



THE EUROPEAN
UNION
EXPLAINED

Education
and training —
The key to
your future

Education, training, youth and sport

Investment in education and training is crucial for boosting young people's personal development and job prospects.



THE EUROPEAN UNION EXPLAINED

This publication is a part of a series that explains what the EU does in different policy areas, why the EU is involved and what the results are.

You can find the publications online:

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International cooperation and development
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Maritime affairs and fisheries
Migration and asylum
Public health
Regional policy
Research and innovation
Taxation
Trade
Transport

CONTENTS

Why do we need European action?	3
How the EU goes about it	6
What the EU does	10
Outlook	16
Find out more	16

The European Union explained: Education, training, youth and sport

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Why do we need European action?

Education and training — For your future — For our future

For you: Investing in education and training is the key to your future, particularly if you are a young person. Learning a second or third language will not only make it easier for you to get to know other countries, their people and different ways of life; it may also enable you to study or train abroad and improve your prospects of a fulfilling and well-paid job in the future. Studies show that highly skilled people are twice as likely to be employed and almost three times more likely to earn an above-average income than poorly skilled people.

For your country: In a world which is becoming increasingly interdependent, national economies will only achieve their full potential if they are underpinned by strong education and training systems. A country that invests intelligently in education and training will prosper in business, science and the arts. Moreover, ensuring educational opportunities for everyone will help to secure social justice and social cohesion.



Education was essential to the blossoming of classical Greek civilisation.

Did you know?

20 % of Europeans have low levels of basic skills like literacy and numeracy, which makes it difficult for them to access the labour market and to fully participate in society.

For Europe: Our success in a competitive global market relies on a skilled labour force, producing excellent and innovative goods and services. But there is much more to education than economic outcomes: a democratic culture in Europe can only thrive if all of us are aware of our civil rights and responsibilities. Active citizenship needs to be taught and learned at home, in school and outside.

Erasmus+

In view of the key role of education for the future well-being of citizens, nations and Europe as a whole, the EU has developed an ambitious programme: Erasmus+. The programme aims to boost people's personal development and job prospects. It supports all sectors of education and training, as well as non-formal learning for youth, volunteering and grassroots sport. It replaces several previous programmes, with streamlined and simplified application rules and procedures.

Since 1987, more than 3 million higher education students have benefited from Erasmus grants. Erasmus+ has increased EU funding significantly. It aims to support another 4 million young people, students and adults between 2014 and 2020 to gain experience and skills by studying, training, taking part in youth exchanges or volunteering abroad. It also significantly increases opportunities for cooperation between education institutions or youth organisations as well as between the worlds of education and work.

Alarming figures — The skills gap

The global economic crisis has exposed structural weaknesses with serious consequences for millions of people. The youth unemployment rate stands at more than 20 % for the EU as a whole, and is above 50 % in some Member States. However, the crisis is not the only cause of unemployment. Poor education and a lack of skills also contribute to joblessness.

Did you know?

Not being able to read and write does not only ruin lives; it brings about enormous costs for society. The costs of illiteracy — in the developed countries alone — amount to more than €500 000 000 000 (500 billion) each year.

About 20 % of young people in the EU do not reach minimum levels of basic skills in reading, maths and science. Six million leave education and training with only lower secondary education or less. You can imagine the impact of these deficits: a recent survey revealed that only one out of two adults with low skill levels is employed, whereas the employment rate for highly skilled adults is substantially higher.

Does that mean that gaining qualifications is the best route to getting a job? It is definitely the safest. Many employers are desperately looking for skilled workers. One employer in three has difficulty finding people with appropriate skills. This is particularly true in the most innovative sectors of the economy, where there are thousands of job vacancies in the fields of engineering, science and technology.

The mismatch between the skills being asked for by employers and those being offered by job-seekers is called the **skills gap**. It is one of the most acute problems facing European countries. Bridges are needed to close the gap. The most solid bridges are education and training.

Retirees bridging the gap

The European HEAR ME project (Highly Educated Retirees Mentoring Early School Leavers) recruited retirees or people approaching retirement who wished to work with young people. The volunteers attended a series of courses on mentoring skills. The retirees then acted as mentors, providing help and guidance to early school leavers with special needs to support their educational and employment goals.



Manufacturers are struggling to find skilled workers.



Subsidiarity in practice: what you learn at home need not be learned at school.

Tackling challenges together

Millions of people and organisations are involved in the process of learning; from students, trainees and parents, to teachers, universities, enterprises and youth organisations, all the way up to governments and the EU. How can they share their respective responsibilities in a smart way? The **principle of subsidiarity** provides some guidance. It means that decisions should always be taken as closely as possible to the people concerned.

Responsibilities in education — What do you think?

Whose role is most important in the process of education and training? Governments, schools, teachers, or parents?

What about your own role?

To what extent can you decide where, when and what to learn?

That’s why — according to the EU treaties — each EU country is responsible for developing its own education, training and youth policies. It is up to the national governments to decide on the content of teaching and the organisation of education. Each government, in turn, is free to allow education matters to be dealt with at the regional or local level. Many decisions are also further delegated to universities, schools, and training establishments. Some of them are implemented by youth organisations.

However, in order to flourish, knowledge needs to grow and expand, including by crossing borders. This is where the European dimension in education, training, and youth policies comes in. Member States can improve their policies by learning from each other’s experiences; students, apprentices, volunteers, teachers, youth workers, schools, universities and youth organisations can cooperate across borders. Cooperation at European level is necessary to create the best learning environments for all and to deliver highly valued qualifications.

Consequently, cooperation programmes in education, training, and youth have been on the European agenda for many years: the Erasmus programme was adopted in 1987 and Europe’s first youth programme ‘Youth for Europe’ in 1988. However, it was not until the Treaty of Maastricht (1993) that formal European competences in the field of education, vocational training and youth were included in the Union’s founding treaties.

Did you know?

Sport was added as a new EU competence in the Lisbon Treaty (2009). The importance of having a Europe-wide approach is clear when it comes to promoting the social and economic benefits of participation in sport and physical activity and to tackling threats to sport such as match-fixing, sport-related violence or doping. Sharing information at EU level helps Member States develop effective policies to counter such challenges.

How the EU goes about it

The EU is committed to opening minds and the doors of opportunity through its support for education, training and youth policy.

Open your mind: learning happens continuously

'Life is about learning; when you stop learning, you die' (Tom Clancy).

Learning happens continuously. Talking to someone you did not know before provides an opportunity to learn about his or her views, preferences, etc.

It is almost impossible not to learn. Try to avoid learning for just an hour. Do you have any chance of succeeding?

You don't. Even in preparing for this experiment, you will have to reflect on what activities to refrain from. As a result, you will develop — through your own experience — a clearer view of what learning is about. Personal experience is learning at its best.

Learning is more than sitting in a classroom. It is more than absorbing facts. Learning is about life.

Accordingly, the EU promotes a broad and comprehensive approach to learning, which includes a whole range of different learning methods and learning environments, for example non-formal, informal and lifelong learning.



Learning is about life.



Learning about solidarity, learning about life.

Non-formal learning means learning outside the formal school or training environment and takes place through organised activities involving some form of learning support, for example:

- structured online learning;
- in-company training;
- volunteering or taking part in youth exchanges;
- programmes to impart literacy or work-related skills to school drop-outs.

Informal learning means learning that is not organised or structured in terms of goals, time or instruction. This covers skills acquired (sometimes unintentionally) through life and work experience. For example:

- project-management or IT skills acquired at work;
- languages and intercultural skills acquired during a stay abroad;
- social skills acquired through volunteering, cultural activities and sport and through activities at home (for example taking care of a child).

Lifelong learning means learning new things throughout your life, particularly after you have completed your initial formal education. Remember: it is never too late to learn!

Lifelong learning for people with intellectual disabilities

For people with intellectual disabilities, lifelong learning is not only about learning new skills. It is also about being included in society, being able to represent themselves and taking more control of their daily life. However, many training courses and classes are not suited for people with intellectual disabilities. Often, the teaching materials are complicated to figure out and it is difficult to understand what the teacher is saying.

*That's why organisations from many EU countries have come together and set up the **Pathways project**. The participants have developed training courses, booklets and online tools, explaining how to make information more accessible. This project will make it easier for people with intellectual disabilities to take part in lifelong learning.*

Open your door: cooperation with the world

Europe is not a closed shop — particularly when it comes to education, training and youth policy.

- The EU supports cooperation around the world aiming at the development and modernisation of higher education institutions in the partner countries. Partner institutions can be chosen in EU neighbouring countries, the western Balkans and Russia as well as regions in Asia, Latin America and Africa.

- The EU supports cooperation projects between youth organisations worldwide. These projects aim to improve the quality and recognition of youth work, volunteering, youth exchanges and other non-formal learning activities in different regions of the world.
- The **Jean Monnet** programme encourages teaching, research and reflection on European integration worldwide. Between 1990 and 2011, the Jean Monnet programme helped to set up approximately 3 700 projects in the field of European integration studies, including 165 Jean Monnet European Centres of Excellence, around 880 university chairs and almost 2 200 permanent courses and European modules. The programme now operates in 72 countries throughout the world.

Promoting knowledge about the EU worldwide

'The Jean Monnet Action is really crucial. The economics programme now serves as a vehicle for developing EU-related curricula, inviting European academics and practitioners ... and promoting various activities to increase the Korean public's awareness about the EU.'

Professor Woosik Moon, Jean Monnet Chair of EU Economics at Seoul National University, South Korea.

The EU plays a supporting role

Member States are responsible for the content and organisation of their education and vocational training systems. The EU respects the diversity of national rules and priorities and is not entitled to harmonise the laws and regulations of its Member States in these fields (Articles 165 and 166 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union).

Accordingly, the EU is not in a position to lay down the rules on education, training and youth policy. Does this mean that the EU stands by and just watches? Not at all! The EU plays a unique role in the European learning process as a coordinator, facilitator and advisor. The EU encourages cooperation between Member States and supplements their action. What does that mean in practice?

It means, for instance, that the EU:

- **supports** students, doctoral candidates, trainees, teachers, trainers, and lecturers to study, teach, or gain work experience abroad as well as young people to participate in youth exchanges or volunteering abroad;
- **encourages** Member States to reform and modernise education and training systems and develop youth policies so that they are better equipped to tackle today's and tomorrow's challenges;
- **facilitates** people's integration into the labour market, in particular through vocational education and training;
- **promotes** cooperation between governments, universities, colleges and schools, training establishments enterprises, social partners, youth and civil society organisations.

Why cooperate at EU level?

Cooperation at EU level helps European countries to improve their education systems. It allows countries to work together and to learn from each other by sharing best policy practices.

Cooperation at EU level: the European semester

Europe 2020 is the EU's strategy for economic growth and job creation. Its cornerstone is the European semester, set up in 2011 as a yearly cycle of economic policy coordination and dialogue involving European institutions, EU governments and national parliaments. As part of this exercise, the EU adopts **country-specific recommendations** which aim to give guidance to Member States on how to ensure competitiveness and job creation. As education and training are of growing importance for employment and economic development, the country-specific recommendations also address — to a considerable and increasing extent — issues linked to education and training.

Cooperation at EU level: the mobility scoreboard

With the participation of the Member States, the EU has developed the mobility scoreboard. The scoreboard identifies five key factors that influence young people's motivation and ability to study or train abroad. It appears (as of January 2014) that the support varies significantly between Member States.

- *Germany, Belgium, Spain, France and Italy provide the most comprehensive information and guidance about mobility opportunities.*
- *Cyprus, Luxembourg and the German-speaking part of Belgium place greatest emphasis on language learning in schools. This is often an important factor for deciding to study, train or work abroad.*
- *The Flemish part of Belgium, Germany, Italy and Austria stand out for having well-developed financial support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds who wish to study or train abroad.*

The EU pursues ambitious goals

Learning is about progress. The same is true of education and training policies. Therefore, to measure progress, the EU and its Member States set the following **benchmarks to be reached by 2020**.

- The share of 15-year-olds with insufficient abilities in reading, maths and science should be less than 15 %.
- School dropout rates should be reduced to less than 10 %.

- At least 40 % of young adults should complete higher education.
- At least 20 % of higher education graduates should have spent a period of study or training abroad.

Where do we stand today? Are we on track for reaching the ambitious goals set for 2020? According to the PISA 2012 survey the picture is mixed.

Whatever the outcome in certain subjects, or for certain countries, much remains to be done. As long as millions of young people in the EU are struggling with reading, writing, and maths, we cannot lean back and relax.



Estonia (this is its capital Tallin) ensures equal learning opportunities.

PISA 2012 survey

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a worldwide study by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). PISA assesses the extent to which 15-year-old students have acquired key knowledge and skills in maths, reading, and science. The first survey was performed in 2000, and the assessment has since been repeated every 3 years. All 34 OECD member countries and 31 partner countries and economies participated in PISA 2012. Here are some of the results.

The EU is improving in reading and science!

The EU is on its way to reaching the benchmark of having fewer than 15 % of students with insufficient abilities by 2020.

Reading:

23.1 % in 2006 → 17.8 % in 2012.

Science:

20.3 % in 2006 → 16.6 % in 2012

We are lagging behind in maths!

The average share of low-achieving students in maths has essentially remained the same in PISA 2012 (22.1 %) in comparison to PISA 2009 (22.3 %).

Some countries stand out!

Four EU Member States (Estonia, Finland, Poland and the Netherlands) are among the top performing countries with a rate of low achievers in maths better than the EU benchmark of 15 %.

Estonia is best in class regarding its proportion of low achievers in maths: only 10.5 % (compared to 22.1% in the EU as a whole).

Others are way behind!

There are EU Member States where between one third and one half of the 15-year-olds score at the lowest PISA level.

What the EU does

The EU is investing €14.7 billion in **Erasmus+**, the EU programme for education, training, youth and sport for 2014–20.

Erasmus+ seeks to boost the job prospects and the personal development of young people. It helps our education, training and youth systems deliver teaching, learning and youth activities that gives people the skills they need in today's and tomorrow's labour market and society.

If you are interested in EU funding for education, training, youth and sport, then you will find essential information here. More detailed information is available in the *Programme guide for applicants*. You will find the programme guide and a lot of other information on the Erasmus+ website (<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus>).

Erasmus+ has three key actions

- Key Action 1 — Learning mobility: support for studying, working, taking part in youth activities, teaching, training or developing professional and personal skills and competences abroad.
- Key Action 2 — Cooperation and partnership: opportunities for collaborative partnerships between education, training and youth organisations, as well as between the worlds of education and work.

- Key Action 3 — Policy reform: supports the processes of reflection, dialogue and evidence-building needed to deliver reform in education, training and youth policies and systems.

Key Action 1: Learning mobility of individuals

This section outlines Erasmus+ opportunities for all kinds of learners and staff in education, training and youth organisations.

Are you ...

... a student in higher education wanting to study or train abroad?

... in vocational education or training and looking to expand your skills?

... a young person wishing to benefit from a youth exchange or to volunteer abroad?

... a teacher, employee or youth worker, wanting to teach or train abroad?

Then this section may contain information on new opportunities for you.

Languages for people on the move

The better your language skills, the more you will benefit from your time abroad. Practicing different languages is an important aspect of most mobility actions. If you're a university student, volunteer or staff member leaving for at least 2 months, or a vocational learner staying abroad for at least 1 month, Erasmus+ offers you the chance to reinforce your knowledge of the language you will use for studying, working or volunteering.

When your mobility application has been approved, you will be asked to check your language competences and offered a language course either before leaving or during your stay abroad. Contact your home institution or organisation to find out more about this new opportunity offered by Erasmus+. Brush up your language skills and get ready to move!

STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Study periods: students can spend 3 to 12 months studying at a university or college in another country.

Traineeships: alternatively, they can do a traineeship in a workplace abroad lasting from 2 to 12 months.

Recent higher education graduates can also do a traineeship abroad within 1 year of graduation. But plan ahead! You have to be selected by your university or college during your last year of study.

Erasmus+ also supports some European students to study in the rest of the world and students from elsewhere in the world to study in Europe.

'Studying at another university helped me broaden the scope of my field of study more than ever before. But the best part of the experience was meeting a lot of people with whom I am sure to work in the future.'

Robert (United Kingdom) on studying industrial design for 10 months at Delft University of Technology, the Netherlands.

MASTER'S STUDENT LOANS

Erasmus+ supports new low-cost loans to help master's students to study in other European countries. Students are able to apply for a favourable loan for a full master's degree abroad and can borrow up to €12 000 for a 1-year course or up to €18 000 for a 2-year course.

JOINT MASTER'S DEGREES

Erasmus+ offers master's students worldwide the chance of a scholarship to follow joint, high-level international study programmes run by university partnerships. The joint master's programmes lead to a degree issued jointly by all or some of the participating institutions. You can get more information from the international office of your higher education institution.

MOBILITY IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mobility abroad can help young people in vocational education and training to gain the skills needed for today's competitive employment market.

Upper secondary students in vocational training schools, trainees and apprentices may complete a traineeship or apprenticeship abroad, hosted by a company, a workplace (for example an NGO or public organisation) or vocational school, with a period of work-based learning in a company. Traineeships may last from 2 weeks to 1 year.



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Broaden your horizons; study abroad.



Gather professional experience in a country known for its expertise.

Also, recent graduates (that is former apprentices) may participate in a mobility activity. They must undertake their traineeship abroad within 1 year of qualifying.

'My mobility experience has definitely helped further my career. Without it, I wouldn't have had the confidence to apply for the Young Chef of the Year competition, never mind winning it. I'd highly recommend this to anyone. My trip to France was, and to this day, still is, one of my greatest memories.'

Deborah (United Kingdom) on experiencing a work traineeship in Lyon, France.

If you are interested in applying, you should approach your vocational education and training institution.

YOUTH MOBILITY: YOUTH EXCHANGES AND PARTICIPATION IN THE EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE

Youth exchanges help young people acquire skills like project management and teamwork. Such opportunities outside the school environment enable groups of young people to undertake a structured programme of activities (such as a mix of workshops, exercises, debates and role plays) in another country within or outside the EU for up to 21 days.

The **European Voluntary Service** offers an ideal opportunity for young people to develop personal and professional skills by contributing for up to 12 months to the daily work of organisations in areas such as social care, the environment, non-formal education programmes, ICT, culture and many others. It is also a chance for them to grow in self-confidence, feel more engaged as citizens and experience another way of life. A volunteering activity can last up to 1 year and participants can volunteer to support all kinds of causes, either within or outside the European Union.

Youth exchanges are open to young people aged between 13 and 30. The European Voluntary Service is open to young people aged between 17 and 30.

'In just 1 year with the European Voluntary Service, I've learned more than I've ever learned before. I would definitely recommend the Voluntary Service to anybody who is open-minded and wants to gain experience.'

Clara (Germany) on participating in a project to assist recently arrived immigrants in Brussels, Belgium, at the Jozef Swinnen Community Centre.

If you are interested in applying, you should get in touch with the national agency in your country.

STAFF AND YOUTH WORKER MOBILITY

If you are a teacher or you work in an enterprise, you can teach at an institution abroad, gaining new professional perspectives, widening your networks and helping to modernise Europe's education and training systems and make them more international.

Teachers, non-teaching staff and youth workers can also follow training abroad, including structured courses, professionally focused language training, training events and job shadowing, to develop new knowledge and ideas that you can put into practice when you get home. These activities can last from 2 days to 2 months.

If you are interested in applying, you should approach the educational institution or youth organisation you are working for. Enterprise staff must be invited by the higher education institution where they intend to teach.



The University of Bonn's international strategy includes the exchange of young scientists, students and administrative staff.

'My experience consisted of job shadowing at the Deaf Federation of Cyprus in order to learn about their activities and experiences ... This experience allowed me to better understand Cypriot deaf culture, further develop my sign language competences and gain a better understanding of the learning process that has to be implemented when teaching deaf learners.'

Christophe (France), a sign language instructor, on his job shadowing in Cyprus.

Key Action 2: support for cooperation and partnership

Are you an organisation or institution in the field of education, training or youth, wishing to work across borders with peers in your own or other sectors, or with the world of work, in order to innovate and modernise your practices?

Are you a company, research organisation, regional authority, association, socioeconomic partner or NGO wishing to cooperate with organisations or institutions in the field of education, training or youth to strengthen cooperation, transfer knowledge and implement innovative practices?

Then there are various kinds of partnership projects in Erasmus+ which may be relevant to you.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITHIN AND ACROSS THE FIELDS OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUTH AND WITH THE WORLD OF WORK

Strategic Partnership seek to develop, transfer and implement innovative education, training and youth practices through cross-border cooperation between different kinds of organisations.

To achieve these aims, Erasmus+ supports organisations active in the fields of education, training and youth from different countries. The kinds of activities which can be supported include:

- developing joint study programmes, new curricula, innovative teaching methods (for instance better exploitation of ICT) and new teaching/training materials, methods and practices (for example for languages);
- networking and peer learning to allow students and staff to study real-life cases with enterprises, aiming at developing an entrepreneurial mindset and creative thinking;
- the validation of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning at national level by referencing them to EU frameworks and using EU documentation instruments.

How to apply: educational institutions, youth organisations or representatives of other interested organisations should contact the national agency in their country.



E-learning allows for flexible, self-paced learning.



*Ready to take the jump?
Acquire entrepreneurial skills
at university level.*

KNOWLEDGE ALLIANCES: COOPERATION BETWEEN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND ENTERPRISES

Erasmus+ funds structured partnerships between higher education institutions and enterprises to help bridge the gap between the worlds of higher education and work. Knowledge alliances will also help to equip students and staff with more entrepreneurial skills and make higher education institutions and companies more entrepreneurial.

Knowledge Alliances can support activities addressed at:

- developing and implementing new learning and teaching methods (like new multidisciplinary curricula and learner-centred and real problem-based teaching and learning);
- creating structures for learning transversal skills and how to apply them across higher education programmes. These should be developed in cooperation with enterprises, thereby strengthening employability, creativity and new professional pathways;
- introducing entrepreneurship education as well as entrepreneurial approaches in the teaching and learning process into all disciplines; thereby providing students, researchers, staff and educators with the knowledge, skills and motivation to engage in entrepreneurial activities.

Knowledge alliances must involve a minimum of six organisations from at least three different programme countries (with at least two enterprises and two academic partners).

SECTOR SKILLS ALLIANCES: COOPERATION BETWEEN PROVIDERS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND THE WORLD OF WORK

Business and industry think in terms of transnational supply chains and not in national ones. Sector Skills Alliances adjust curricula to this reality and help prepare young people in vocational education and training for a European labour market. Sector skills alliances aim at providing them with the skills required by their specific professions through:

- tackling skills gaps by enhancing the responsiveness of initial and continuing vocational education systems to sector-specific labour market needs;
- working to design and deliver transnational vocational training programmes and teaching and training methodologies;
- developing work-based learning (in school or companies) and apprenticeships to facilitate the transition from education to work.

Sector skills alliances must involve at least nine different organisations from at least three programme countries, including two Member States.

CAPACITY-BUILDING IN HIGHER EDUCATION: COOPERATION WITH HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN PARTNER COUNTRIES

Erasmus+ supports cooperation projects with higher education institutions around the world, aiming at the development and modernisation of higher education institutions in the partner countries. Partner institutions can be chosen in EU neighbouring countries, the western Balkans and Russia, as well as regions in Asia, Latin America and African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

Future projects could include:

- joint projects developing new curricula and degrees, learning and teaching methodologies, staff development, quality assurance, new governance and management structures and processes;
- projects for developing structural reforms at national level with support of authorities in partner countries (for example policy modernisation, governance and management of higher education systems).

CAPACITY-BUILDING IN THE FIELD OF YOUTH: COOPERATION WITH YOUTH ORGANISATIONS IN PARTNER COUNTRIES

Erasmus+ supports cooperation projects between organisations active in the field of youth around the world. These projects aim to improve the quality and recognition of youth work, non-formal learning and volunteering in different regions of the world — particularly in developing countries.

Examples of activities include:

- cooperation, networking and peer-learning among youth organisations;
- working together to raise awareness and recognition of volunteering and non-formal learning in partner countries;
- developing and implementing good practices and tools for the professional development of youth workers and trainers.
- youth exchanges, volunteering abroad and mobility of youth workers.

ONLINE TOOLS FOR SCHOOL TEACHERS AND ADULT EDUCATION

eTwinning supports and reinforces cooperation between schools by providing support, useful tools and a place to work together online. eTwinning can be used to support mobility projects or strategic partnerships, or to collaborate online.

In addition, eTwinning contributes to the professional development of teachers and staff by offering online learning materials and networking opportunities throughout Europe.

All schools and preschools in the programme countries are welcome to use eTwinning at any time by registering in the eTwinning portal:
<http://www.etwinning.net>

EPALE (Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe) is an online space in which policymakers, educators, stakeholders and anyone involved in providing adult education can exchange information and ideas, or showcase and disseminate methods of good practice in adult education. It creates communities of adult education staff across the EU. The platform will be available by the end of 2014.

Key Action 3: support for policy reform

Erasmus+ supports activities aimed at achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy, the Education and Training 2020 strategic framework and other sector-specific strategies such as the Bologna process in higher education. These activities involve evidence gathering, studies and analyses on particular themes or countries, cooperation projects between public authorities or major organisations, and consultations with governments and citizens' organisations. They also encourage meetings between young people and decision-makers in the context of the Structured Dialogue with youth.

The activities are intended to improve the quality and efficiency of education, training systems and youth policies, promote commitment to policy reform, awareness-raising, mutual learning, transnational cooperation, develop knowledge and encourage the active participation of young people in democratic life.

Outlook

From 2014 to 2020 about 4 million people and 125 000 institutions will directly benefit from Erasmus+.

Key figures: Erasmus+ (2014–20)

Overall budget	€14.7 billion Additional funds will be allocated for funding the actions with third countries (partner countries).
Overall mobility opportunities	More than 4 million people
Higher education	Around 2 million students
Vocational education and training students	Around 650 000 students and apprentices
Staff mobility	Around 800 000 lecturers, teachers, trainers, education staff and youth workers
Volunteer and youth exchange schemes	More than 500 000 young people
Master's degree loan guarantee scheme	Around 200 000 students
Joint master's degrees	More than 25 000 students
Strategic partnerships	Around 25 000 strategic partnerships linking together 125 000 schools, vocational education and training institutions, higher and adult education institutions, youth organisations and enterprises
Knowledge Alliances	More than 150 Knowledge Alliances set up by 1 500 higher education institutions and enterprises
Sector skills alliances	More than 150 sector skills alliances set up by 2 000 vocational education and training providers and enterprises

Find out more

- ▶ **General information on education and training on European level:** <http://ec.europa.eu/education>
- ▶ **General information on youth policy on European level:** <http://ec.europa.eu/youth>
- ▶ **Erasmus+:** <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus>
- ▶ **Executive agency:** <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu>
- ▶ **National agencies:** http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/national-agencies_en.htm
- ▶ **Teachers' Corner:** <http://europa.eu/teachers-corner>
Teachers' Corner provides educational material about the European Union in 23 languages. It contains all kinds of material (websites, booklets, online games, videos, etc.) designed for primary and secondary school pupils. Teachers will find plenty of inspiration here, whether they want to teach pupils about the history of the EU, how it works or what it does or to debate EU policies in greater detail. All teaching resources are free of charge.
- ▶ **European Youth Portal:** <http://europa.eu/youth>
The European Youth Portal provides Information and opportunities for young people across Europe.
- ▶ **Questions about the European Union? Europe Direct can help:** 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 — <http://europedirect.europa.eu>

