdan



Finnish National Agency for Education
AnneSophie Hokkanen & Sami Niemelä



Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills
Ieva Serapinaite



Erasmus Student Network
Darwyn Bruelemans, Ana Rita Dias, Wim Gabriels, Juan Rayon Gonzalez, Gorka Guerrero & Bianca Stefan



Agence Erasmus+ France / Education Formation
Christelle Coët-Amette



Foundation Tempus - National Erasmus+ Agency in Serbia
Milena Jovanovic



Czech National Agency for International Education and Research
Terezie Kracíková & Tomáš Nevidal



IKY -State Scholarships Foundation (EL01)
Elina Mavrogiorgou



SAAIC - Slovak Academic Association for International Cooperation
Jana Šamková & Michaela Šidová



Dutch National Agency Erasmus+ Education & Training
Erick Davelaart, Matthijs Harmsen, Babet Hoerberigs & Willeke van der Werf



Rannís
Sólveig Sigurðardóttir & Svandís Ósk Símonardóttir



Feminist Researcher and Social Justice Consultant
Stella Saliari

GUIDELINES ON SYNERGIES REINFORCING INCLUSION IN ERASMUS+ FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND ERASMUS+ NATIONAL AGENCIES

Long Term Activity (LTA) “Social Inclusion in Higher Education”
Subgroup: Briding Erasmus+ Key Actions

INTRODUCTION

‘Inclusion and diversity’ is a horizontal priority in the Erasmus+ Programme, thus all its key actions are instrumental to enhance and foster this topic. The rationale for the selection of inclusion as the top priority to be mainstreamed in all Erasmus+ actions and projects may be found in the “[Implementation Guidelines for Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy](#)” (further: Implementation Guidelines).

The Implementation Guidelines also provide the definition, the suggested list of target groups (ref. definitions enclosed), the description of the programme’s mechanisms to support inclusion and diversity, the explanation of roles National Agencies, Resource Centres and the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) play in this context, as well as references to inspiration and resources on how to address the topic. These Guidelines and the [Erasmus+ Programme Guide](#) together provide a comprehensive overview of the topic inclusion in the Erasmus+ Programme.

Target groups: People with fewer opportunities who may experience barriers that can hinder their participation both as a stand-alone factor, and/or in combination of various factors. These factors can be various kinds of physical and mental disabilities or health problems, barriers linked to existing education and training systems, cultural differences, social barriers, economic barriers, hindrances linked to various types of discrimination (gender, age, ethnic and more) and/or geographical boundaries.

(Source: Implementation Guidelines for Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy)

This document – “Guidelines on synergies reinforcing inclusion in Erasmus+” should be seen as a supplement to the Implementation Guidelines mentioned above, because synergies may reinforce inclusion, i.e. amplify and multiply its impact. In this respect, ‘using synergies’ means to make the key actions and funding lines so transparent and permeable that Higher Education Institutions as well as National Agencies can easily discover and use the full potential of the Erasmus+ Programme. These *Guidelines on Synergies* intend to provide some advice and good practice examples on how to integrate the topic of inclusion in all Erasmus+ key actions, and how to use various types of synergies to reinforce and maximise the inclusive effect. For instance, inclusive mobility measures can result in Erasmus+ cooperation projects (both decentralised and centralised) or even lead to the development of policy measures on European level or vice versa. Alternatively, Erasmus+ cooperation projects with specific attention to fewer opportunity groups may contain material to be used for an efficient implementation of social inclusion measures in mobility actions.

These Guidelines intend to take a closer look at:

- The definition, context and types of synergies in general.
- The most common synergies among Erasmus+ actions with examples of synergies reinforcing inclusion. These are not exhaustive; **but should be seen as an inspiration and an explanation of possible ways of how to make Erasmus+ programme more diverse and inclusive.**

Also, you might want to look at the other outcomes of the LTA: [Long-Term Activity \(LTA\) Social Inclusion in Higher Education – Nationale Agentur für Erasmus+ Hochschulzusammenarbeit - DAAD](#)

1 SYNERGIES - DEFINITION, CONTEXT AND TYPES

Synergies are defined by the Oxford Dictionary as “*the combined power of a group of things when they are working together that is greater than the total power achieved by each working separately*” (websearch). In other words, synergies can be seen as a process in which individuals, teams or companies combine their efforts and resources to achieve better productivity, efficacy, results and /or maximise the impact of the undertaking.

The term covers many different types of processes; it is often used to define various types of possible co-relations, with limited information on types of synergies or contexts in which synergies may appear. However, providing the context and specifying synergy types could bring some clarity to this ubiquitous, yet relatively vague term. It would also lead to a better understanding of which synergies we refer to, and how they can be used, for example in the context of EU programmes and initiatives.

In the Erasmus+ Programme, synergies refer to positive effects which may be generated by various forms of collaboration and/or combination of different policies, funding lines, action types, etc. The programme is designed to support a wide range of activities, targeted at diverse stakeholder groups, engaged in different levels and forms of education or training.

Table 1: Different types of synergies

Types of synergies	Definition
Synergies within one programme (for instance Erasmus+ actions)	Erasmus+ consists of several Key Actions, i.e. 'Learning Mobility for individuals' (KA1), 'Cooperation among organisations and institutions' (KA2) and 'Support to policy development and cooperation' (KA3). Synergies can occur when, for instance, a KA1 mobility project leads to KA2 cooperation partnership or results for a more systemic impact, into a KA3 project. Typically, the first step to internationalisation of higher education may be mobility projects, which expand to include step 2 – partnerships for cooperation – later. Over time, the actions offered by the Erasmus+ Programme help to build a real international strategy, in line with the Higher Education Institution's ambitions and resources. For details, please see 2.)
Synergies within funding programmes	The RISE Programme developed by DAAD (Welcome to RISE - DAAD), which combines a national and an international component (RISE Germany; RISE Worldwide and RISE Professional) to involve students into research at an early stage. The programmes have been sequentially developed, based on prior successful experiences of providing undergraduate students with advanced research experiences first in Germany and then abroad. ¹

¹ *ACA Reflection Paper «Minding the gap – Higher education, research and innovation in international cooperation».*

SYNERGIES - DEFINITION, CONTEXT AND TYPES

Synergies between EU programmes	Synergies between several EU instruments, for example the Erasmus+ Programme and Horizon Europe Programme ² or between Erasmus+ and Creative Europe particularly relevant for higher education establishments in the cultural and creative sectors. Other programmes may also be relevant, for example Digital Europe. For instance, the FR National agency has developed a close cooperation & synergy between Erasmus+ and Creative Europe to support internationalisation for higher education institutions in the cultural and creative sectors.
Synergies in policy development	Parallel strategies, for instance the Strategy for Norwegian participation in Erasmus+ and the European Education Area ³ & the Strategy for Norwegian participation in Horizon Europe and the European Research Area. ⁴
Synergies between funding levels	Funding at different levels, for example EU and national programmes and/or regional co-financing schemes.
Synergies through joint support structures and joint promotion	Synergies which occur when several instances cooperate on the same objective, for example joint support services for students with disabilities (disability offices and international offices).
Synergies within projects and through specific activities	Designing/mapping projects on a certain topic and using them to build up strategic cooperation (for example synergies between education and research) or specific activities (for example all projects on inclusion).

Synergies are often used with an aim to strengthen and reinforce intended strategic actions or concentrating resources and consolidating efforts on certain topics, for instance strengthening synergies between education and research. The reason to combine funding lines is that the synergetic approach reinforces both the financial and strategic perspectives, which are often aligned with the overall policy aims and objectives (for example reinforcing digital and green transitions in EU programmes 2021-2027). Such an approach may leverage an expected effect and increase the sustainability and effectiveness of the strategy. It may be noted that funding may be:

- **Successive financing:** Projects that complement each other one after another, over an extended period of time.
- **Parallel financing:** projects that complement each other over the same period of time, but in different aspects.

Some principles must be considered in any case, for example avoiding double funding, respecting the rules of the relevant programme, ensuring that cumulative financing shall not exceed the total eligible costs of the action, etc.⁵

² *Synergies between the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions and Erasmus+ in the area of higher education | Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (europa.eu)*

³ *Strategy for Norway's participation in Erasmus+ and the European Education Area (regjeringen.no)*

⁴ *Strategy for Norway's participation in Erasmus+ and the European Education Area (regjeringen.no)*

⁵ *EUR-Lex - 32021R0695 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)*

2 SYNERGIES WITHIN ERASMUS+ ACTIONS

Erasmus+ consists of three key actions, which have slightly different objectives, activities, target groups, scope, levels of complexity and expected impact:

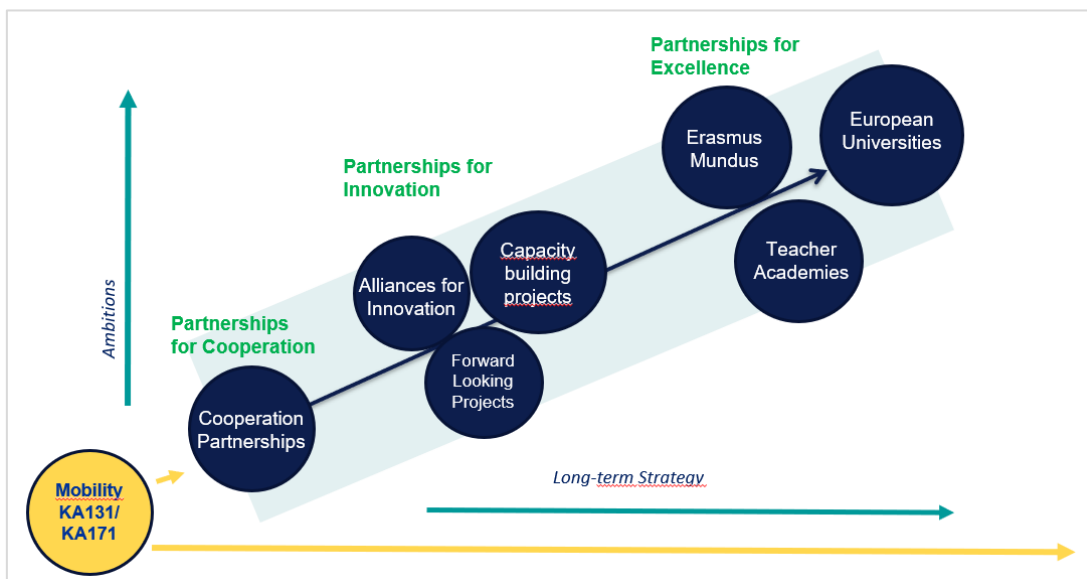
- KA1 for the learning **mobility of individuals**,
- KA2 for the **cooperation for innovation and exchange of good practices**, and
- KA3 **for Support to policy development and cooperation**.

More detailed information about actions may be found in the [Erasmus+ Programme Guide](#).

Projects on inclusion in different key actions may open up for complementarities and synergies. For instance KA1 projects, which aim to foster individuals' personal and professional development by providing support for learning mobility, may lead to various types of KA2 projects. KA2 projects provide learners with another range of possibilities for learning, exchange of experience and developing new innovative approaches. Synergies may occur when, for instance, a KA1 mobility experience for a person with fewer opportunities leads to an intention to gain more insight into how people with fewer opportunities are included into society and culture in another country via a small-scale partnership project. In parallel, a higher education institution where a student with fewer opportunities is involved in, may work with the preparation of a cooperation partnership on the same topic, yet focusing on, for example, how to design an inclusive learning environment for students with disabilities. Later, a successfully implemented project, or mapping and clustering of several projects with similar topics could foster new efforts and needs to transition to a larger, more systematic approach to inclusiveness on a national level. It would probably mean initiating a more complex project with a larger partnership over a longer period, moving from KA2 cooperation partnership project to KA3 policy reform initiatives.

The structure of gradual complexity, which the Erasmus programme is based on, makes such transitions from simpler, smaller, shorter projects to complex, large projects possible. The Implementation Guidelines (referred to above) describe the ways in which the programme mechanism is designed in a holistic, inclusive way. Various types of applicants can find an access to possibilities in Erasmus+ and identify a project type they intend to cooperate on, based on ambitions, objectives or capacities. Both newcomers with little or no administrative capacity and experienced stakeholders with a long and successful track record in previous projects may design Erasmus+ projects.

Diagram 1: Variations of Erasmus+ KA2 projects



(Source: European Commission, adapted by NA DAAD)

Further discussion on synergies between Erasmus+ actions may include some consideration on levels or intended effect/impact. If the main effect of KA1 mobility will be personal and professional development for beneficiaries, KA2 action aims at a broader, more systemic - institutional - outreach. Within KA2 actions modalities may also be found, for example *Cooperation Partnerships* may typically focus on the development of study programmes, introducing digital technologies or new learning and teaching methods in certain programmes, subjects or study areas. Other types of KA2 projects (especially centralised projects, for example *Erasmus+ Mundus Joint Degrees* or *Capacity Building in Higher Education*) aim at an even broader scope, i.e. increasing capacity at several HEIS and producing systematic effects on national levels. KA3 projects aim at the development of various types of national reforms in the field of education and training, which require even wider, more systemic approach in collaboration among several countries.

SYNERGIES WITHIN ERASMUS+ ACTIONS

Below please find some examples of above-mentioned synergies.

Example 1. Project “Marginalisation and Co-created Education (MaCE)”, which started as a KA2 partnership and was later developed into a KA3 project.

Marginalisation and Co-created Education (MaCE) is a project where researchers and students work together to explore and learn more about research, young people and education. The project was created in 2017 as a response to youth unemployment rates within the EU area, and concerns regarding young people who are «Not in Education, Employment or Training» (NEET). The objectives of the project:

- gain knowledge about ESL/NEET students based on their own description
- develop and disseminate a model or method for education and welfare services to support young people grounded in their own experiences.
- develop an innovative training program for higher educational institutions that will ensure that students are equipped to support young people in practice.
- disseminate the findings to public institutions and youth institutions to better equip them to meet the needs of these groups.
- improve the ability of higher educational institutions to support students to achieve their academic goals and gain the job they desire.
- train higher education students for research through being co-researchers on Bachelor and Master programmes.
- support innovation and creativity through partnerships and inter- and transdisciplinary approaches and strengthening the role of higher education regionally.
- [Search - Erasmus+ \(europa.eu\)](#) - MaCE

Example 2. Project “PREP” has served as a basis for two cumulative projects – PREP IP (cooperation partnership) and an Erasmus Mundus project which are implemented simultaneously in upcoming years.

The Physiotherapy and Refugees Education Project (PREP) addresses the mismatch between the competence of physiotherapists and the complex rehabilitation needs of a growing population of refugees and migrants in Europe. Over 1 million refugees and migrants have crossed the borders to Europe in recent years. This migration represents a major challenge for health care systems that struggle to provide healthcare services, particularly for non-communicable diseases and disability.

Refugees and migrants have complex health needs that are a result of a cumulative trauma experienced in their home countries, during their dangerous journey, or in the period of adjustment in their new country. This diverse and non-homogenous group also comes with resources in terms of resilience that we need to learn from and use in the healing process. However, they also face barriers accessing healthcare services because of language and cultural differences, differences in socio-economic status, and a lack of familiarity with local environment and healthcare system.

There is a gap in competence of health care professionals, including physiotherapists to meet their complex needs, many of which can be addressed by physiotherapy. There is a clear lack of definition regarding physiotherapists competencies needed to serve refugees and migrants, and a lack of common strategies to address challenges of migration which has negative implications for health. The project is divided into four parts, such as 1) European consensus; 2) Curriculum; 3) Production of e-course and 4) Pilot and revision of the course. More detailed information: [Prosjekt #622494 - Physiotherapy and Refugees Education Project - Cristin](#)

Example 3. The experience within mobility projects KA131 and KA171, attaching a high importance on promotion of equity and combating discrimination in its international mobility projects were key to go further with this cooperation partnership.

Through the frame of the Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnership programme, AGILE's objective is to contribute to building inclusive higher education systems capable of addressing the ongoing refugee crises through common values, civic engagement, social participation and recognition of skills in refugees' learning pathways.

One of the European Union's main objectives is to enhance refugees' inclusion within the society. In this domain, it appears Higher Education Institutions could do more. The project aims to give a better access to Higher Education for refugees. This is the only way to guarantee a better inclusion in the European Union's society.

The consortium is composed of 8 partners - 7 Higher Education Institutions and 1 education-oriented business - in Europe and in Ukraine, for a 3 years project, from December 2022 to May 2025. It aims to encourage and reward excellence in learning, teaching and skills development.

Many activities are planned as roundtables, public talks, one summer school, experiments at local level, and conferences to show the results. The consortia wants to engage as much as possible academia society but also the industry and the civil society in our initiative. More detailed information: <https://agileproject-erasmus.eu/>

SYNERGIES WITHIN ERASMUS+ ACTIONS

The diagram below shows how Erasmus+ actions can be combined based on cooperation objectives. A higher education institution's internationalisation strategy is often a long-term process, with interlocking objectives and actions, using a wide range of Erasmus+ actions.

Figure 1: Erasmus+ Programme Actions for Higher Education



(Source: Agence Erasmus+ France - Education & Formation)

3 IMPRINT

Editor

German Academic Exchange Service
Kennedyallee 50
D-53175 Bonn

Tel.: +49 228 882-0
Fax: +49 228 882-444

Email: webmaster@daad.de
Internet: <https://www.daad.de>

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Dr. Kai Sicks; Kennedyallee 50, 53175 Bonn

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Erasmus+ National Agency Higher Education Erasmus+ Key Action 2: Partnerships and Cooperation Projects

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Project Coordination

Dr. Stephan Geifes (V. i. S. d. P.), Beate Körner, Matthijs Harmsen (NA NUFFIC, Netherlands), Christelle Coët-Amette (NA Agence Erasmus, France), Julia Duh (NA Harno, Estonia), Elina Mavrogiorgou NA IKY, Greece), Ieva Serapinaite (NA HKdir, Norway), Michaela Sidova (NA SAAIC, Slovakia) (all DAAD).

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