

The National Report on the implementation and significance of the ERASMUS+ 2014-2023 Programme in Slovakia

National coordinator: Beáta Brestenská

Contact details: beata.brestenska@uniba.sk, tel.: +421 911 653 343

Author of the report: Beáta Brestenská

Evaluators and authors of the underlying reports: Jana Blštáková, Ivana Boboňová, Zdena Gadušová, Dagmar Jelínková, Romana Kánovská, Boris Mattoš, Jana Miháliková, Renáta Proková, Juraj Vantuch, Darina Výbohová,

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Contents

1. Summary	3
2.1 Fulfilling the expectations of the impact analysis	3
2.2 Summary of answers to evaluation questions according to evaluation criteria.....	4
2. Methodology for the preparation of the national report, the role of actors	6
2.3 Evaluation resources	6
2.4 Evaluation methodology	7
3. Answers to standard questions as well as conclusions and suggestions for improving the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme and the future programme.....	9
3.1 Efficiency	9
9	
3.2 Effectiveness	28
3.3 Significance	33
3.4 Cohesion.....	38
3.5 European added value and sustainability.....	43
4. Recommendations and topics for the Erasmus+ programme for the next time period	50
4.1 Recommendations for the EC as to the changes and supplements to the ongoing Erasmus+ programme	50
4.2 Recommendations and topics for the national authorities and national agencies	51
5. Appendices: more detailed justification, explanations or statistics of arguments in the main document.....	52
5.1 Annex 1 List of used abbreviations	52
5.2 Appendix 2 Management of the preparation of the ERASMUS+ National Administration....	53
5.3 Appendix 3 Examples of good practice in the ERASMUS+ program in Slovakia	54
5.4 Appendix 4 Images	61
5.5 Appendix 5 Tables	62
5.6 Annex 6 Charts	75

1. Summary

The national report on the implementation and significance of the Erasmus+ programme in Slovakia was elaborated for the completed Erasmus+ 2014-2020 programme and the new Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme where we evaluated only the first two completed years of the programme and the ongoing year 2023. The structure and content of the national report is determined by the startup materials: EU Norms 2012/817 Art. 24 (Regulation (EU) 2012/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of May 2011 establishing Erasmus+, 2012)¹ and the evaluation questions formulated in the guidelines of the European Commission (European Commission (2023). National reports on the implementation and impact of Erasmus+: guidance note.)². The results of the research study as well as round table discussions and personal interviews conducted in Slovakia in 2023 using a representative sample of respondents (Tables 1, 2 and 3) clearly present positive trends in meeting the objectives of the Erasmus+ programme as well as the approved horizontal priorities.

2.1 Fulfilling the expectations of the impact analysis

The assumptions of developing the new Erasmus+ programme became a challenge as well as a „propeller engine“ for the national authority and for both National Agencies Erasmus+ (SAAIC and NIVAM). The research study analysis clearly explains that the Erasmus+ programme is well implemented in Slovakia and has a significant positive impact on all sectors of education and youth. The motivation and number of people interested in joining the programme increases annually. A particularly significant increase can be observed in the sector of school education (SE) and vocational education and training (VET).

i) The „one-stop shop effect“

The system of two national agencies (SAAIC, NIVAM) continues to work well in Slovakia. They have created a common website (as a single point of contact) for the new programme [Programme 2021-27 - Erasmusplus Slovakia](#). The results of the evaluation present the positive opinions of the respondents to the professional management of the programme by the national authority and to the implementation of the programme by agency workers, where they evaluate a significant improvement in communication with the agencies, which is enhanced by using the new digital tools (video manuals, podcasts, webinars, etc.) and maintaining personal contacts at seminars, information events, workshops, conferences, etc.

ii) Increased participation as a result of simplifying the programme structure

There was a certain fear and disorientation spread among the public at the beginning of the implementation of the new programme, but the targeted awareness and educational work of both NAEs+ in schools and organizations quickly led to an understanding of the new simplified structure of the programme and the expectation of an increase in the number of applicants for projects in all sectors was fulfilled. A certain decrease in the number of projects was noticeable in 2020 and 2021 with respect to the Covid pandemic (extension of deadlines for unfinished grants); however, a significant increase in the number of projects can be seen since 2022 (Table 4).

iii) Better inter-sectoral cooperation as a result of the simplification of the programme structure

More effective cooperation between areas and sectors is shaped only gradually. We most often monitor the interconnection between key actions KA1 and KA2 (mobility of teachers and pupils/students who already have made contacts and acquired long-term experiences within the Erasmus+ programme). An increasing interest in KA121 events within accredited projects and in KA122 events within short-term study mobilities (SE, VET) is very remarkable. A growing interest in events within key actions KA2 has also become a positive trend. The applicants are also involved in cooperative partnerships (KA220) (SE, VET, AE) right after their involvement in Small partnerships (KA210). In the higher education sector, BIP short mobilities are being used more actively by students. Students interconnect them with various study mobilities and internships in KA131, KA171 (*international mobilities supported by funds for external policies, etc.*) after gaining experiences and making contacts within the BIP stay. To ensure better and more effective cross-sectoral interconnections (mainly in the VET and HE sectors) within the new Erasmus+ programme, it is necessary to consider increasing the financial support in key actions KA2 and KA3 due to their great potential for supporting systemic changes.

¹ Regulation (EU) 2012/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2011 establishing Erasmus+, the Union Programme for education and training, youth and sport and repealing Regulation (EU) No. 1288/2013 (OJ L189/1, 28.5.2021); EUR-Lex – 32021R0817 – EN – EZR-Lex (europa.eu).

² European Commission (2023). National reports on the implementation and impact of the Erasmus+: guidance note.

iv) More time for activity results due to lower administrative burdens

The above assumption has not yet been fulfilled in Slovakia. This is mainly due to the deployment of a new digital programme management tool that was not tested before and was developed within „on the go“ process, which caused major problems with the work administration of NAE+, as well as big problems for administrators and coordinators at schools and organizations that helped to solve issues in both NAE+. This was appreciated mostly by respondents in all sectors within the conducted research survey. Still, more than 56% of respondents in all sectors confirmed that the greatest barrier to implementing the programme is the difficulty of the administrative tasks. Only 18% of respondents (in the SE and HE sectors) with steady positive experiences and good skills in applying for projects within the programme rated the simplification of administration very positively. The introduction of the „Beneficiary module“ had to face some critical evaluation. The respondents recommended simplifying the administration as much as possible, especially in the case of short-term mobilities (BIP) as well as small partnerships in key actions KA2. It is recommended to continue to reduce the administrative burden and to make sure that the programme management tools are of high quality and „user-friendly“ (unification of forms, more user-friendly tools for programme management).

v) Greater cost efficiency and economies of scale

Greater cost efficiency and economies of scale are gradually being implemented in Slovakia. There were some personnel changes in the national agencies, which were caused by the increased demands imposed by the new programme structure, as well as the increasing allocated financial resources for Slovakia. Both NAEs+ effectively cover the costs of training coordinators, promotion, and public awareness of the Erasmus+ programme. You can see it as an increase in the quantity of digital tools on the website³, where there is all necessary information and materials for applicants, as well as training courses, e-webinars, podcasts, e-blogs, etc. This is the world of communication in the 21st century, ensuring much better dissemination and promotion of the programme, but also a more efficient use of resources and time compared to personal meetings, workshops, training courses, etc. It is necessary to realize that hybrid work (in-person and online) is new phenomena for the Erasmus+ programme whereby the hybrid communication environment must be strengthened within the next programme period and education as a digital priority must be improved as well. In the new Erasmus+ programme, the philosophy of managing finances is also changing. In Slovakia, the research studies as well as personal interviews revealed the problem of poor financial literacy of project applicants (they are mainly teachers, administrative employees). The transition from the UnitCost to the Lump-sum system of managing the finances requires the elaboration of a high-quality financial methodology with examples of the utilization of funds for various actions, as well as the preparation of educational webinars and a mentoring system as an additional form of methodological support. The philosophy of implementing changes in the structure and financing of the Erasmus+ programme requires a longer time. Coordinators and applicants must get used to them gradually and it is assumed that the required prerequisites will be met in the next three years.

2.2 Summary of answers to evaluation questions according to evaluation criteria

The guidelines of the European Commission include 34 evaluation questions, grouped into 5 units - evaluation criteria. Questions 1 to 13 examine the effectiveness of the implementation and significance of the Erasmus+ programme in the country from various aspects of the conditions up to individual impacts. Questions 14 to 20 examine the effectiveness of the programme, questions 21 to 24 focus on the relevance of the programme to education and national policies. Questions 25 to 28 examine the cohesion of the programme itself as well as its compliance with national, regional, and international programmes etc. Questions 29 to 34 deal with the added value of the programme for Europe, cooperation of EU countries, cooperation with third countries, but they also emphasize the same value for the individual, the organization and for the educational system.

i) Efficiency

The first period of the implementation of the new Erasmus+ programme was less effective at the initial stage, but the number and quality of projects, as well as the efficient use of funds managed to increase with the gradual support of the national authority and two national agencies. In the new Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme, efficiency decreased due to the Covid pandemic, but since 2022 there has been a significant increase in the number (share) of projects when meeting the objectives and horizontal priorities of the programme (Table 5 and 6), which is also reflected as the effectiveness of the implementation and the impact of the programme on

³ [Programme 2021-27 – Erasmus+ Slovakia](#)

education in Slovakia. A detailed analysis of the programme effectiveness in Slovakia is introduced in questions 1-13.

ii) Effectiveness

The Erasmus+ programme and its effectiveness can be evaluated from various aspects. One of them is good cooperation between the actors in the programme. The improved online communication with the EC is the factor that the national agencies valued the most. Since 2023 they have appreciated the new OpenHouse system – informal discussions held on Fridays, which brings about flexibility and freshness of information that is immediately transferred to other actors, national authority, coordinators, etc. Another aspect is the effectiveness of the distribution of financial resources and their utilization. In Slovakia, it is possible to maintain a long-term utilization of financial sources at the level above 95%. This is due to the fact that the EC is more flexible to accept requests from NAE+ for fund transfers within individual sectors to ensure the exploitation of financial resources to the maximum level allowable. The better effectiveness of the Erasmus+ programme has been achieved through the introduction of the accreditation system, which simplified the administration of project submissions and was appreciated by respondents in all sectors. The approved goals of programme indicators have not yet been fulfilled; however, the SE and VET sectors indicate great progress in their fulfilment. The goals of indicators were met in the HE sectors to a certain degree, but they were not met in the AE and youth sectors. For the next three years, NAE+ will concentrate its activities on increasing the performance of indicators in these three sectors.

iii) Significance

The objectives and priorities of the Erasmus+ programme were rated as relevant by more than 80% of respondents and there is no need to change them. Among all those selected priorities, the greatest interest in projects on the topics of inclusion and diversity, digital transformation, and active European citizenship increased most significantly within the sectors. The environmental issue is just gradually gaining public awareness as it reflects low prioritization in society. The importance of individual objectives and priorities in areas or sectors of the Erasmus+ programme can completely emerge only within well-set national priorities in domestic education and employment policies. Currently, the following national priorities are well set: modern transformation of education (a strong support of internationalism, digitalization, inclusion, diversity, and efforts to minimize the number of students with incomplete education) and modernization and support of the development of vocational education to be interconnected with the needs of practice. Based on the research study in all sectors, we identified topics for the expansion of existing priorities and proposals for new priorities. The digital transformation accentuates a proposal to include topics such as: a) fight against disinformation, b) artificial intelligence and its effects on education. There have been some notable proposals for the next new priorities: quality of human health (aging Europe), mental health of youth. The most often identified barriers to cope with when meeting the objectives of the Erasmus+ programme were difficulties of administrative tasks, lack of experience in writing projects, poor language literacy and social problems. The details are analysed in questions 21-24.

iv) Cohesion

Research studies within individual sectors did not demonstrate the existence of inconsistencies or overlaps between programme areas even from the point of view of management structures. The current programme creates conditions for the probability of cooperation between sectors and areas, mainly in key actions KA2 and KA3. We have identified the initial cooperation mainly in the SE, HE, VET and AE sectors. Based on the interviews with coordinators and national agencies, the respondents came up with an important proposal: to create a financial grant scheme at the national level to support the Erasmus+ programme in all sectors (not only for the HE sector), which would create support for better consistency and cohesion of the programme.

v) European added value

During the evaluation period, the Erasmus+ programme presented a significant impact on the European belonging, the European values and presents the importance and strength of cooperation in solving common problems of Europe. Based on the presented results of the research study, the young and middle generation studying in Slovakia (students and teachers) realize the importance of being part of the „European family“ and active participation in the „thriving business“. They enrich their own knowledge and gain experiences that many other people would not have been able to obtain without the Erasmus+ programme. We will quote one of the most concise statements about the value of the Erasmus+ programme chosen from among the group of respondents' replies: *„I feel that I am a European and I have found out that teachers from all EU countries face the same problems. My management skills have improved greatly. I am more aware of my attitude towards the EU. I am searching for professional opportunities for my school as well as for myself. My views on travelling and internationalization have significantly changed“* (similar statements were made by many respondents).

2. Methodology for the preparation of the national report, the role of actors

2.3 Evaluation resources

The submitted national report is based on the task of the EC and is intended to assess the importance and impact of the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme on education in two overlapping periods: the period of completed Erasmus+ 2014-2020 programme and that of the new Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme, as well as a view of the direction of the programme after 2027. According to the guidelines of the European Commission, the national report evaluates decentralized activities in the field of vocational education and training and in the field of youth and sports.

The Erasmus+ programme (implemented since 2014) considered positive impacts on education, lower administrative expenses and better availability of information and services due to the creation of a single point of contact („one stop shop“) as consequences of the integration of the original separate programmes. Increasing relevance for the programme was expected from „fewer priorities“ and the simplification of the programme structure was to „encourage greater participation from the staff and better cross-sectoral cooperation“ and contribute to a more effective response to „the most important challenges that Europe is facing in the development of workforce skills“. ⁴ Higher cost efficiency and a reduction of the administrative burden allowing us to focus on the results of activities should be considered a consequence of the simplification of rules. The creation of the integrated programme was supposed to ensure „economies of scale, simplification of processes and rationalization of reporting“. Since these expectations are important, we try to highlight them when formulating conclusions and summarizing the evaluation results.

The Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic (MŠVVaM SR) is the national authority for the Erasmus+ programme. As a member of the EU, Slovakia participates in the management of the programme at the European level in cooperation with the EC through nominated representatives of the Erasmus+ Committee. The Section of the International Relations, acting as the coordinating organizational unit of the MŠVVaM SR is responsible for the overall implementation of the programme, approves the work programme of both national agencies for the next calendar year, and continuously monitors the activities of the National Agency. MŠVVaM SR annually secures and provides financial resources for additional financing of the programme activities using the state budget resources (mobilities of students from the higher education sector within the Erasmus+ programme). However, SAAIC decided not to request the MŠVVaM SR to provide funds from the state budget for additional financing of student mobilities for the years 2021-2023 due to the deteriorated situation with respect to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic that negatively affected international academic mobilities and, in particular, the significant increase of funds to support student mobilities. The employees of the MŠVVaM SR are members of the Erasmus+ Committee at the EC, the internal working group of the Erasmus+. They claim the status of observers during their attendance at the selection committees of the programme established by NAE+ that deal with the selection process. Two national agencies of the Erasmus+ programme are responsible for the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme in Slovakia: SAAIC - National Agency Erasmus+ for Vocational Education and Training (www.saaic.sk) and NIVAM - National Agency for Youth and Sports (www.nivam.sk). Based on the requirements of the EC, both NAs ensured the implementation of the programme from the announcement of the call for submitting applications, information campaign and consultations, registration, evaluation, and selection of projects, contracting, monitoring, and project audits to the final reimbursement of the allocated funds from the EC. They followed the current guide elaborated by the EC for national agencies implementing the Erasmus+ programme.

The following entities also participated in the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme:

⁴ Commission staff working paper: impact assessment on education and training actions accompanying the document Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council establishing a single Education, Training, Youth and Sports Programme for the time period of 2014-2020, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:6504cbd3-689b-40a0-a6dd-83ac07a8fc57.0001.01/DOC_1&format=PDF, p. 68.

- internal working group (IPSE) of the Erasmus+ that is represented by the relevant organizational units of the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic
- external evaluators who evaluated the submitted applications and projects, or, depending on the requirements, also the final reports and results of the projects
- selection committees (composed of the nominated representatives of key institutions) which controlled the evaluation process and approved the list of submitted applications based on the evaluations of external evaluators
- internal and external auditors, who annually check the implementation of work programmes of the National Agency and the utilization of the EC funds within NA and the selected groups of grant beneficiaries.

Additional information about the Erasmus+ programme is published on:

- the website of the Erasmus+ programme in Slovakia www.erasmusplus.sk
- the EC website <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/sk>.

The Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic approved upon the proposal of NAE+ to introduce the horizontal priority, the **Inclusion and diversity** as the *European priority in the national context for the years 2021-2024*. This information is published on the website of the programme: [list of the European priorities in the national context](#).

2.4 Evaluation methodology

In February 2023, the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic (MŠVVaM SR) approved and entrusted Mrs. Beáta Brestenská, the national coordinator with the preparation of the National Report on the implementation and significance of the Erasmus+ programme in Slovakia during 2014-2023. Subsequently, the Steering Board was approved under the leadership of the national coordinator who approached and contracted experts for individual sectors within the Expert Group (10 members) in March 2023 for the purpose of developing the sectoral materials for the National Report on ERASMUS+.

Contracted experts for individual sections:

Sector of school education: Romana Kanovská and Darina Výboňová

Higher education sector: Jana Blšťáková, Zdeňka Gadušová, Boris Mattoš

Sector for Vocational education and training (VET): Dagmar Jelínková, Juraj Vantuch

Adult education sector: Renáta Proková

Youth sector: Iveta Boboňová, Jana Miháliková

In April 2023, a time plan (Fig. 1) for the preparation of the national report was developed and approved. The latter was modified in October 2023 to ensure sufficient time for processing the sectoral reports and preparing the working version of the national report for the purpose of its opposition and finalization. The details of the management activities of the Managing Board and the Expert Group are included in Annex 6.2.

During the months of April and May 2023, research e-questionnaires and interview materials were created for individual sectors of the Erasmus+ programme based on the EC evaluation questionnaire. The research study was carried out in Slovakia in individual sectors of the Erasmus+ programme within the time period from May 15 to October 31, 2023. The following measuring devices were used for the research study:

- e-research questionnaires (several e-questionnaires were created for individual sectors - the total number of 10 templates),
- interviews,
- round table discussions.

Other data necessary for the report preparation were obtained from the annual reports of the Erasmus+ programme in Slovakia during 2014-2022⁵, the RAY⁶ survey results in the years 2014-2020 and from the evaluation reports of the Erasmus+ programme graduates.

⁵ Annual reports on the implementation of the Contract on cooperation at the programme coordination in the field of education concluded pursuant to the provisions of § 51 of the Act No. 40/1964 Coll. of the Civil Code between the MŠVVaM SR and Slovak academic association for international cooperation (SAAIC) for the years 2014-2021. Reports on SAAIC in the years 2014-2022.

⁶ National studies 2014/2020 Results and impacts of the Erasmus+ programme on the field of youth and sport, Bratislava 2020, IUVENTA (Matej Vanoch) [2021 – OneDrive \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Timeline of the research study and document processing for the National Report on the Erasmus+ 2014-2023 programme

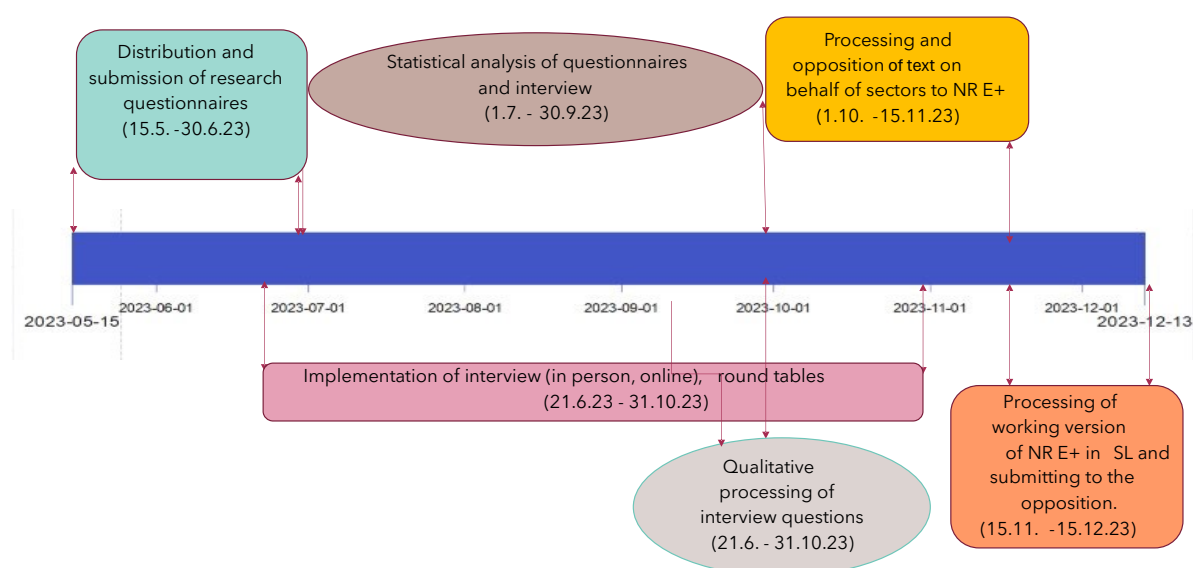


Figure 1 Timeline of the implementation of the research study and processing of the National Report on ERASMUS+

A representative research sample of 6,263 respondents was made up of organizations, schools, and participants in the Erasmus+ activities during 2014-2023. The e-questionnaires were sent to higher education managers (vice chancellors of universities and vice-deans of faculties), teachers [primary schools, secondary (high) schools and higher education institutions], pupils and students (secondary schools and higher education institutions), managers of organizations - principals (primary schools and secondary schools) and administrative staff (secondary schools and higher education institutions).

Table 1 E-questionnaire research – number of respondents

Number of respondents	Sector of School Education	Sector for Vocational Training and Education	Higher Education Sector	Youth Sector	Adult Education Sector
School management	239	236	60	74	
Teachers	652	242	1164		
Students			1890	1686	
Organizations		47			33
Total	891	525	3054	1760	33

Table 2 Interviews

Sector	Number of interviews
School Education Sector	13
Vocational Training and Education Sector	3
Higher Education Sector	26
Youth Sector	15
Adult Education Sector	20
Total	77

Table 3 Round table discussions

Organization	Number
Education	4
Youth Sector	10
Total	14

In total, we obtained data from 6263 respondents to e-questionnaires, 7 interviews and 14 round table discussions.

3. Answers to standard questions as well as conclusions and suggestions for improving the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme and the future programme

3.1 Efficiency

1. *To what extent have the different programme areas within the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme and the Erasmus+ 2014-2020 programme brought the expected outcomes, results and impacts in your country? Do negative and positive factors seem to influence outcomes, results, and impacts? Do you think that some measures are more effective than others? Are there any differences between areas? What are the decisive factors to streamline the programme activities?*

While using all research tools, the research study clearly indicates that the Erasmus+ programme in both time periods and its various programme areas has a very significant influence on the following areas of education in Slovakia within all fields of education:

- professional development of pedagogical and professional employees;
- transformations in educational processes – educational practice (digitalization, green transformation);
- changing the academic culture (climate) of school education – inclusion, diversity, internationalization;
- personal development of pupils and students - civic involvement, responsibility, creativity.

The significant contribution of the new structure of the programme, the simplification of rules and the new system of accreditation of organizations contribute to more effective and greater interest in joining the programme and achieving the necessary outcomes and impacts on society. The survey did not identify differences between areas and the effectiveness of measures. Chart 1 (Annex 6 Charts) shows the share of sectors in the total number of projects implemented in the Erasmus+ 2014-2020 programme, where we can see a positive increase in the number of projects in the sector of education and training and VET sector. Moreover, it shows the list of the specific positive features of the Erasmus+ programme in individual sectors, which significantly impacts the results and outcomes in Slovakia.

The sector of school education - 92.40% of respondents mentioned the development of professional competences. This is also confirmed by the results of the questionnaire for pedagogical employees/professional employees (PE/PRE), whereby 89.66% of PE/PRE confirmed that participating in the activities of the Erasmus+ project had a significant or very significant impact on their own educational practice, which was seen mainly in using activating methods (84.04%), abilities to use and create innovative educational resources and teaching aids (81.46%). The managerial employees (ME) mentioned in particular the improvement of communication and cooperative competences of PE/PRE, progress in learning foreign languages (20%), application of new forms of organizing lessons (77.66%), newly applied methods, procedures and learning activities implemented within project activities (86.80%) and their transfer into educational practice, improving the level of competence in the use of IT tools and digitalization of teaching (14.16%) as well as their environmental awareness (5.41%). Examples of specific innovations: 20 schools apply the CLIL method, 17 schools apply changes to the school subjects/curriculum.

Change in the school climate is the result of the acquisition and improvement of social/soft skills, which is seen in the improvement of relationships (86%), *increase of well-being in schools, decrease in absences, and better relationships between the student and the teacher*. The majority, almost three quarters of respondents (74.17%), expressed their agreement or complete agreement with the statement: „The Erasmus+ programme is well adapted and available for organizations like ours (type and size of school, region) as to its structure, conditions and requirements“.

The VET sector also confirms a very significant contribution of the Erasmus+ programme to the mentioned areas. However, the most surprising fact is a strong reporting on impulses for „complex personal development“. In addition to language improvement, we often see an increase in self-confidence and various „life skills“ of students and teachers as they stay far away from home. This factor is obviously promoted by the fact that a larger number of VET learners consider traveling abroad as a peculiarity, compared to other sectors. In case of individuals, the impulses for „complex personal development“ and the interest in deepening the professionalization due to the expanded horizons can be considered the most important result and impact of the programme on mobilities in key actions KA1. From the point of view of the institutions, the most important result

in both key actions KA1 and KA2 is the exchange of experiences and an innovative impulse. Schools often say that the programme helps them identify new equipment or aids that they want to acquire later. Experiences gained within the participation in the programme are also an argument for obtaining support from the founder (sponsor) for further investments in professional education.

The HE sector positively evaluated all actions of the Erasmus+ programme. Universities have been active in key actions KA1 for a long time, where the interests of applicants stabilize; however, we have recorded an increasing interest in key actions KA2 which are directed toward the creation of partnerships and cooperation in the field of innovation and the exchange of best practices. The most significant outcomes and impacts in the HE sector are (besides those already mentioned in general in all sectors) internationalization, innovations in education and research, better digital literacy, interest, and openness to cooperation with third countries affiliated with the programme and with third countries not affiliated with the programme. Significant changes at Slovak universities are causing positive pressure for higher quality of teaching and competitiveness of science and research in the European area. A new powerful tool of the Erasmus+ programme is the excellence projects of the European Universities creating transnational alliances which are to become the universities of the future. These universities will promote European values and should bring about a revolution in the quality and competitiveness of European higher education. In Slovakia, there is already 5 universities involved in consortia of the European universities.

From the beginning to the present, the Erasmus+ programmes in **the youth sector** have become an important impulse for the development of the entire youth sector, especially in mobility activities and international partnerships, with a special emphasis on supporting the initiative and engagement of young people. After participating in the Erasmus+ programme projects, young Slovaks evaluated their personal development within RAY (research-based analysis) mostly in the cooperation with people from different cultural backgrounds and of their abilities to communicate with people who speak foreign languages. About a quarter of the projects⁷ were devoted to the topic of participation and active citizenship. Less than 30% of respondents agreed that they have improved their abilities to achieve something that is in the interest of the community or society. 18% of respondents strongly agreed that they had improved their abilities to lead discussions on political topics. Activities related to structured dialogue had the greatest impact on this area. As it comes to attitudes, almost 72% of respondents said that they can better appreciate the value of cultural diversity than before by participating in the programmes. Almost 90% of the organizations involved in the evaluation questionnaire stated that participation in the Erasmus+ projects had a significant or even very significant impact on their development in the organization and content and brought about the introduction of new approaches and practices. The greatest benefit is the „internationalization“ of organizations, changes in strategic planning, as well as new perspective on one's own functioning and direction and setting more ambitious goals. The greater self-confidence of the organization and its members in their own abilities and greater visibility and credibility in public perception are very often mentioned as significant benefits. A positive factor is the familiarity and stability of the programme within the sector, which is significantly dependent on funding from this source. The simplification of the rules and the accreditation system are perceived as a positive step forward in the development of the programme as well as new possibilities of activities - Activities focused on youth participation and Small partnerships.

According to the statements of the addressed organizations within **the AE sector**, the effectiveness of the programme is so great that it cannot even be quantified. The biggest impact of the programme was identified within internal enrichment and clearly defined goals according to which it is easy to prepare and implement a project. Some organizations exist and function only thanks to the Erasmus+ programme.

The identified challenges related to the new generation of the Erasmus+ programme that affect the success, outputs, and impact of the programme in the sectors were identified as following:

- **change of IT tools** (non-functionality demotivates, as well as requiring a new way of inserting documents and reports, problems with inserting and sorting documents, etc.) Duplication of records and exhaustion of human resources usually occurs.
- **pandemic and war conflict in Ukraine** (direct effect in the extension of projects and persistent effect of the reduced interest in participating in key actions, especially in KA1)
- **administrative burden and problems with accounting for projects, especially in the SE and VET sectors;** since they do not have enough administrative staff, teachers must do the job instead
- **language barrier** - mainly in the VET and AE sector (teachers of vocational subjects, masters, adults)

⁷ The data reflect the period of 2014 -2020.

- **need for budget flexibility in relation to inflation,**
- **youth work** – prevailing concerns that the Erasmus+ programme will not become only a programme for young people with a lack of opportunities and will implement only social work with youth (in recent years the situation has changed and young ambitious people can choose from a wider range of programmes for individual development at the national and international level and has diverted a certain group of the youth from the Erasmus+ programme to other programmes, e. g. IAMbitious/DASATO Academy, Show your talent, DoFE.

2. *What are the results and long-term impact of the Erasmus+ 2014-2020 programme on education in your country? We are interested in the impact of all actions/elements of the Erasmus+ 2014-2020 programme on education. Special attention is paid to those actions/elements that continue within the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme. We are also interested in the impact of measures/elements that have been discontinued to the extent that it could help design the future programme. How do you assess the quality of applications received in your country and what measures could be taken to improve the quality of applications and awarded projects in your country, considering the duplication of budget for the entire cycle of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme?*

The Erasmus+ 2014-2023 programme shows a significantly positive influence in all sectors that is quantified by more than 95% positive ratings of all respondents to the questionnaire survey, as well as in the examples of good practice listed in Annex 3. There are, of course, differences between individual areas and key actions/subprogrammes both in terms of attractiveness and success in fulfilling individual specific objectives and priorities. Based on the research study analysis, the efforts to increase the effectiveness of projects and the efficiency of investments should be focused on better dissemination of project results. This requires the cooperation of the national authority to support the „life cycle extensions“ of the project with measures to exploit the results on a large scale. It is very demanding and conceptually complex to compare the effectiveness of various actions with each other and to compare individual areas, the differences of which are conditioned by different views on effectiveness. In principle, however, it is appropriate to apply the effectiveness to domestic policy priorities as well. Currently, a new school reform is being implemented in primary schools in Slovakia^{8 9}. So, enhancing greater support for the mobilities of teachers and small partnerships in the sector of school education is of high importance. The importance of mobilities and partnerships for reforms in the sector of vocational education and training is also highlighted in the strategic material called Slovakia in learning process including the measure 3-10.02 that suggests to explicitly increase financial resources to support projects KA102 and KA202. It strongly emphasizes the support of dual education and education in the work environment („work-based learning“). Projects in the VET sector focused on internships can be considered more effective than some other projects. In the higher education sector, the mobilities of students and teachers have become a very effective tool to support internationalization, as the internationalization of higher education system is a high national priority, which is also actively discussed in the academic community. The Higher Education Act enables the mobility window and universities are looking for a way to incorporate this tool into their study plans. In the youth sector and adult education sector, the programme is a long-term important tool for functioning, sustainability and development of informal education and youth work. National co-financing of higher education mobilities is a positive aspect. Based on the interviews and round table discussions, we found out that similar financial intervention would be necessary mainly in the developing sectors of school education and vocational education and training.

The quality of applications within the ERASMUS+ programme has significantly improved in the SE, VET, HE and youth sectors, which is the merit of the clearly defined objectives and priorities of the programme, as well as the work of both national agencies which put well-processed information about calls and methodical assistance for the applicant on their websites. We can observe the poor quality of applications in the AE sector, where many new applicants with insufficient experience with project preparation have been registered. NAE+ prepares special workshops and consultations for them. Thus, we can evaluate the quality of the projects by the success rate of the projects in key actions KA1 and KA2 for the period of 2021-2022 listed in Tables 4 and 5 (Annex 5 of the Table). The success rate in key actions KA1 is the highest rate in the SE, VET and HE sectors (over 96% in 2021 and over 84% in 2022) and the average success rate in all sectors was over 93%. The quality of the projects in key actions KA2 is lower. The best success rate ever (53%) was recorded in the HE and VET sectors and the average success rate in all sectors is 47% in 2021 and 34% in 2022.

⁸ [11808 state-educational-programme-for-primary-education-final version.pdf \(minedu.sk\)](#)

⁹ [Home page - The 21st century education \(education21.sk\)](#)

Table 4 Success rate of projects in KA1 and KA2 activities call 2021

	KA1			KA2		
	Submitted	Approved	Success rate %	Submitted	Approved	Success rate %
Higher Education Sector	32	31	96,88	15	8	53,33
School Education Sector	64	57	89,06	44	20	45,45
Vocational Training and Education Sector	121	117	96,69	30	16	53,33
Adult Education Sector	13	10	76,92	33	12	36,36
Youth Sector	72	42	58,33	48	22	45,83
Total	302	257	83,58	170	78	46,86

Source: 2021 Annual Report on the Implementation of the Agreement on Cooperation in the Coordination of Programmes in the Field of Education, SAAIC 2022 Bratislava

Table 5 Success rate of projects in KA1 and KA2 activities call 2022

	KA1			KA2		
	Submitted	Approved	Success rate %	Submitted	Approved	Success rate %
Higher Education Sector	31	31	100	13	8	61,54
School Education Sector	178	155	87,08	66	14	21,21
Vocational Training and Education Sector	181	166	91,71	27	11	40,74
Adult Education Sector	28	16	57,14	66	9	13,64
Youth Sector	118	61	51,7	69	21	30,44
Total	536	429	77,53	241	63	33,51

Source: 2022 Annual Report on the Implementation of the Agreement on Cooperation in the Coordination of Programmes in the Field of Education, SAAIC 2023 Bratislava

3. Identify, describe, and quantify (if applicable) the spillover effects between the different actions (groups of actions) of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme in your country in terms of the intervention logic outlines.

Since the new programme was launched during the period of deteriorating pandemic and war conflict in Ukraine, it is currently impossible to quantify the effects of the interconnection between the various actions. We are gradually observing the trends in key actions KA1. We are aware of the increasing number of short-term mobilities in the sectors of school education, vocational education and training, and partially also in the adult education sector (KA122) that are intermingled with accredited mobilities (KA121) and are gradually beginning to overlap with small partnerships (KA210). In the higher education sector, we can see the trend of the mobilities of students and teachers intermingling when they take part in KA131, create contacts, and actively participate in small and cooperative partnerships (KA210, KA220). In the youth sector, the experience of organizations with the EU programmes for youth reveals the most interconnections between the Youth Exchanges and the Youth Participation Activities (YPA) when working with young people. YPA serves as a space for realization of young people's plans and ideas, but also creates a space for motivation (and preparation to some extent) of youth leaders to join international activities with overlapping topics. Participation in international exchanges often

leads to the continuation of cooperation between partners to deepen know-how in common topics through the Mobility of Youth Workers (KA1) or Small Partnerships (KA2).

4. *To what extent has the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme had a transformative effect on systems, values, and norms in your country, especially when it comes to the four programme horizontal priorities: inclusion and diversity – digital transformation – green transformation (environment and fight against climate change) – participation in democratic life and civic engagement? Could you identify the horizontal priorities which were the most impacted by the programme measures?*

For the first three years of the new programme period, it is not possible to clearly identify the transformative effects of the programme on the educational system, norms, and values in Slovakia. Based on the conducted survey, it is possible to identify trends of transformation in defined horizontal priorities which are gradually transferred to the educational system, reform processes and legislative changes.

Table 6 Evaluation of the significance of the impact of priorities on individual sectors

Horizontal priority	SE	VET Schools/other organ.	HE Teachers/students	Youth	AD
Inclusion and diversity	77,2%	85,6/74,5%	59/71,7%	67%	83%
Environment and the fight against climate change	37,7%	73,8/63,8%	32/30%	50%	71,6%
Solution of digital transformation by developing digital readiness, resilience, and capacity	78%	79,7/87,2%	46/40%	60%	80%
Common values, civic engagement, and active citizenship	10,8%	82,2/63,8%	43/48%	74%	71,6

Table 6 shows that the horizontal priorities of inclusion and diversity and digital transformation have the greatest impact on the transformation processes in the sectors. The priority of participation in democratic life and civic engagement is next to come, while the environment and the fight against climate change have had the smallest influence on the transformation processes so far. An overview of the representation of priorities in 2021 and 2022 can be seen in key actions KA2 Chart 2 (Annex 6 Charts). The identified trends are important to ensure greater public awareness within the next challenges of the current programme and to arouse great interest among applicants in the horizontal priorities of green transformation and democratization and civic engagement. Similarly, Table 7 and 8 reflect the fact that the most submitted projects are included within the priorities of inclusion and diversity and digital transformation in key actions KA2 (partnerships) for the years 2021-2022. The other two priorities include less submitted projects. However, increasing the number of projects in all sectors is a positive feature. Tables 9 and 10 (Annex 5 of the Table) show specific topics of projects in individual sectors according to horizontal priorities for the years 2014-2020 and 2021-2022.

Table 7 KA 2 (Partnerships) Overview of selected horizontal priorities 2021

Horizontal priority	SE	VET	AD	HE	Youth	Total
Inclusion and diversity	25	8	16	2	21	72
Solution of digital transformation by developing digital readiness, resilience, and capacity	18	13	8	4	18	61
Environment and the fight against climate change	10	7	10	2	12	41
Common values, civic engagement, and active citizenship	10	1	7	1	18	37

Source: 2021 Annual Report on the Implementation of the Agreement on Cooperation in the Coordination of Programmes in the Field of Education, SAAIC 2022 Bratislava

Table 8 KA 2 (Partnerships) Overview of selected horizontal priorities 2022

Horizontal priority	SE	VET	AD	HE	Youth	Total
Inclusion and diversity	32	6	21	3	21	83
Solution of digital transformation by developing digital readiness, resilience, and capacity	18	9	25	4	21	77
Environment and the fight against climate change	21	6	14	1	18	60
Common values, civic engagement, and active citizenship	15		17	2	23	57

Source: 2022 Annual Report on the Implementation of the Agreement on Cooperation in the Coordination of Programmes in the Field of Education, SAAIC 2023 Bratislava

5. *What are the differences in the impact of the actions of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme in your country on hard-to-reach groups, people lacking the opportunities or special disadvantaged population groups that are not traditionally engaged in transnational or international activities compared to any other groups that benefit from the programme? We are interested in evaluating the early effects of the inclusion measurement framework and the inclusion and diversity strategy on supporting the access to funding for a wider range of organizations and better ways of addressing the larger number of participants with lack of the studying opportunities.*

The evaluation of the first effects of the framework of measures and financial support on the inclusion and diversity strategy to support the accessibility of participants with a lack of opportunities is a positive pressure from the authorities as well as the project participants in all sectors (positive ratings within a rating scale from 90% to 75%). A special website of the programme to support inclusion¹⁰ and a clear methodology to support people with a lack of opportunities¹¹ are perceived positively. A guide for the support of inclusion and measures implemented by the MŠVVaM SR to support the inclusion are available to applicants, which leads to a better understanding of the objectives of inclusion and to the need to become familiar with examples of work with pupils/listeners/participants with a lack of opportunities in the mainstream. All sectors positively evaluate the fact that it is possible to cover the increased costs of diet meals (this gives an opportunity for celiacs) or the accompanying costs (e. g. autistic adults travel with their personal assistant or visually impaired people travel with their dog) and that accredited organizations can apply for additional finances to support the disadvantaged participants and inclusions after the lapse of 12 months. An important factor of our research study is the significant support of inclusion by digitalization. Examples of successful projects for disadvantaged groups and people with special needs are shown in Annex 3.

In **the HE sector**, quite a lot of respondents to the survey (63.52%) agreed or *completely* agreed with the following statement: „The Erasmus+ programme is well adapted to its structure, conditions and requirements and available even for people with a lack of opportunities at our school“. The average level of agreement was reported by more than a quarter of respondents (27.51%). We have presented and specified the impacts on the education of mentioned groups of students. Increasing internal motivation, the active approach of students to their studies and the improvement of their integration into the classroom, school collectives, or other school teams had the greatest influence on their career progression. The development of language competences, the promotion of self-confidence and the development of social skills were seen as the other crucial factors of the impact. The following factors were mentioned to a lesser extent: experiences, knowledge, possibilities of cooperation and improvement of student educational outcomes.

Too much positive feedback at schools just in **the VET sector** confirms that the emphasis on inclusion and diversity is reflected within the increased participation of pupils from disadvantaged groups in projects. Based on the questionnaire survey for the management of vocational schools (directors), we can see examples of a

¹⁰ <https://www.erasmusplus.sk/inclusion/>

¹¹ https://www.erasmusplus.sk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Methodics-OVPaSV_final.pdf

higher level of inclusion and measures to support inclusion and diversity, as well as the impact of projects on the future life at the school:

- „The number of inclusive students at the school is increasing. Therefore, we focus more on the forms and methods of their education. A school psychologist is employed with the school to work with teachers and students. We also received a lot of information from partner schools in the Czech Republic and Lithuania.“
- „Inclusion support - a student with special education needs or a student from socially disadvantaged background is assigned an extra point during the selection process to make it possible for him/her to participate in foreign mobility. This applicant is favoured to join the mobility in case of equality of points.“ Our mobility participants are medically disabled students, but also students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. We put our best efforts to make mobilities accessible to everyone without making any differences between people.
- „The criteria for the selection of participants have been modified. We have moved the average value of the academic performance results to favour these students. Laptops were lent to students for the duration of their internship. Students were assigned the appropriate job title within their placement at the workplace in cooperation with hosting institutions.“
- „Many students participating in mobilities had the opportunity to travel abroad for the first time. They were given the chance to experience the diversity of cultures and fight against prejudice and xenophobic statements. They managed to understand that people from other countries and students of different races can even work together, live in the same place, and respect each other.“
- „Introduction of the methodology for vocational education of students with special education needs based on knowledge acquired during professional internships and practical experiences abroad.“

Vocational schools as well as organizations cooperating within the VET sector reported the importance of the effects of their interventions and the involvement of such persons in the project, which led to a significant change in their behaviour and increased self-confidence and self-esteem, e. g.:

- „A female student with many difficulties had the courage to participate and currently demonstrates a high degree of independence, decisiveness and proper self-confidence. She knew that she could even stay on her own and function relatively independently in a distant world and solve problems even without involving her parents in decisions about issues. She will also be participating in another mobility.“
- „...their interest and awareness of the EU has increased; some of them want to work abroad after finishing school“
- „A student from marginalized community demonstrated better academic performance results and was willing to participate more in the extracurricular activities upon completion of the Erasmus+ programme.“
- „We have noticed the increased level of self-confidence and acceptance by the majority, which contributed to the improvement of mental health and self-awareness to a larger extent.“
- „...they become more assertive; they feel like being a part of society.“
- „The students realized that the programme provides equal conditions for all students. Thus, their personal/work awareness increased, which contributed to the successful completion of their studies and created more opportunities to apply for a job within the labour market.“
- „Their motivation to engage in project activities has increased. They got rid of fear and uncertainty about teamwork and presentations.“

The answers to the question regarding barriers to the involvement of these persons show that, despite the support on behalf of the school, there are frequent obstacles such as: fear (of travelling, language barriers, low self-confidence), bad financial situation in the family and deteriorating social environments.

In the **HE sector**, students in these groups can participate in the programme activities to the same extent. Their financial advantage is also motivating. The management of higher education institutions stated that the new Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme is better adapted to the needs of disadvantaged groups, compared with the previous programme in the period of 2014-2020. The only identified barrier is their economic situation (they do not have any additional funds of their own to study at universities in countries with a higher standard of living), so they rather choose virtual stays. According to the statements of 75% of students, the programme contributes significantly to the development of their knowledge in the field of European integration, the increasing awareness of the common values of the EU and the enhancement of the European sense of belonging within the young generation.

In the **youth sector**, the survey shows that the majority of young people find the Erasmus+ projects still more interesting than the youth who have problems functioning in ordinary life. However, if we manage to successfully involve youth with a lack of opportunities in the projects, 78% of respondents will consider the influence of the implemented projects on disadvantaged groups as significant or very significant in terms of increasing their competences for successful educational paths and practical life through participation in a well-prepared activity within international mobility or in a local activity on topics, in which disadvantaged groups rarely engage in everyday life. These are mainly groups of young people from impoverished backgrounds who have experienced generational poverty (young Roma men and women from marginalized communities), but also similar individuals living in various rural areas. A large part of the projects that addressed disadvantaged groups was dedicated to working with youth with medical disabilities. Certain parts of the projects were also dedicated to intergenerational dialogue and support for seniors. Some completed projects have already involved children and youth from Ukraine (Ukrainian refugees) right upon the beginning of the war conflict in 2022. One third of mobility participants (especially in key actions KA1) are young people with a lack of opportunities.¹² NIVAM focuses its support mainly on the inclusion of disadvantaged young people. In addition to the publication of the special guide *Join the Inclusion* (2021)¹³, they organize special training courses for their employees (including the regional network) on how to consult projects with a focus on the inclusion of disadvantaged groups. NIVAM has also prepared training courses for various organizations to promote the involvement of young disadvantaged people while cooperating with renowned national experts to deal with this issue. The organizations' perspective on the involvement of disadvantaged youth groups in the Erasmus+ programme identifies persistent barriers related to the national and regional support systems and work with disadvantaged groups: insufficient personnel capacities to identify and address the representatives of disadvantaged groups, problems with the integration of disadvantaged groups in Slovakia into everyday life and into international activities (it is even more difficult to accomplish), higher levels of organizations' internal financial resources to guarantee the coverage of integration costs, etc. Despite various obstacles in the involvement of disadvantaged youth groups in the Erasmus+ programme, it is confirmed that the correct understanding of the topic within the Erasmus+ projects brought about a change in the attitudes of the majority of young people involved in the projects, where they present that their view on the disadvantaged groups was not correct, and they already perceive them differently today. Their behaviour has changed. They are more perceptive and more helpful. They act without unnecessary prejudices against disadvantaged groups. Organizations working with youth also remind us of the need to continue with special additional compensation of the costs associated with the involvement of young people with a lack of opportunities, but also the need to work with the majority (healthy population), which should be educated in the ERASMUS+ programme to understand the various barriers that people with special needs have to cope with and thus gain experience on how to accept them in a polite manner and create conditions for them so they could also become part of society.

In the **adult education sector**, research study has shown great reserves in reaching out to disadvantaged groups to ensure their further education. These are mainly people with medical disabilities, people from marginalized groups or early school leavers. The barriers remain the same as those mentioned in other sectors of education. These are the main positive effects of the education of adults from the mentioned groups: increased self-confidence, facilitation of job search, integration into society and socialization. Some graduates from these groups had the chance to come across the forms of democratic decision-making and the awareness of European belonging in the practice environment for the first time in their lives.

6. *To what extent do the actions/activities/projects financed by the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme contribute to the mainstreaming of climate and environment measures and to the achievement of climate and environment objectives including those aimed at reducing any negative environmental impacts in your country?*

The analysis in tables 6 to 12 (Annex 5 of the Table) shows that the interests (out of a total of submitted projects) in the mentioned horizontal priority in the new programme period are gradually increasing. We claim it is a positive fact that with respect to the changes in the Recovery and Resilience Plan as of April 26, 2023 which respond to the green transformation in education and the need to develop green skills, and finally also due to the influence of the EU Council's recommendation for Slovakia as of May 24, 2023 (Country Specific Recommendations 2023) which exclusively prioritizes to support the political efforts to target „the provision and

¹² Statement of the National Agency representatives, 15.05.2023. Has yet to be verified from data obtained from SAAIC.

¹³ https://euodesk.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/SPI_Checklist_Disability-sl_WEB-02.pdf

acquisition of the skills necessary for the green transformation“¹⁴, there will soon be a change in favour of this priority also in the projects of the Erasmus+ programme in all sectors. In the sector of school education, the issue of green skills represented in KA2 projects has been resolved gradually only since 2021.

7. *To what extent did the forms of cooperation and types of actions within the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme and the Erasmus+ 2014-2020 programme influence policy development in the field of vocational education and training, youth, and sport in your country? What actions of the programmes are the most effective as to your country's needs? Are there any significant differences between the various actions*

Over the last ten years of the evaluation of the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme, we have felt its influence within the education system in Slovakia. More than 90% of all respondents (individuals and organizations) declare the positive influence and impact of the programme on the gradual transformational processes in the educational sphere in general. Compared to the past, it is important to highlight that the creation of the Erasmus+ programme (unification of actions, higher budget, digital administration, etc.) has had a more significant impact on educational policies, as compared to the past. It also led to a great activity on behalf of the MŠVVaM SR that has implemented some regulatory changes in the educational system and has applied even constant improvements in legislation:

- The Act No. 137/2022 Coll. which amends the Higher Education Act No. 131/2002 Coll. and on amendments to certain laws as amended and by which some laws are amended¹⁵ [„mobility window“ that creates space in study programmes for students to participate in foreign mobilities and possibility of accepting foreign (Ukrainian) students].
- The amendment to the Act on Pedagogical Employees and Professional Employees No. 138/2019 Coll.¹⁶ created conditions for instant teacher workload reduction in schools [the 5-hour rule (5 hours of continuous teaching per week)] applying to the overworked academic staff working on projects.
- The amendment to the School Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll. intensively supports inclusive education and the creation of support (inclusive) teams. Newly hired professional employees could be helpful in overcoming barriers (insufficient support, sometimes even resistance in families or concerns of the students about participating in the project) and thus increase the involvement of disadvantaged students or students with a lack of opportunities (due to their poverty) in mobilities.
- The amendment to the Act on Vocational Education and Training No. 61/2015 Coll. supports the provision of practical teaching abroad, which not only supports sending out students within a dual programme to parent companies to acquire practical skills, but also stimulates their further participation in the Erasmus+ programme.
- The amendment to the decree of the Act No. 202/2022 Coll. promotes successful schools in the Erasmus+ programme to be favoured by the number of vacancies allocated to them by municipal regions to admit pupils for their enrolment in the first school year, which is also reflected in a higher income of the school from the state budget due to capitation funding.

No significant differences between the ERASMUS+ actions in individual sectors were identified. Key actions KA1 are the most positively evaluated by respondents since they have a direct impact on personal development, innovations in education, digitalization of education, inclusion and perception of EU values (SE, VET, HE). Key actions KA2 are positively evaluated mainly by larger organizations (big schools, universities, organizations from practice with sufficient personnel capacities) which maintain a high added value within strategic partnerships in education and within the implementation of innovations and the exchange of best practices that drive forward the necessary transformation processes in Slovakia (e. g. strategic focus of higher education institutions) and evoke direct pressure on education policies, as well as necessary legislative changes. Youth policy in Slovakia is defined in detail in the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for youth for the years 2021-2028.¹⁷ It includes several areas that influence the quality of life of young people in Slovakia. According to experts, the influence of the Erasmus+ programme within youth policy is most noticeable in the section of Participation (participation in

¹⁴ https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/06dee83b-e24f-4a3e-8e27-791232a81d5e_sk?filename=COM_2023_625_1_SK.PDF

¹⁵ Act No. 137/2022 Coll., The Government of the Slovak Republic, March 2022, [137/2022 Coll. – The law amending Act... - SLOV-LEX](#)

¹⁶ Act No. 138/2019 Coll., The Government of the Slovak Republic, May 2019, [138/2019 Coll. – Act on pedagogical employees and professional employees | Actual wording \(zakonypreludi.sk\)](#)

¹⁷ https://www.minedu.sk/data/files/11043_Strategy-of-the-Slovak-Republic-for-youth-in-years-2021-2028.pdf

democratic life and civic engagement) and Work with youth. Long-term work with municipalities through EU youth programmes has significantly contributed to improving the status of work with youth at the local level [NIVAM is part of a pan-European network (e. g. *Europe goes local*, hereinafter referred to as EGL, or *Democracy Reloading*¹⁸)] in the same way as individual projects of organizations within various mobility activities, but especially youth exchanges, strategic partnerships, and structured dialogue.¹⁹ We can view the following examples of the influence of youth programmes on society:

- The youth organization also began to act as an advisory body to the municipality.
- Methodological support for the creation of strategic documents aimed at youth in rural communities.
- Cooperation settings (at regional and local level/with municipalities) not only in the field of youth work, creation of conceptual materials in cities, offer of a job position (youth work coordinator) financed by the city, establishment and development of the operations of school and youth parliaments, development of their networking cooperations not only at regional, but also national and international level (www.zajednolano.sk)
- Involvement in expert groups, commentaries and consultations on strategic and legislative documents at national or regional level (e. g. BSK Youth Strategy) and others.

8. *What specific approaches (such as co-financing, promotion or other) have you used to try to increase the effects of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme and the Erasmus+ 2014-2020 programme in your country? How effective were these approaches? Are there any specific points for improvement to be identified?*

The sector of school education highlights the relevance of specific forms of dissemination of results and promotion of the programme proposed in the questionnaires for pedagogical / professional staff: methodological training courses, seminars and workshops, online communication, presentation of acquired experiences in front of the School Council (public, parents), local and thematic conferences and online tools (web, FB, podcasts, videos, etc.). The number of projects in the sector of school education has recently been increasing also due to good promotion, as well as **a greater interest** of teachers and students in overcoming mainly the language and the administrative barriers. There are other factors influencing the increasing interest: internationalization, transfer and implementation of innovations, methods and means within the educational process, etc.

The VET sector demonstrates only a few examples of concrete approaches to support the increase in the effects of the Erasmus+ programmes and there are no analyses of their effectiveness available. However, there is some information on three types of support activities:

- Pre-financing of projects by the municipal regions facilitates the implementation of projects and, for example, enables the involvement of financially stressed students in mobilities, so the school can also send out students who benefit greatly from the project and otherwise would not be able to travel;
- information about the facilities of foreign schools creates more favourable conditions for the founder's investments to improve the school equipment, as well as conditions for more effective use of foreign experiences;
- support of language training for pedagogical employees by municipal regions, which creates conditions for increasing the effectiveness of projects through increasing the absorptive potential of foreign stimuli.

70% of respondents to the questionnaire for secondary vocational schools replied positively to the following question: „Would it be useful to increase the effects of the Erasmus+ projects through some additional activities that would not be financed by the Erasmus+ programme?“ In the case of a positive answer, the respondents were invited to give specific suggestions that could help increase the effectiveness of their project. We will present several examples of such proposals that are structured according to the focus on its content (funding, promotion of visibility):

- Financial support from the MŠVVaM SR or the founder could be used to improve the material and technical equipment in the school premises to match the performance of foreign schools that we have visited as part of the Erasmus+ projects as well as the facilities of modern business entities where our students complete professional practice/training and plan to apply later in the future.

¹⁸ <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/sk/content/workshops-focused-on-the-competence-framework-democracy-reloading>

¹⁹ *The Structured Dialogue projects caught up with the launch of the new generation of the Erasmus+ programme, which is also the reason why they are mentioned by many organizations in the evaluation questionnaire for the defined period.*

- Undoubtedly, financial support for schools on behalf of official institutions (the MŠVVaM SR, VUC) would certainly help to strengthen the effects of projects. Perhaps it would be smart to motivate the „production sphere“ to transfer their investments to „non-production sphere“ - simply to education...
- We suggest getting support from the MŠVVaM SR and other sectoral ministries (e. g. the Ministry of Agriculture) for supplemental activities of the participants so they can obtain certificates/certifications to increase their opportunities to submit successful job applications within the labour market.
- Financial support of state organizations in the relevant field or motivational sponsorship on behalf of businesses/companies, enterprises - programme participants will gain work experience abroad, which they will use in their future work life.
- To employ a full-time employee who would coordinate the Erasmus+ programme.
- Separate financial support of the long-term foreign language training of pedagogical employees in the VET sector at schools implementing mobilities for a longer period.
- To recognize the active participation of teachers in the ERASMUS+ projects as one of the forms of their future education system (a greater motivation to succeed in education strategy and the opportunity for professional and financial advancement).
- The visibility of a school involved in the Erasmus+ projects would be achieved by a greater willingness on behalf of the founder to engage in the field of promotion, media coverage, online platforms for the school performance outcomes, or by organizing meetings of participants and E+ coordinators under the auspices of the founding institution where positive examples and the impact of the project on the transformation of professional education in Slovakia will be presented to the public.
- To create a unified platform for all vocational schools for the purpose of networking with them and exchanging experiences from the implemented activities of the Erasmus+ programme.

A similar question was also answered by the respondents to the questionnaire intended for other organizations (not for schools). In the positive cases, respondents were asked to indicate what could help increase the effectiveness of their project. There are following examples of such statements:

- financial support of internationalization
- recognition of educational results within the framework of the Erasmus+ mobilities, recognition of the EUROPASS through the management of institutions as to the additional education, ...
- more effective interconnection of EPAL or the individual programme with YouTube or FB
- reduction of bureaucratic burden and implementation limits for project outcomes
- establishment of an agency to support the dissemination of results, promotion of the examples of good practice among national regulators of education, support of long-term implementation even upon the completion of the project (We must have proven results, so there will be no need to create another project).
- creating a role of a mentor/consultant on the part of the agencies who could be addressed during the implementation of project activities (he would have experiences with various Erasmus+ projects) and he would also be able to help disseminate the results of the projects at the national level.
- announcement of „competition“ (perhaps in compliance with the „European Language Label“) for the „Best“ Erasmus project in the country.

Effectiveness and efficiency were simultaneously examined in the questionnaires to eliminate common problems arising from insufficiently accurate distinctions between these terms. Anyway, it cannot be excluded due to the effect of ambivalence on the use of the term „efficiency“ in ordinary speech. In any case, the measured values are very favourable: According to the statements of 83.05% of respondents from secondary schools and 78.72% of respondents from other organizations, the effectiveness of the programme is high and very high. The data about the effectiveness of the programme are comparable as it plays an important role in changing the educational practice or the attitudes of the participants. Thus, 80.09% of respondents from secondary schools and 82.98% of respondents from other organizations perceive the effectiveness of the programme as high and very high. To increase both the effectiveness and efficiency of projects, it is useful to examine the burden associated with project activity as a barrier to the involvement in the programme. Results in Chart 3 (Annex 6 Charts) confirm that the greatest barrier to cope with is „insufficient experience of the project preparation“ at secondary schools (61.86%) and in other organizations (53.19%). Other types of great barriers were encountered at schools [insufficient language skills (44.49%) and complexity of administrative tasks (55.51%)] and other organizations [insufficient language skills (42.55%) and complexity of administrative tasks (31.91%)]. At the same time, both groups of respondents claim that the financial burden is perceived as a barrier only to a small extent

(15.68% at schools and 14.89% at other organizations). (These barriers were identified on a similar scale in all sectors).

Therefore, it can be concluded that three types of measures are suitable to promote efficiency and effectiveness:

- retraining focused on the preparation of projects, so that their implementation is not hindered by deficiencies in the making;
- reduction of administrative complexity, which is repeatedly emphasized at all levels;
- improvement of the language level of the participants, which made not only communication and their work more efficient, but it also made the acquisition of new experiences more effective.

In their answers to the open-ended question „What changes do you suggest making your project work more efficiently (have the amount of labour been reduced while achieving the same results)?“ respondents mostly mentioned increased funding for school education (undoubtedly due to inflation) and reduction in administrative burden. Some specific examples of comments are mentioned as follows:

- the possibility to prepare the project and the final report more easily; It is difficult to pre-finance a project when you do not want to collect money from the participants;
- participation in several mobility projects, obtaining also accreditation for a longer time period and thus breaking down administrative and financial barriers in the field of long-term implementation of the strategy for the mobilities of teachers and pupils, expansion of partnerships;
- reduction of administrative complexity of the project (because) it does not benefit the end user, it only serves to control cash flows.

NIVAM uses various tools to spread information about the possibilities of the programme, but also organizes other support activities for selected target groups. For a long time, the focus has been on local and regional municipalities as they have the most significant influence on the quality of life and further direction of young residents in their living territory. The most important outcome is the support of sustainable and modern work with youth, further education of youth workers in local municipalities, while using foreign know-how.

A few suggestions from interviews with experts and evaluation questionnaires:

- It is necessary to strengthen the network of multipliers and consultants for the Erasmus+ programme in the regions. The reason for this request to recur on a long-term basis is the lack of systemic support for youth work, especially at the local level and in rural areas.
- It is crucial to focus on targeted support for the creation of projects within KA2 Cooperation between organizations and institutions that would bring strategic change, especially in the context of overlapping the individual Erasmus+ programmes in various areas of education (the field of youth interconnected with the field of School Education, Higher Education, Adult Education). A more active approach on the part of both Agencies is required due to the lack of tradition and long-term cooperation in these areas.
- For the continuation of the Discover EU Activity, it is important to strengthen opportunities for young people from the host country to associate with guests from other countries (even as a formal condition); their preparation and motivation for the meetings must be implemented in a flexible way to increase the message of the importance and values of the European Union.
- There is a great need to strengthen opportunities for creating new partnerships as to the fact that the Slovak sector of youth work is unstable and many of new emerging organizations (these are often being established continuously by young people) have not yet built direct networks to be used for the implementation of projects in the Erasmus+ programme.

9. *To what extent are the results of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme and the Erasmus+ 2014-2020 programme adequately disseminated and found useful in your country? Where do you see opportunities for improvement?*

The national authority, national agencies, and all sectors improved and intensified the dissemination of information and good practice of the Erasmus+ projects within the evaluating periods of the Erasmus+ programme through digital and print media (websites, video information, podcasts, Facebook, webinars, press, publications, etc.) as well as through educational seminars of programme coordinators, conferences (35th anniversary of the Erasmus+ programme), consultations, etc. for the purposes of dissemination of their results and examples of good practice in the Erasmus+ programme (Annex 3) even under the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war conflict in Ukraine. Information and outcomes on websites are open to the public on the websites of all schools and institutions involved in the Erasmus+ programme ([Home - Erasmusplus Slovakia](#)), see pictures 2, 3 (Annex 4 Pictures). Workshops, open days, exchanges of ideas, etc. are regularly implemented in school education. There is no systemic support for the dissemination of examples of good practice and

important results transferable to the practice of other schools for the better use of impacts, influences, and successes of the new Erasmus+ programme. Without the introduction of a support scheme (including financial appreciation of examples of good practice and financial support for dissemination activities), it is unrealistic to expect an increase in efforts for the dissemination and thus greater influence of the Erasmus+ project in Slovakia simultaneously at the same time of the decreasing interest of young people in studies (especially among excellent students applying to study at home in Slovakia), the decreasing population, and the existing capitation model of school financing. The recommendation is to prepare a synergistic, coordinated support system, dissemination of the results and successes of the Erasmus+ programme at the level of the governing body and national agencies. There is a recommendation for projects at the EC level to include an additional year for activities aimed at sharing and disseminating project outcomes (with lower financial subsidies compared to other activities).

10. *To what extent are the effects in your country likely to persist upon cessation of the intervention both at cumulative level and the level of implemented grants?*

In the **SE sector**, nine out of ten respondents (teachers) agreed with the statement that the results of the Erasmus+ programme projects at their school are sustainable even upon their completion (90.61%). Schools most often ensure the sustainability of the outcomes and results of the Erasmus+ programme by continuing to use the teacher-created materials and tools (83.67%), enhancing the cooperation with partners (64.9%), optimizing the educational process (54.29%), providing training to internal PE/PRE of the specific school (43.27%), or innovating the school's educational programme (34.69%). The school managers stated that they most often ensure the sustainability of the results and outputs of the Erasmus+ programme at their school by continuing to use the teacher-created materials and tools (82.83%). Less than half optimized the educational process at the level of the subject committee/methodical association (45.59 %) and one third of the respondents continue to cooperate with colleagues from partner schools abroad (32.07%). 17.78% of the respondents keep innovating their school educational programme.

In the **VET sector**, 93.22% of schools agreed with the statement that „The results of projects supported by the Erasmus+ programme at our school are sustainable after the project completion“, even 85.10% of other organizations within the sector agreed with a similar statement. In response to the question of how they ensure the sustainability of results, the highest score was reached in the continuation of the partnership (72.46%), followed by items directly related to the provision of student education. A characteristic element of the competitive atmosphere at vocational schools is the expression of one of the schools included in the „miscellaneous“ item: „Results and outcomes from the Erasmus+ programme are an important added value when recruiting students for vocational education. We manage to meet and even exceed the number of people interested in studying at our school.“

In the **HE sector**, the permanent effects of persisting project results can be seen even after their completion (internationalism, innovations in teaching processes, inclusion, digitalization, cooperative partnerships bring new impulses into education and science, etc.). It is just this sector where continuity and synergy can be seen, as both students and teachers are continuously involved in key actions KA1 and KA2. The effect occurs in the form of active partnerships and consortia, whose cooperation exceeds the objectives of the projects for which they have been created. The effective forms of interaction are not only the funded collaborations, but also those that could not be financed. Universities continue with the initiatives they have created together, often search in their own resources, and continue to cooperate in some form.

The **AE sector** very actively maintains the results of the projects even after their completion, which can be seen in 90% of the respondents' answers. 79% of them continue within the created partnerships, 88% of them innovate adult education using teacher-created materials and processes, 21% of them support education for pedagogues at other schools and partner organizations that were not part of the projects, and corporate fundraising.

In the **youth sector**, 84% of respondents to the questionnaires declare that the results of the projects after their implementation are continuously or very continuously sustainable. This corresponds with the statement of the organizations to what extent the projects had an impact on changes in their organizations²⁰, based on which several changes affect practice, approaches, quality development and are not linked only with the continuation of similar activities. However, the interviews with experts confirm that such practice is more likely applied with renowned organizations that have capacities to operate in the youth work sector for a long time. In the case of informal groups or organizations operating only on a voluntary basis (without employees) there is no guarantee for the sustainability of the results or long-term effects.

11. *What would happen if the Erasmus+ programme did not exist? Would the relevant sectors (higher education, school education, adult education, vocational education and training, youth, and sport) in your country get the same support to a comparable extent?*

According to the respondents' answers, it would be a „disaster“ if the Erasmus+ programme did not exist. The opinion of the national agency is similar. It is not just about the loss of financial resources, but above all about

²⁰ See also the section of Results of the Erasmus+ projects: Young people and organizations working in the field of informal education and youth work.

the loss of the opportunity to share experiences, solve common problems, be competitive in the European space and know one's belonging to European values.

According to the e-survey within the **sector of school education**, 66.53% of respondents disagreed with the statement that we could develop the internationalization of the school even without the Erasmus+ programme, while only 11.4% of respondents agreed with the stated fact. More than 75% of the interviewed school employees agreed that if the Erasmus+ programme has not continued since 2028, they would be significantly lacking the realization of their goals and ambitions (77.05%). The medium level of agreement was expressed by 16.41% and only 6.54% of respondents did not agree with the statement at all. A very positive finding is that up to 83.28% of school employees plan to join the Erasmus+ programme soon. Only 16.72% of the interviewed PE/PRE do not plan to participate.

In the **VET sector**, the expressive statement about the disaster is completely justified, because vocational schools receive stimuli that are unavailable at home - familiarization with new technologies and related education. In the final stage, the last item of the questionnaires includes views of the respondents who could give feedback on anything. Some of them expressed the benefits of the programme very emotionally, while they were also involved in documenting that non-existence of the programme would be a great loss:

- Erasmus+ provides a unique opportunity in VET and makes it possible to improve education at the level of students and teachers. Its role is irreplaceable in this regard.
- I can no longer imagine my life without the Erasmus+ programme. „Erasmus+ gives us wings to fly.“ It enables us to keep in touch with other foreign partners not only through job-shadowing methods at work, but also by means of inspiring cooperation on interesting projects with real results in the school partnerships. For many teachers, individual mobilities in key actions KA1 are a very important impetus for their own self-development. The school partnership is an extraordinary chance for students to try to cooperate in international teamwork (according to our experience, this type of long-term preparation and cooperation motivates them a lot and improves their results). Without the Erasmus+ projects, many teachers would not be able to cope with the demanding work of a teacher and would quickly burn out or move to work in other (more interesting) fields.
- ...in fact, all participants got a job abroad after completing their internship and graduation. From my point of view, it is very important for teachers and students to participate in internships. New things, experiences, technologies; students especially do not want to go back to the settlements and live their life as they have done before...
- In general, it is the best organized and the most beneficial EU programme for education.
- In my 35-year career as a director, I do not know of a better democratic tool to ensure the financial support for schools that want to be able to do something for their students and colleagues and for the European Union. Let's give a helping hand to functional schools in the future.

It is appropriate to say only thank you for the existence of the Erasmus+ programme.

- ...We're keeping our fingers crossed...that you'll be changing many lives.

79.34% of employees of schools and organizations that participated in the Erasmus+ 2014-2023 programme agreed with the statement: „If the Erasmus+ programme did not continue, I would be significantly lacking the realization of my professional development goals and ambitions“. Only 5.79% of them disagreed. The significantly less supportive results regarding internationalization are obviously surprising. 16.95% of respondents from secondary schools and 21.28% of respondents from other organizations agreed with the statement that the internationalization of their schools could be developed even without the Erasmus+ programme, while over 20% of both groups of respondents had two options to choose from „neither agree nor agree“. 58.48% and 57.45% of respondents expressed a disapproving opinion and thus a fear of the impact on internationalization due to the absence of the programme. However, at the same time, 88.13% of respondents from schools and 95.74% of respondents from other organizations rated the importance of the Erasmus+ programme for internationalization and cooperation support as high and very high. One of the explanations is the persistent language barrier and, in part, the dropout of Great Britain providing cooperation in native English. The failure of the Erasmus+ programme would mean a significant loss of diversity and a low degree of internationalization primarily in the neighbouring states. Despite this restriction, we assume that the international exchange of experiences and cooperation would partially persist only thanks to previous contacts obtained within the participation in the Erasmus+ programme.

The HE sector reflects the most accurate statement to the question of one of the respondents from the university management that contains a summary of the statements of all other chief employees: „Erasmus+ is the best form of targeted learning through experience, using diversity and inclusion, becoming able to apply the skills in

the labour market and develop own thinking so that one can lead a life with respect, perseverance and a great desire for acquiring the endless knowledge“. The managers of the university agreed that it would be difficult to replace the Erasmus+ programme while promoting the internationalization of their university.

The summary of the students' answers is also sententious: Termination of the programme would mean the return of internationalization by one generation, which would have an impact on the results of scientific research and the transfer of know-how, as well as on the standards of education, the profile of graduates and the overall competence to operate in an international environment. Furthermore, the number of activities of international research networks, project consortia and teacher exchange programmes would be reduced. New ones would be difficult to create. Cooperation with the third world countries would cease or would be limited, as it would not be possible to support hosting from the universities sending participants from the third countries. The capacity building in the EU would slow down, the sustainability of various forms of cooperation would be jeopardized, the curricula of study programmes would be less attractive, the employment opportunities within the labour market would be reduced to national levels. Universities would have no reason to build and continuously improve the infrastructure for mutual interaction. The potential of scientific research would be limited, the transfer of know-how would be difficult, and the results of new knowledge would be embedded at the national level. Europe's potential for peacekeeping would decrease.

Youth sector – Many respondents repeat their statement that without the Erasmus+ programme most organizations would not be able to make such progress in the quality of work with youth, provision of informal education, professional development, and other attributes (Table 13). 74% of respondents consider the existence of the Erasmus+-like programmes to be a significant or very significant factor in their professional development and in many cases also in their own sustainability and existence.²¹

Table 13 Processes, activities, changes in organizations affected by the participation in the Erasmus+ programme (the option to choose from several areas)

A	no reply	19%
B	increasing the quality of work with youth and educational activities	33%
C	professional development	27%
D	increasing the quality of work with information and its dissemination	8%
E	improving the quality of processes in organizations (crisis management)	12%
F	stabilization of the team/organization	8%
G	recognition of non-formal education and youth work	4%
H	improvement of the MT equipment, finances necessary for functioning of the organization	8%
I	networking, new contacts	27%
J	improving relationships	8%
K	increasing the participation and engagement of young people	11%
L	sensitivity to divergency (empathy, inclusion)	4%
M	international dimension, language competence	25%
N	awareness of the EU, its importance, and public benefits	1%

The concern of the organization about its maintenance and development in the sector after the termination of the Erasmus+ programme is justified, because in the field of informal education and work with youth, there is no tendency to increase resources from the state budget included in this chapter. For comparison, subsidies for the

²¹ Source: focus interviews

support of youth work (MŠVVaM SR) cover a wider spectrum of activities with a much higher number of people interested in financing local activities at a lower budget²² than the annual Erasmus+ budget.

In the AE sector, this would mean a major limitation of adult education strategies, because it would not be financially supported in the same way as within the Erasmus+ programme (e. g. from other national sources).

12. *How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the implementation of two generations of the programme in your country and what was the impact of the measures taken in response to the consequences of the pandemic?*

Both the National Authority and the National Agencies, as well as the organizations themselves, coped very flexibly and professionally with the problems associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. This is also confirmed by findings from e-questionnaires, interviews, and round table discussions (more than 60% of respondents). According to the SAAIC Annual Report for the year 2020, mobilities in all education sectors have essentially been suspended since March 2020, either due to measures taken at the national level (especially in the SE and VET sectors) or at the level of individual countries. However, the pandemic did not only affect the mobilities of individuals, but also significantly affected the implementation of strategic partnerships (KA2). Many grant beneficiaries took advantage of some of the measures of the EC in mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Erasmus+ programme. It was namely the extension of the duration of the grant agreement (in some justified cases even beyond the maximum duration of the project) and the implementation of virtual activities as a substitute for physical activities. One of the consequences of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic was the massive extension of projects from the previous programme period. Although promotional and communication activities were also aimed at newcomers within the project, many grant beneficiaries who repeatedly used and are still using the Erasmus+ programme were not able to implement and spend the grant(s) within the specified time.

In the HE sector, a significant reduction in the number of applications in call for the year 2021 was seen as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Changes in the thematic focus and types of implemented activities can also be seen after the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a total of 6,458 completed mobilities in SCHE and 12,916 completed mobilities in SCHO. Based on the questionnaires, more than half of the chief employees (57.85%) agreed, or *entirely* agreed with the statement that it was important for their school to continue with the implementation of the Erasmus+ projects during the COVID 19 pandemic, which was highly important in managing the impact of anti-pandemic measures. Only 2.07% of respondents did not agree with this statement at all. A similar number of respondents (57.44%) agreed or *completely* agreed that the Erasmus+ programme responded flexibly to the COVID-19 pandemic. Only 1.24% of the survey respondents did not agree with this statement at all. Almost 62% of respondents agreed or *completely* agreed with the statement that their school reacted in a sufficiently flexible way at the implementation of the Erasmus+ projects during the COVID-19 pandemic. Less than 3% of them expressed complete disagreement. More than a quarter of respondents could not comment on the mentioned statements. 190 respondents replied to the question about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Erasmus+ programme activities at their school. A quarter of them (24.74%) cannot state, cannot see, or cannot assess the impact of anti-pandemic measures on project implementation, or the project was implemented in a different period. In the answers of the remaining 143 respondents, some positive impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were also emphasized (38.46%), for example: *Digital competences of teachers and students, introduction of new possibilities, tools, and resources, motivation of students, time allowance - extension of the project deadlines, flexibility, crisis management skills, high-quality work on non-mobility activities. During the online mobilities, more students with disadvantages could even participate in the activities, and we did not have to solve problems regarding their travels. Pupils demonstrated a high level of responsibility.* According to the respondents' answers in **the VET sector**, the Erasmus+ programme responded to the COVID-19 pandemic flexibly enough, as 67.37% of respondents from secondary schools and 68.09% of respondents from other organizations agreed with this opinion. 71.18% of respondents from secondary schools and again 68.09% of respondents from other organizations agreed with a similar statement regarding the direct response of the relevant school/organization to the pandemic. When requesting to specify the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the activities of the Erasmus+ programme, various forms of plan disruptions due to pandemic restrictions appeared repeatedly to be negative, as they caused administrative and financial complications. However, the VET sector revealed more important and particularly unpleasant fact that the pandemic restrictions have made

²² Budget in 2022: Subsidies to support youth work: 3 788 801,00 €, Erasmus+ 6 530 919,00, EZS 2 103 383,00

it difficult to acquire practical skills, since online activities cannot fully replace them and, unlike partner schools, the pandemic has also threatened the existence of partner companies:

- Pupils were less communicative after the pandemic, had trouble integrating with the collective, were used to work online, but (later) had to work manually on mobility, which caused difficulties for some of them.
- During the pandemic, our students participated in mobilities abroad, but many companies went bankrupt during this time, so the students worked in companies in the specific field that did not correspond with their education.

The strengthening of digital skills of both teaching staff and pupils was highlighted as positive and surprisingly, so was the acquisition of specific experiences caused by the pandemic:

- Gaining new experiences during the pandemic is a positive. Pupils' work during the pandemic brought them experience and new knowledge regarding compliance with strict regulations during Covid 19.

Regarding KA2 projects, the respondents stated the advantages and disadvantages of online meetings:

- We found out that many processes/tasks can be done online. On the other hand, we found out that F2F meetings with a partnership at least once a year is irreplaceable - what we manage to work out in one day of the meeting takes much longer online and is a lot more exhausting.
- As a result of the impossibility of implementing the „live“ sessions, the feeling of „togetherness“ was fading, social ties between partners were missing.

In the **HE sector**, universities have enabled teaching and International Office work in an online environment. Short-term and intensive programmes have developed thanks to the new infrastructure. Top scientists and artists did not participate in person due to capacity reasons, but intensive online programmes will make these interactions possible. The results of their work reach academics and students who would otherwise not have access.

The negative effects of the pandemic were described by more than half of the respondents (**55.79%**) as follows: *Cancellation of mobilities, obstructions and restrictions, decreasing interest of participants, financial costs (cancellation), loss of partners, cancellation of courses, less social interaction. The project coordinators especially experienced stress: there were no clear procedures in case of such situations, it was necessary to follow the changing measures and to communicate a lot with the agency, not all information was clear. The project was extended by one year, which made it impossible for us to apply for a new project. The measures in our country often did not correspond with the measures in the partner country.*

In the **youth sector**, the pandemic was a test of flexibility and creativity for 68% of organizations. They stated that it affected them significantly or very significantly. Organizations had to cope not only with the absence of participants and youth workers who fell ill with the COVID-19 disease, but also with inflation following right after the pandemic and increasing the costs of activities that were moved to the post-pandemic period (or to the period between lockdowns). Different pandemic measures in different countries also complicated the implementation of projects. The loss or resignation of partners, lower motivation for the implementation of the project, bureaucratic actions connected with the cancellation of accommodation or flight tickets, etc. were also seen as obstacles. Several organizations stated the following:

- During the pandemic, we had to reduce our activities and income by 80%. We worked in a very limited mode for two years... We had to minimize our costs and we made a single employee redundant. Our organization has not yet recovered from this.
- Many members remained apathetic after the isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; they did not want to participate in the activities, they were disgusted by the previous restrictions, their social ties were broken, and they lost their last enthusiasm.

Several organizations also found positive effects in the implementation of the project during the pandemic, especially regarding the use of digital technologies and crisis management training or adaptation of the project to the current situation as to the terms and form.

- The introduction of online planning meetings enabled us more time with the partner... more frequent meetings compared to the time of being „relied on“ physical meetings.
- We got used to doing more of our work online and that's why face-to-face mobilities were more valued later.
- The pandemic brought about the creation of new topics in the organization - digital security and literacy, digital space as a public space - pitfalls and advantages.

The work and supportive approach of the National Agency (NIVAM) in the common search for solutions to problems on the part of organizations or groups supported by the programme was positively evaluated, especially in connection with the pandemic.

In the **AE sector**, the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact mainly on the extension of some projects and changes in the budget for the project which were successfully completed with the support of NAE+.

13. What was the impact of the measures taken within the implementation of the programme in your country aimed to respond to the consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine?

In the **HE sector**, 174 respondents answered the question of how the school reacted in the Erasmus+ programme to the consequences of the invasion in Ukraine. Almost half of them (48.85%) did not state a method, did not react in any way, did not have a project, were not involved in the project, or considered the school to be apolitical. 19.10% of respondents to 89 specific questions integrated Ukrainian pupils into the educational process, provided them with language support, and implemented courses for teachers (7,726 pupils from Ukraine were integrated at primary schools in Slovakia). 15.73% of respondents responded by including current topics in teaching, organizing lectures and discussions on the topic of conflict, hoaxes, and prejudices. 14.60% of respondents organized charity events and supportive collections. They stated in 7 answers that they reacted to upcoming projects. 6 respondents suggested adjusting activities, schedule, place of activities or organizing hybrid meetings. 6 interviewees saw specific facts: *Hospitality. Concerns on the part of partners regarding the implementation of the meeting in Slovakia. An attempt to involve pupils from Ukraine failed, as they did not stay at our school any longer. Refusion to send pupils from partner countries to Slovakia due to their fear of our country being geographically situated close to the war conflict was seen as the consequence of the Russian invasion. The school cooperates virtually with partners from Ukraine through e-Twinning.*

In the **VET sector**, the Ukrainian refugees were also being educated in Slovak schools due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In the context of the programme and organizations involved in the project, they could participate in mobilities the same way as citizens of the Slovak Republic. However, there could be administrative obstacles on the part of the Ukrainian citizens during their travels (e. g. regarding the validity of the passport). There was also a case where mobility was suspended due to the call-up orders to join the army.

In connection with the priority of key actions KA2 (partnerships) „Support of the response of the European VET systems to the war in Ukraine“, this is only a slightly relevant problem according to the respondents to the questionnaires. 37.29% of respondents from secondary schools and 27.66% of respondents from other organizations had two options to choose from „do not know/does not apply“. Ultimately, it also complies with the nature of KA2 projects and the small number of Ukrainian pupils at vocational schools. As of September 15, 2023, there were 1,561 students from Ukraine registered at secondary schools, 97 students registered at schools of arts and creative industries, and 112 students registered at conservatories. These are not significant quantities within the VET sector in comparison with 7,726 pupils in primary schools.²³

When requesting to specify how the school reflected the war in Ukraine in the Erasmus+ programme, it is necessary to mention the examples of solidarity:

- We involve pupils from Ukraine in mobilities. They are given priority in the selection process.
- As part of one of our Erasmus+/KA2 projects (at the beginning of the war conflict), we included humanitarian aid in the mobility of foreign students at our school (collection of clothes and fundraising collection boxes among both students and teachers which we personally handed over to the international aid staff for Ukrainians in our city). We also organized a discussion forum on this topic, where we presented the importance of the cooperation of young people (not only within Europe) for their better and peaceful future.
- A student from Ukraine was one of the participants of mobility in Latvia in 2022. We informed the students at our school about the huge support of the people of Latvia towards Ukraine, which we saw and experienced over there at the civic and artistic level. In galleries, public spaces, lobbies of public buildings (libraries) there were artistic expressions reflecting support. We also placed that kind of visual support in the vestibule of our school and led several discussions with the students about it. Our Ukrainian pupils appreciated it very much.

However, there were also concerns about the safety of pupils who were sent out to Slovakia, but even of those whose stay was recognized by the Slovak Republic.

- We moved mobility from the Baltic country to a country further away from the conflict site.

²³ <https://ukrajina.minedu.sk/data/att/27805.xlsx>

- Mobilities could not take place because the parents were worried about the situation in Ukraine.
- For example, deadline of the project to be implemented in Estonia was moved to a more suitable period, which was appropriate for the circumstances.
- Our usual reactions to our partners included long explanations that we are currently a safe country.

In the **HE sector**, higher education institutions used the funds from the Erasmus+ programme primarily to support incoming teachers and students from Ukraine for the purposes of studies and internships due to the consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Universities accepted students from Ukraine whose stays were classified as mobilities and were supported through the incoming student grants. Cooperation with partners from Russia was frozen. Memberships in consortia and organizations uniting universities remained suspended for the duration of the conflict. Universities have created opportunities for the Ukrainian refugees to work as academic employees.

In the **youth sector**, the war in Ukraine had only a small impact on the implementation of projects comparing to the pandemic.²⁴ Only 30% of the organizations stated that they had to significantly adjust their projects in some way (postpone the deadlines, cancel the Erasmus mobility due to the fears of their partners to come to Slovakia and thus get closer to the territory of the ongoing armed conflict, choose a partner outside of Ukraine or Russia, etc.), while the cooperation and friendliness of the National Agency has been repeatedly rated as extraordinary. On the other hand, many projects' activities reflected the theme of war and peace, mental health, coping with anxiety and uncertainty which strongly resonated especially within the group of young people. Many of them declared that they had suspended the projects so that they could focus more on charitable assistance and support for emigrants from Ukraine or direct humanitarian aid to Ukraine.

In the **AE sector**, no information was given regarding measures as to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

3.2 Effectiveness

14. *What is the financial cost effectiveness of the various actions (clusters of actions) of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme and the Erasmus+ 2014-2020 programme in your country?*

The effectiveness of financial costs can be evaluated from several aspects. One of them is the efficiency of funds used in all clusters of actions, reaching above 96%. The claimed efficiency is due to the active approach of both national agencies to the maximum exhaustion of funds in individual sectors by applying to the EC for the possibility of transferring funds from sectors where they have not been used up to sectors with a lack of funds for many high-quality projects. Furthermore, the efficiency of draining financial costs can also be measured by the constantly increasing number of participants, mainly in key actions KA1 (Table 14), but also in key actions KA2.

Table 14 Number of mobilities in key actions KA1

	<i>KA1 mobilities in individual sectors – number of mobilities</i>				
Years	SE	VET	HE	AE	Youth
2021	952	2729	4613	79	2044
2022	2502	4308	6739	184	3604

The crucial factors ensuring the effective use of funds are the informational, educational and control activities of national agencies which are carried out via face-to-face, electronic and hybrid seminars, training courses, and conferences within the old and new programme periods. For example, in 2021, SAAIC organized 73 events for 2643 participants, and in 2022, 52 events took place for 1088 participants). In 2021, NIVAM held 37 informational and/or educational events, which were attended by 1117 participants. In 2021, the fading pandemic still had an impact on the implementation of face-to-face activities. For this reason, NAE+ added a new podcast „SuperGeneration“ to its informational events in the youth sector. In 2022, NIVAM held 65 events for 1657 participants. The most significant events with the greatest impact on the target groups in 2022 were events such as Europe Day, Profesia days, Gaudeamus and the Pohoda festival.

²⁴ *The report reflects the opinions of organizations whose projects had been completed at the time of the report preparation, and the number of those continuing to implement projects will probably increase, which may be reflected in the overall assessment of the impact of the war in Ukraine in subsequent reports.*

15. *To what extent is the size of the budget appropriate and proportionate to the achievable objectives within the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme compared with the previous programme? To what extent is the distribution of funds within the programme areas and key actions appropriate in relation to their level of effectiveness and usefulness?*

We have noted a positive trend of budget growth in the new programme period. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education significantly affected the distribution of funds in the new programme period. One of the consequences of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic was the massive extension of project deadlines from the previous programme period. Even though promotional and communication activities were also aimed at newcomers involved in the project, many grant beneficiaries who repeatedly used and are still using the Erasmus+ programme were not able to implement (spend) the grant/s from previous calls. Ultimately, this led to a persistently decreasing number of applications in call for the year 2022 in the sector of school education and adult education sector. Another factor that influenced the amount of required funds in the sector of school education in call for the year 2021 and 2022 was the transfer of student mobilities from key actions KA2 (KA229) to key actions KA1. For this reason, it was necessary to announce the second round of calls in the adult education sector and in the sector of school education. On the contrary, requests in the sector of vocational education and training exceeded the allocated funds in key actions KA1 for the year 2022. These funds were allocated from the sector of school education. NAE+ asked the EC to approve these transfers in individual sectors. The EC responds positively and flexibly to the necessary changes in the allocated financial packages, which is very positively accepted. We found out that the interest in mobilities in the sector of school education and the VET sector is growing significantly based on research study. Remarkable changes can be seen just in the VET sector as there is greater positive impact of the implementation of the objectives of the Erasmus+ programme on education, which will require an increase in the availability of resources within the budget to reach the sustainability of this trend. The higher education sector supports efficient resource utilization and receives additional finances from the state budget at the same time (except the other two years when additional financing was not implemented). The new call will implement changes in the financing of mobilities in the higher education sector, which may bring certain problems („novelty“ effect) that can be solved again by additional financing from the state budget.

In the youth sector, the budget increase in the current programme period was rated very positively compared with that in the previous programme period. From the point of view of the National Agency (NIVAM), one of the greatest benefits is the project evaluated in terms of „value for money“ KA1 – Educational mobility of individuals. During the interview, the change within key actions KA2 was rated positively due to the creation of the sub-programme - Small Partnerships that is characterized by the lack of sufficient budget despite the increasing interest of mobilities. In all sectors, respondents point out problems with project accounting (teachers do the business budget planning and account for expenses all by themselves; however, they do not have the required financial literacy). This problem is particularly highlighted when changing the accounting system from the Unit Cost to Lump-Sum payment. The solution is to be seen in projects aimed at educating teachers in financial literacy, as well as in creating the system of methodical assistance to schools in accounting through founders, etc. Problems can also be seen in financing within key actions KA2 (210, 220) with the defined financial intervals that (within the „turmoil in the current crisis-ridden world“) can cause problems to applicants as to the finance withdrawal, which has no good effect on the fulfilment of the objectives of the action. We see the probability of solving the problem using an inversion model, where the applicant (if he/she knows the financial limits to key actions KA2) calculates a real budget for the project that will be approved even if it exceeds the limits, i. e. approved financial limits to key actions KA2 (210, 220) should be indicative. Respondents are very dissatisfied with the budgets of the wage evaluation program. Slovakia is included in the last cost category of the European countries (such as North Macedonia), which evokes tensions within our nation e. g. compared to the high-ranked Latvia (not mentioning the developed countries of the EU). The methodology of wage evaluation for the same work is perceived by practitioners and national authorities as discriminatory. Above all, the low level of salary evaluation reduces the attractiveness of projects for specialists in the VET sector which is particularly sensitive to competition from the private sector.

16. *From your country's point of view, how effective is the cooperation between the various actors involved in the implementation and monitoring of the programme (European Commission's departments – Erasmus+ committee – executive agency – national authorities – national agencies – independent audit bodies – international organisations)? To what extent does the Commission fulfil its leading role in this process? Have there ever been any changes in these two programme periods? What are the reasons for any potential changes? What areas of education intend to improve the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme or the follow-up programme?*

In both programme periods, the mechanism of management, coordination, and supervision of the Erasmus+ programme in Slovakia is implemented by three main actors: the national authority (MŠVVaM SR – section of international cooperation and European affairs), the Internal Working Group for the Erasmus+ programme (IPSE) established by the national authority (performs coordination and control activities) and two national agencies: SAAIC and NIVAM. The management, monitoring and control of the programme is also performed to some extent by the following subjects: external evaluators (they evaluate the submitted applications and projects), selection committees (composed of nominated representatives of key institutions; they check the evaluation process and approve the submitted lists of applications based on the evaluations of external experts) and internal and external auditors [they annually check the implementation of the NAE+ work plan and the utilization of the EC funds in NAE+ and selected entities - grant beneficiaries (internal audit, external financial and systemic audit on behalf of the EC, audit according to EN STN ISO 9001:2015, independent audit body - IAB)]. The interviews with the National Agencies confirmed a very good cooperation with the national authority and appreciated especially more effective cooperation with the EC and other actors as it is significantly better and more flexible than in the old programme period (before the existence of the Erasmus+ programme). Besides the meetings of national agencies and informal meetings of the NA chairmen (held in the country of the European Presidency), the OpenHouse informal online meetings have become a very helpful tool in improving the quality of communication and information since 2023. They usually take place on Fridays when all information about the programme news is delivered in „real time“, which contributes to the improvement of professionalization of the work performance in the Erasmus+ programme in the EC countries. Based on a positive finding within the questionnaire survey, respondents rated the cooperation with national agencies significantly as better than in the previous programme. Public awareness and methodical help provided on websites, at seminars and workshops, cooperation in the extraordinary situation of the COVID-19 pandemic and solutions and assistance of NAE+ with problems using new IT tools were mostly appreciated. NAE+ began to use more frequently the IT technologies, such as webinars, video manuals, podcasts, social networks, etc., which contributes to an effective dissemination of information and increasing the motivation of young people to join the Erasmus+ project.

17. *How effective and adequate are the measures applied by your national agency(ies) to monitor and support applicants, beneficiaries (including small and new organizations) and participants? What are the areas intended for improvement/simplification regarding the need for smooth and effective programme implementation?*

National agencies (SAAIC, NIVAM) have a well-developed system for monitoring and supporting applicants for the Erasmus+ projects (evaluation of questionnaires, analysis of final reports and audit in organizations) which is flexibly modified and supplemented with new IT applications on websites and is largely supported by personal contacts with applicants and organizations (webinars, workshops, seminars, etc.). NAE+ SAAIC conducted 25 primary inspections, document inspections in 45 projects and 20 monitoring visits in 2022. In the youth sector, NAE+ NIVAM organized 29 primary inspections/monitoring visits for the year 2022.

The conducted questionnaire survey was aimed at identifying positive changes, as well as problems and shortcomings in the cooperation between NAE+ and applicants. The level of satisfaction with the work of NAE+ (SAAIC) was evaluated as very high in the SE, VET, HE and AE sectors (the satisfaction rating was 5 and 4 on a scale of 5-1). In particular, the workplace communication and cooperation with NAE+ in the new programme was highlighted as more effective in comparison with the old programme. Respondents perceive that the workload of national agencies increased enormously during the pandemic and the implementation of new IT tools in the new programme, which was seen in changes in the forms of work (online forms) with newcomers and increasing number of errors in the organizations that routinely submit their applications within a long-term period and do not follow the occurred changes upon arrival of the new programme period. The proposal of the respondents was also to establish HelpDesk at national agencies. The mentioned shortcomings and comments can only be solved by increasing the personnel capacities of the national agencies. On July 1, 2022, NIVAM was established and the operations of the NA Erasmus+ for youth and sports were also transferred to NIVAM. The work of NA was not negatively affected in any way and the close cooperation of NA with NIVAM managed to maintain the

general stability of NA, including that of its personnel. Respondents evaluated the work with NIVAM as good and excellent, they positively commented on the information on the old website as it was redesigned and is a great support for project applicants. The representatives of municipalities also dealt with the request of regional NA representatives, as they would also like the National Agency to be closer to the regions. This requirement arises mainly in reaction to the under-dimensioning of other tools for the support and development of youth work at the local/regional level. For this reason, youth workers and youth organizations in the regions are not only interested in regional multipliers, which only provide information about grant calls and deadlines, but in multipliers that are part of NIVAM and know how to comprehensively help applicants directly in the region. Cooperation with the EC and the national authority of the Erasmus+ programme would be a solution to the mentioned comments and topics.

18. *To what extent have the intended simplification measures, such as the system of simplified grants and the accreditation system, reduced the administrative burden for national agencies, program beneficiaries and participants? Are there any differences between actions or areas? Which elements of the programme could be changed to further reduce the administrative burden and simplify the management and implementation of the programme without jeopardizing the governance, results, and impact of the latter? Some (limited) actions of the programme are implemented under indirect management by the international organizations evaluated according to the pillars (e. g. OECD, Council of Europe). The aim of the pillar evaluation is to determine whether the organization complies with the requirements of the European Community (EC), and to guarantee a level of protection of the EU's financial interests equivalent to the level required under the Financial Regulations on Budget Rules.*

Despite positive views of the introduction of the accreditation system and the system of simplified grants and despite several welcoming simplifications (applications for accreditations are simpler, forms of final reports are less extensive, interim reports are not submitted), the administrative burden is still perceived as high in individual sectors. In the sector of school education and the VET sector, we have observed a significant increase in the number of new applicants involved in all actions since 2021. A higher administrative burden is reported by 52% of respondents in the sector of school education, 84.75% of respondents from secondary schools in the VET sector and 63.83% of respondents from other organizations. 20% of schools and 15% of other organizations in the VET sector perceive higher administrative burden in the period of 2021-2023 compared with that in the period of 2014-2020. However, the management of the administration was at the same time described as very difficult and rather difficult by 85% of respondents from secondary vocational schools and 64% of respondents from other organizations. According to the respondents from both types of organizations, the greatest difficulty (although in a different order) relates to the preparation and administration of the project. Furthermore, the project work at secondary vocational schools is more burdensome than in other organizations (with prevailing KA2 projects) as they have natural difficulties in harmonizing the project work with teaching. For other organizations, preparation of the project is naturally the most difficult.

Respondents in the HE sector perceive an increasing administrative burden for both applicants and administrative employees in international departments due to the existence of several digital systems at the national and international level and the uncomplete digital transformation at partner universities. In the youth sector, the first-time applicants consider working with e-tools to be simple and intuitive. On the other hand, multiple successful applicants evaluate the introduction of new e-tools as increasing the administrative burden and consider them to be more complex. However, they self-critically justify it by saying that they have already gotten used to one mechanism (e-tool) and it takes them longer to get used to the new settings in case of any change. At the same time, they pointed out the fact that once an e-tool is fully functional, it will be replaced by a new one, the functionality of which must be verified again in practice and all faulty settings must be remedied immediately. For this reason, successful applicants consider the changes to functioning e-tools unnecessary or inappropriate.

19. *To what extent do the indicators determined for the programme by the EC Regulation correspond with the monitoring purposes at the national level? How could the overall management and monitoring system be improved?*

There are no systemic indicators set at the national level; the only measurements that are implemented result from the annual work plans of the national agencies. At the national level, the results of the programme within the framework of monitoring the implementation of the programme are mainly based on quantitative (statistical) data; qualitative data (impact) are not systematically monitored. This area remains fully within the competence of national agencies in the form of their analyses, impact studies, etc.

The aim of setting the basic performance indicators for the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme was to consider the requirement for easier monitoring and reflection of their actual performance.

In general conclusion, some indicators are, or will succeed in a good performance, for example in the case of the functional improvement to the existing IT tools (indicator 2.4 Integration and indicator 2.5 Simplification). However, it should be noted that at the time of this report, a significant part of the projects in key actions KA2 had not yet been completed, so it is difficult to evaluate indicator 2.2.2 (the share of organizations and institutions that believe they have developed high quality procedures owing to their participation in key actions KA2). However, the planned outcomes are in compliance with the formulation of the indicator: various methodological materials and procedures, curricula, educational platforms and applications; it can therefore be expected that the programme can lead to an improvement in the activities of the involved organizations, but not to fundamental structural changes; it can also be assumed that the impact of the projects will not go beyond the sphere of influence of this institution at the local or regional level. Considering the objectives of the programme aimed at developing individuals' potential and individual organizations, this is not necessarily to be perceived negatively. The effectiveness of the programme could be increased by strengthening the weak synergies, e. g. by enhancing monitoring, complementarity between different programmes, systemic planning of financing the subsequent projects to achieve higher efficiency, etc.

However, some of the indicators are more difficult to evaluate. This applies mainly to indicators that are based on the subjective self-evaluation of participants in activities (reports of participants), especially in the context of indicator 2.1.5 (the share of participants who believe that their participation in activities within key actions KA1 enhanced their sense of European belonging). The extent to which the participants felt „obliged“ to consider this point in the self-evaluating questionnaires will become an issue within future research. In general, the programme participants report high satisfaction and benefits of the programme in the context of their self-development and continuous improvement of developing language competences (indicator 2.1.4). The participants in employee mobilities reacted in a similar way in the case of an improvement in professional competence.

A more objective evaluation of the impact of the programme would require a comparison of results between programme participants and those who did not participate in its activities (i. e. a control sample), either at the individual or institutional level. Such comparison has not been carried out at the national level.

The national agency actively promotes the use of digital cooperation platforms (indicator 2.2.3). In this context, it should be noted that this indicator is linked to key actions KA2; however, these cooperation platforms are also actively used within key actions KA1, e. g. in searching for partners and creating transnational networks of partnerships. From just this point of view, the former eTwinning (currently the European School Education Platform) traditionally associated with the sector of school education is being used in a positive way. In Slovakia, the number of users of this platform increased several hundred times by now in comparison with the previous programme period, owing to the intensive work of the EPAL National Support Service (ŠIOV) that is focused on networking organizations in the adult education sector. Since there is no specialized platform for organizations from the sector of vocational education and training, these organizations use both abovementioned platforms.

It is equally difficult to evaluate the overall contribution of the programme to reducing the carbon footprint by using sustainable means of transport. The increase in travel allowance has not created the expected motivational effect for organizations. On the other hand, the national agency registers an increasing percentage of projects addressing the topics of climate change in KA2 projects (around 40% in school education, 50% in adult education and vocational education and training, 30% in higher education).

The goals of quantitative indicators (e. g. 2.1.1 – 2.1.3) are continuously being achieved in almost all sectors of education and vocational training, except for the adult education sector. We register a very high volume of mobility flows in the sector of vocational training and education; general interest in participating in mobilities is limited by budgeting options. On the contrary, the number of organizations from this sector involved in key actions KA2 is significantly lower compared with other sectors; the low involvement of vocational secondary schools is due to the insufficient capacity of schools and the low level of language competences of pedagogues, which limits their capabilities to participate in activities in an international environment. We also record a significant increase in mobilities in the sector of school education, which is, however, caused by a change in the architecture of the programme compared with the period of 2014-2020.

In the case of the participation of people with various forms of disadvantage, the national agency records a gradual increase in all sectors of education, but again – except for the higher education sector. We can perceive

a synergistic effect with policies at the national level within a hierarchy of education forms (from pre-primary to upper secondary education); the adoption of the Strategy of an inclusive approach in education naturally led to an interest in acquiring/increasing the professional competences of pedagogical and professional school employees and introducing the necessary processes at schools.

Thus, the number of small organizations (e. g. civic associations, non-profit organizations) within key actions KA2 is also increasing, especially in the adult education sector (indicator 2.5.1).

The basic objective of the programme „is to support the educational, professional and personal development of people in the fields of education, vocational education and training, youth and sports in Europe and beyond through lifelong learning...“. In this context, it is necessary to state that the rate of recognition of the results of academic mobilities falls far behind their expectations compared to other sectors of education (approx. 70%; for comparison – the declared rate of more than 90% is notable in the SE sector). However, the high degree of recognition of the results of mobilities in the sectors of the vocational education and training and school education mainly concerns the mobility of pupils; the national agency registers ongoing problems with the recognition of the results of the mobility experiences of pedagogical and professional employees; this is also reflected in the participants' self-evaluation reports, where the improvement of the participants' career possibilities is a rarely identified benefit of such mobility. In the context of currently adopted policies at the EU level, the need arises to monitor this aspect more systematically at the national level.

20. *To what extent are the new management support tools in line with the needs and structure of the Erasmus+ programme? What other features would you recommend for its further development?*

From the conducted research study, we have identified two main problems with the introduction of new management support tools in accordance with the needs and structure of the programme.

Based on the questionnaire survey and the interview in all sectors, the objective criticism was raised of the new IT tools to support management and reporting (EWP, Beneficiary module) as they were not functional and created problems with uploading and downloading data. The EU survey was only available with a 9-month delay from the start of the new programme period. The online language training is a suitable additional tool, but it does not meet expectations yet. The online language support system started up late and not all languages were available, and it was not possible to continuously monitor the participant in language training. The respondents pointed out the fact that in the past it was possible to implement language training directly at the place of professional internship with lecturers from the given country. It was effective and very motivating as well as adaptive. The offered online language training does not motivate participants at all.

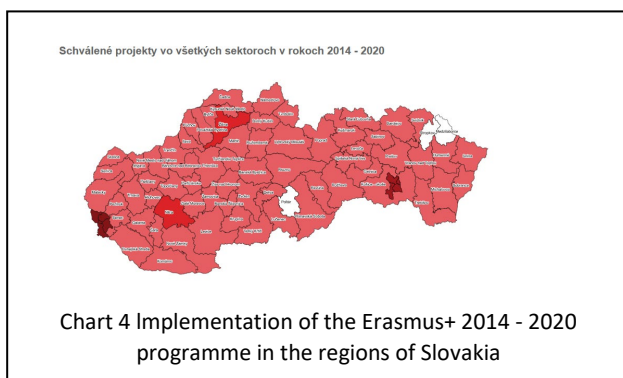
Recommendations for EC:

- not to deploy new IT tools that are only being developed during the programme. It is necessary to create a functional unified IT environment for the Erasmus+ programme based on the interconnection of the system between institutions, whose modules will provide robustness (it will not fail) and the data standards for good compatibility will be defined. The system should be tested and then deployed as a long-term tool which will only be modifiable in modules based on suggestions from users,
- design and use a hybrid language training system that will be more motivating for pupils/students and teachers.

3.3 Significance

21. *To what extent do the objectives of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme established by Articles III, paragraph 1 and 2 of the Erasmus+ Regulation in relation to the policies of the EU programmes in the field of vocational education and training, youth and sport continue to address the needs or challenges they are intended to help with? Are these needs or challenges (still) relevant in the context of your country? Have needs or challenges evolved to the extent that it will be necessary to modify either the objectives of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme or those of its follow-up programme?*

The Erasmus+ programme (from its inception in Slovakia up to the present day) is an important tool for building the European educational space and support for the implementation of the European strategic cooperation in all sectoral programmes, which is also shown by the widespread representation of the programme in all regions of Slovakia in Chart 4, as well as the gradual involvement of regions in key actions KA1 and KA2 in Charts 5 and 6 (Annex 6 Charts). The outputs of the evaluation of all actions within the Erasmus+ 2014-2020 programme and



the analysis of the approved projects in the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme show that the goals and needs defined in the new generation of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme are still relevant and correspond with the current needs and policies in Slovakia. The answers of respondents to the evaluation questionnaire in all sectors (96%) and the individual interviews show satisfaction with the goals set within the Erasmus+ programme and recommendation to further continue with them. In the discussions at the round table at the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic, it

was stated that the goals are harmonized with the needs of Slovakia and its national policies in all sectors and are still relevant.

Recommendations for adjustments and changes in the objectives of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme

Several thematic areas emerging from the interviews with experts and the answers of the respondents to the evaluation questionnaires deserve to be attended to within the next generations of the programme.

- **expansion of thematic networks and cooperation:** the programme could provide financial support for thematic networks involving different institutions from different countries to address specific challenges, allowing for deeper cooperation and exchange of proven processes
- **long-term exchanges of pedagogical employees** (e. g. duration of one year)
- **mental health support** appears in all evaluation activities, not only because of the pandemic, but also as a challenge that is addressed cross-sectionally in all areas of society
- **strengthening areas in the fight against disinformation, especially those related to the functioning of the EU**
- **support of emotional intelligence in young people**
- **cultivation of media communication**
- **setting balance in the digital society** [artificial intelligence, virtualization, active leisure time (except digital technologies), etc.]
- **systematic development of the topic of the future**²⁵ and preparation for it in common areas and topics of the European Union such as democracy, migration, interconnecting and development of cooperation in the common search for future solutions, cooperation with countries outside the EU
- strengthening of **cooperation between the sector of school education** and, above all, **the sector of education training and the world of work:** support of an active approach among young people to manage their work, integration into the work process, support in building relationships at the workplace, etc.

As to the first two recommendations from the respondents, however, it should be noted that the programme already allows for long-term exchanges of pedagogical employees. The problem arises in the national legislation that does not address the possibility of a „sabbatical“ and resources to ensure replacement of an employee for a one-year period. Similarly, additional financial support for networking could and should be provided from national sources, especially if our schools had a strong interest in activities within existing networks [e.g. also SALTO for Training and Cooperation Activities (TCA) or specialized networks for each horizontal priority (SALTO Digital, SALTO Inclusion, etc.).

22. *To what extent do the objectives of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme address the needs of different interested persons and sectors in your country? To what extent is the Erasmus+ programme successful in attracting and reaching our target groups in different areas of the scope of the programme? To what extent is the Erasmus+ programme known for vocational education and training, youth, and sport communities in your country? What factors limit the access of some target groups in case they are not sufficiently addressed? What measures could be taken to remedy this situation? What are the reasons for the limited participation of certain target groups? Are there any target groups that choose not to participate, or do the external factors always hold them back?*

²⁵ [Literacy of the future as a competence in the 21 century](#), UNESCO

In all sectors, we have identified a positive evaluation and impact of the implementation of the objectives of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme on the target groups involved in the programme. National agencies (SAAIC, NIVAM) implement the outreach for the programme's target groups via systemic and well-set tools, such as cross-sectional information and communication activities promoting the programme (website, social networks, media performance, discussions, podcasts, informational webinars in the regions, etc.) as well as educational programmes (informational webinars, video tutorials, consultation meetings, etc.). The successful participants of the programme in individual key actions, who spread their positive experiences among all target groups, also have a great influence on the motivation to join the Erasmus+ programme. There are still some organizational and personal barriers to joining the programme, as well as different barriers between younger and older programme participants.

Based on questionnaires and interviews, teachers **in the SE and VET sectors**, revealed that significant barriers to students' participation in the Erasmus+ programme are socioeconomic family background, serious medical handicaps, but also barriers on the part of their parents, e. g. their lack of interest or fear, or concerns about their child traveling to an unknown environment. Several school principals or teachers within the interviews appreciate that thanks to the currently set up Erasmus+ programme already covering all costs, they can better balance the differences between students coming from families from different economic backgrounds, which brings the expanding opportunities for many children (children of single mothers, children with special needs, medical barriers, etc.). In the least developed regions, we have examples of the school's management which provides financial assistance for the purchase of travel luggage for pupils with low socioeconomic background and reciprocal accommodation of children from abroad in another family, etc. Teachers and other employees (mainly older people) must cope with permanent barriers to better involvement (around 20%), such as insufficient language skills, administrative complexity, substitutability in teaching as well as private reasons (personal situation in young families) and lack of interest in participating.

Recommendations for the current and future programming period:

- **enabling more mobilities of school managers, which would increase the added value for the involved organization and the educational system**
- **paying more attention to newcomers - institutions entering the programme**
- **support of the mobility of not only pedagogical employees, but also employees from the work environment (from private companies) for better involvement in the programme**
- **support of the professional development of Master of Vocational Education**
- **focus also on talented youth, not only participants with a lack of opportunities**
- **development of language skills mainly for teachers of general education and professional subjects, not only for language teachers**
- **reciprocal exchange of pedagogues in smaller groups, etc.**

In the higher education sector, the objectives of the Erasmus+ programme are clearly positively evaluated by teachers and employees of universities in terms of professional training and growth. Almost all of them (95.5% of respondents) consider these activities as an important tool for their professional development. They unanimously claim (89%) that their participation in mobilities motivated them to further professional development and gain more international experience, and thanks to the participation in mobilities abroad, they acquired skills and experience that (80%) help them to do their work better, which also contributes to the growth of quality and modern transformation of education at universities. Groups of people with a lack of opportunities are not registered at universities. Universities work with the status of a student with specific needs, which generally requires adaptation to the environment and educational methods. Students positively evaluate the possibilities of their personal growth, acquisition of new skills, internationalization of education and sharing European values. We have identified the following barriers and problems as to increasing the motivation of target groups, which needs to be solved mainly at the organizational level of universities:

- the Erasmus + programme is not sufficiently visible at universities and does not have enough strong marketing (the task of university managers and programme coordinators is to work more on the importance of the programme to ensure the quality of education at universities, on the publicity dissemination and specific achievements of the Erasmus+ programme)
- a demotivating aspect for students is also the incompatibility of study programs at domestic and foreign universities and problems with the recognition of earned credits

- great financial barrier and an administrative barrier (44.9%) for students (58.7%)
- language barrier mainly for teachers (48.5% of older generation), not for students anymore
- personal reasons (39.4% - in the family, in representation in teaching and research, etc.).

In the youth and adult education sectors, the Erasmus+ programme is a permanent challenge for the systemic and long-term interconnection between informal and formal education. For many non-profit organizations, the Erasmus+ programme is a financial resource contributing to their sustainability. Municipalities and regional organizations gain new ideas and inspiration from the programme for the creation of local youth policies for interconnecting informal education with the world of work, using the potential of both youth and adults. Here are some limiting factors: the need to increase promotion and motivation of participants, better adaptation to the needs of target groups (adults, youth from different social groups, especially Roma youth), poor language skills. In both sectors, it is necessary to create a systemic connection and coordination of the Erasmus+ objectives with the Strategy of Lifelong Education and Counselling for the years 2021 - 2030²⁶ and the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth for the years 2021 – 2028²⁷ at the national as well as regional level for the purpose of greater motivation of the target groups and their involvement in the Erasmus+ programme,

23. *To what extent is the concept of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme targeted on and adapted to hard-to-reach groups, people with a lack of opportunities or special disadvantaged groups of the population that do not traditionally engage in transnational or international activities, compared to other groups that benefit from the programme? What factors will limit the access to information of some target groups in your country if they are not sufficiently addressed? What measures could be taken to remedy this situation?*

In the new programme period, the programme operates explicitly at the pro-inclusive level, together with financing that considers the increased costs of inclusion/inclusive access. Despite supporting materials (specialized site and concise methodological material to support inclusion) and supporting funding, problems persist. The experience of project implementation and discussions of specialists from national inclusion agencies show that it is necessary to better work on:

- the issue of early identification of participants who need inclusive support - sometimes serious signs of poverty may appear just at the time of leaving for mobility, which can negatively affect the successful course of mobility;
- supporting measures for full inclusion, not only involvement in the project but also minimizing risks threatening the successful course of mobility.

In Slovakia, young people from marginalized Roma communities (MRK) and from socially disadvantaged and unstimulating environments (from NRO) belong to the group of people with a lack of opportunities within the framework of SE, VET, and youth. Difficulties with activating people from a socially disadvantaged environment, as well as other participants, are often a reflection of difficulties already seen during teaching classes at school - lack of interest in the field of study and education itself, high rates of absenteeism concerning theoretical and practical classes. This is mainly about cultural barriers and the fact that students from MRK have a problem just with regular attendance at school. Significant barriers according to the respondents are as follows:

- weaker performance of pupils with lack of opportunities
- their lack of interest even after being motivated
- weak communication skills due to medical handicaps, lack of interest of pupils from marginalized groups

Similarly, despite the existing project priority and inclusive support, there might be problems arising as to the involvement of disabled (medically handicapped) participants, because it is difficult to adapt the project to their needs. Provision of study materials adjusted to their abilities usually requires an individual approach. The pace of acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills in online and traditional communication is different. Additional time requirements (e. g. medical examinations) and an increased risk of unforeseen events are to be considered. Increasing the rate of inclusion of both groups requires time and continuous support through continual learning seminars focused on inclusion, but especially on successful inclusive practice. The publication of aid examples (short stories and especially videos) could be significantly helpful for programme applications, as these would help other students with special education needs or participants from socially disadvantaged background to understand that people with a similar fate or disadvantage not only managed to actively participate in the

²⁶ Strategy of Lifelong Education and Counselling for the years 2021 – 2030, The Government of the Slovak Republic, November 2021, [22182.pdf \(minedu.sk\)](#)

²⁷ Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth for the years 2021 – 2028, The Government of the Slovak Republic, December 2021, [Microsoft Word - 2.own-material Strategy of the Slovak Republic for youth \(minedu.sk\)](#)

project, but the chance to take part in the project helped them change their life for good. Thus, the motivation of pupils and their families to get involved in the project would be supported, which is the first prerequisite to manage the problems arising from the need for their inclusion. The current intensive building of support (inclusive) teams in primary schools and gradually also in secondary schools shapes the development of personnel capacities to support the inclusive educational environment, education, and thus, to also increase the level of inclusion in projects. In the higher education sector, we usually do not deal with people with a lack of opportunities or special disadvantaged groups of the population. To a lesser extent, higher education institutions offer the academics also for the students with medical disabilities, for whom the individual study programmes are implemented. The faculties employ coordinators who work with students with special needs.

24. *To what extent are the needs and challenges associated with the green and digital transformation of Europe reflected in the actions/activities of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme? What is the relevance of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme in your country compared with that of the Erasmus+ 2014-2020 programme? Has it improved within a new generation of programmes?*

The challenges associated with the green and digital transformation of Europe are very significantly reflected in the actions of the Erasmus+ programme in Slovakia. These are topics that affect the life of the whole society and everyone. The challenges of digital transformation are mostly addressed in the projects, and the interest in green transformation is also gradually increasing. Financial preference for „green travel“ strengthens the ties to the development of green skills and attitudes.

In the **HE sector**, the period of 2021-2022 reflects an increase in the interest of schools in the topics of green transformation, especially in key actions KA2, where the share of topics focusing on the development of green skills for the given period was estimated to add up to a total of 40%. Projects reflecting the theme of the environment and the fight against climate change represented a total of 20% in key actions KA2 for the first two years of the new Erasmus+ programme period. In the topic of digital content, technologies and procedures, the share of completed projects in key actions KA1 represented a total of 19% (in 2021) and 18% (in 2022). Digital security was represented by only a tiny rate of 2% (year 2021). The topic of digital transformation remains relevant in these sectors even within the new period of 2021-2027. The schools were better prepared to provide online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic owing to the Erasmus+ digital projects implemented in the period of 2014-2020, which was also mentioned by teachers in their respond to the questionnaire surveys and the interviews. In 2022, there was an increase in the general interest in the topic of digital skills and competences due to the influence of home education experiences. The share was estimated to add up to a total of 50% (KA2), which further confirms the high relevance of this issue in our schools.

There are not any quantifications available in the **VET sector**, only qualitative information. Schools are becoming more aware of the importance of the „green agenda“ that is more emphasized in the present projects compared to the past. There are also new topics induced by economical changes (renewable energy sources, low-energy buildings, green roofs, electromobility). Pandemic restrictions also contributed to a better understanding of the need to adapt to the use of digital technologies. Another piece of progress is brought by the experience with artificial intelligence, especially the generative language models such as e. g. ChatGPT, which is widely used because it allows public access to mutual communication. This was also confirmed by the respondents' answers. 72.73% of employees involved in mobilities rated the impact of the project on the use of digital tools in their own practice as *very significant* and 42.15% of them as *significant*. On the other hand, only 57.02% of employees involved in mobilities rated the impact of the project on the support of green transformation in their own practice as *very significant* and 25.62% of them as *significant*. Vocational schools clearly indicate that green transformation is less relevant than inclusion and digital transformation in terms of pressure on the daily course of their work and teaching. They also pointed out that the definition of green transformation in the programme guide is quite formal.

In the **HE sector**, school managers, employees and students were the first interested parties to discover an interesting fact that the objectives of the Erasmus+ programme, such as the priority of inclusion and diversity, internationalization and the European integration and its common values mostly contribute to the development of higher education institutions. In terms of the rating scale, the areas of digital transformation and the environment and the fight against climate change received the lowest rating. The respondents (students and teachers) were particularly critical of the digitalization of administrative tasks; however, they noted significant progress especially of the administrative employees in their communication with the participating partners. The digital transformation of education was booming during the covid pandemic, but this trend has slowed down and the potential of hybrid education has not been used since. Facts based on reality reveal that higher education institutions found long-term solutions for digital infrastructure, digital equipment and the education of teachers

and students in digital competences through national and international projects as well as projects directly applied in the education process since 2020. Respondents pointed out only a little progress made on presenting projects for the green transformation of Europe. Only 30% of them claimed that there has been some progress in the green transformation, but 70% of them do not see and cannot assess whether there have been changes in the respective area.

Based on an interview with experts in **the youth sector**, we found out that the setting of priorities motivated the applicants to devote themselves more deeply to these topics in projects and their practice. The mandatory use of IT tools within the submission of applications, monitoring, and closing of projects initially created pressure to change the „learned and experienced“ procedures. Later, it was the start of a new view on these two priorities in half of the organizations. 56% of respondents consider the participation in the Erasmus+ projects for the development of digital transformation in their organization to be important or very important, 52% perceive the situation in the green transformation process the same way. At the same time, they are aware of the space available for further improvement and expansion of the awareness of the importance of both objectives of the Erasmus+ programme.

3.4 Cohesion

25. *To what extent are the objectives of the different programme areas within the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme consistent and mutually supportive? What evidence proves the existence of cooperation between different programme areas, including those managed by different national agencies, and actions? How do the different actions work together? To what extent do the inconsistencies, overlaps, or other disadvantageous issues among all the programme areas persist? How can the latter be solved?*

In the sectors of school education, VET and youth and sport, there were no findings highlighting consistency and support between actions nor any inappropriate overlaps between them. They are mentioned neither from the solvers' point of view nor the point of view of the management structures. Support and cooperation between individual actions is implemented mainly in the field of information dissemination about the Erasmus+ programme. The only problem pointed out by successful solvers from the sectors of school education and youth and sport is the divergence of rules between sectors.

In the HE sectors, key actions KA1 were rated as consistent and complementary. They are administratively centralized at universities. In key actions KA2, the specific and mainly scientific objectives are being fulfilled. Thus, their coordination is separated from the universities. They are implemented at individual faculties, which makes their synchronization more difficult.

26. *To what extent is the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme compatible with other national or regional programmes, other forms of the EU cooperation (bilateral programmes) as well as international programmes with similar objectives available in your country? Can you identify any inconsistencies, overlaps, or other disadvantageous issues with other programmes?*

The Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme is found to be specific to the international scope in all sectors and focuses on mobilities and partnerships that bring experiences that cannot be acquired through national or regional programmes. Respondents from the HE sector declared a particularly significant impact on the strategic direction and contribution to the innovations in higher education. Teachers have gained not only new experiences in key actions KA1 and KA2, but they have also seen a great progress in internationalization, networking of schools, higher quality of education and identification of new objectives during the preparation of international and national projects. The Erasmus+ programme is complementary, but it is also fully in accordance with other programmes, because the objectives and horizontal priorities of the programme such as inclusion, digitalization and the environment are currently the hottest topics in the new transformation of education. Moreover, the development of green skills together with the emerging green transformation of the economy is becoming more acute. Specific examples of the harmony between the objectives and values of the Erasmus+ programme are also described in detail in question 27.

The only problems of a kind identified from the interview are associated with the insufficient absorptive personnel capacity of schools of all levels, which can lead to decreasing interest of the school to participate in the Erasmus+ programme if the school becomes the beneficiary of another project, especially the one that (unlike Erasmus+) brings investments primarily in the improvement of the quality of the school's infrastructure. Examples of these „collisions“ were observed as capacity difficulties due to grants from the „Norwegian Fund“ or the involvement of so-called pilot schools in the regions of Banská Bystrica and Prešov in the initiative

„Catching up regions“ launched under the European Commission and the World Bank. These schools consider the investment packages offered under this initiative as an extremely attractive financial source. Administrative management of such projects becomes a priority and may jeopardize the quality of work on the Erasmus+ projects. Therefore, the national agency is, in case of doubt, forced to proceed with the control of the operational capacity of the organization and, in case of insufficient capacity, the project will not be approved for operational reasons even though despite the submission of a high-quality project in terms of content. This problem will grow continuously in schools within the period of 2023-2030, when the challenges of the Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Slovak Republic begin to be implemented. To solve the above-mentioned problem, we can state that there is a growing need for better coordination of the objectives and priorities of the Erasmus+ programme with the strategic support packages of the EC and EU, from the level of the European Commission, national governing bodies (authorities) up to the level of national agencies of the Erasmus+ programme.

27. *To what extent has the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme proved to be complementary to other national and international programmes available in your country in the field of vocational education and training, youth, and sport? To what extent does the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme build effective synergies or interactions with other programmes at the national or regional level and other EU programmes or international programmes with complementary objectives available in your country? What evidence proves the existence of synergies and complementarities between the Erasmus+ programme and other EU programmes, national or regional programmes? Can you identify any inconsistencies, overlaps, or other disadvantageous issues with other programmes? Can you compare the synergies and complementarities developed within the previous Erasmus+ 2014-2020 programme?*

The Erasmus+ programme is primarily a supplement to international programmes with an investment component since the investments from the European sources are significantly higher compared to domestic options. The priority programme „Recovery and Resilience Plan“²⁸ approved based on the criteria of the Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe is being implemented at the national level. The Recovery and Resilience Plan provides a comprehensive package of reforms and investments to be implemented by 2026 and supported by the Recovery and Resilience Facility. The plan consists of investments and reforms that will address the challenges identified in the context of the European community, especially in the recommendations of the European Commission for Slovakia. The plan also includes measures aimed at solving the challenges that Slovakia faces in connection with the green and digital transformation. The MŠVVaM SR implements challenges of transformative education through national and development projects aimed at various aspects of the development in education and training. As confirmed, all the objectives of the Erasmus+ programme in the previous and current period have had a significant impact on the content focus of international, national, regional programmes and challenges implemented in the transformation processes in Slovakia. Below we present only a selection of the most significant transformational activities that are in synergy with the objectives of the Erasmus+ programme.

Examples: In 2023, the MŠVVaM SR outsourced for „School development projects for the support of ethical behaviour and value education in schools“.²⁹ The objective of the call was „to initiate or enhance the implementation of systemic tools in schools which are based on the participation and shared responsibility of the school community - teachers, students, but also parents - and civil society in creating the school environment where the dignity of every person is respected (including respect of the plurality of opinions based on true information and the right to hear out the voice of each individual when making the school's operating rules), the verification of the facts is undenied, the results of scientific research are respected, the unverified and false information and the presentation of opinions based on misinformation is rejected“. This is in line with the horizontal priority of the Erasmus+ programme „participation in democratic life, common EU values and civic engagement“. The support of the development projects „Support of regional and multicultural education of pupils belonging to national minorities 2023“ is also in line with this priority. The Erasmus+ horizontal priority of „inclusion and diversity“ is fully synergistic with the reforms and investments of the Recovery and Resilience Plan to support inclusion.

In 2018, 29 development projects aimed at „removing structural barriers in schools attended by students with medical disabilities were approved“.³⁰ Overall demand was higher and other challenges followed. To support the debarrierization of „bigger schools“, a call funded by the Recovery and Resilience Plan was announced³¹, owing

²⁸ Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Slovak Republic, The Government of the Slovak Republic, February 2021.

²⁹ <https://www.minedu.sk/school-development-projects-to-support-ethical-behavior-and-values-education-in-schools/>

³⁰ <https://www.minedu.sk/removal-of-structural-barriers-in-schools-attended-by-students-with-disabilities/>

³¹ <https://www.minedu.sk/call-for-debarrierization-of-bigger-secondary-schools/>

to which the architectonic barriers to mobility in supported schools should be removed by June 30, 2025. In the school year of 2023-2024, the inclusion is again supported by the call Support of aiding professions announced by NIVAM.³² The main goal of this national project is to support the provision of equal opportunities in education through the action of aiding professions. One of the specific objectives is „the support of equal access, especially of disadvantaged groups, to quality and inclusive vocational education and training, and the support of their successful completion...“, which is also related to the facilitation of educational mobility of persons with medical disabilities. The horizontal priority „digital transformation“ is fully compatible with national policies. „Grant programme for universities for the support of new teacher study programmes abroad“³³ has been announced since December 2023.

The objective is to support the creation of new teacher study programmes and at the same time to introduce such changes in the programmes promoting the implementation of inclusive education, including the education of children and pupils speaking different mother languages, to develop the digital competences and enhance the equality between men and women. In the previous programme period, the digital transformation of schools was supported by the ESF project called the „IT Academy“³⁴, followed by the ESF+ Project of Digital Transformation of Education and Schools (DiTEdu)³⁵. Based on the call announced on November 15, 2023, the DiTEdu (in collaboration with the National Institute of Education and Youth as a future recipient of the national project) puts a great emphasis on the cooperation of research and educational institutions at the national and international level. As part of this project, „The National Centre for the Digital Transformation of Education“ will be established, which will contribute to the formation of a sustainable system for the support of the digital transformation. „The National Centre for the Digital Transformation of Education“ will cooperate with the academic environment and its partners, such as the University of Pavol Jozef Šafárik in Košice and the Comenius University in Bratislava.

The activities will be focused on the education and methodical support of school digital coordinators, school principals, pedagogical and professional employees of schools and students of teaching programmes at universities. At the same time, the project will contribute to the updates and creations of innovative methodologies, networking of schools and employees and certification of quality of digital schools. A lot of attention at the national level is also paid to the horizontal priority of „environment and the fight against climate change“. Very important activities aimed at the „environmental education and awareness (EEA)“ are supported by the Slovak Environmental Agency (SAŽP) which is a state-funded organization of the Ministry of the Environment. The agency manages the specialized website www.ewobox.sk which serves as an information channel, a space for the presentation of green activities and a support for networking of organizations that are interested in education focused on environmental protection. SAŽP also manages small educational projects financed through the Environmental Fund.³⁶ In 2023, the Green Education Fund³⁷ supported 151 project intentions including projects of secondary vocational schools³⁸. An important contribution to the support of environmental education and awareness is the construction of a modern centre for environmental education and public awareness, where the informational and educational activities in the individual areas of the environment and support for the investment activities of certified providers of environmental education and awareness will take place.

Building up of the Dropie environmental centre will be ensured by SAŽP as part of the national project of the Cohesion Fund.³⁹ Following the successful implementation of the initiative of the European Commission and the World Bank called „Catching up regions“, national projects are being prepared to support the modernization and

³² https://nivam.sk/call-for-support-of-aiding-professions-3/?fbclid=IwAR0mIUmo2-RyIPidcT5PoY-0KAkkAWemEQp2NgTp7BTuQOkQc0Zbv-ygk_o

³³ *Grant programme for universities for the support of new teacher study programmes abroad*, MŠVVaM SR, December 2023, [Grant programme for universities for the support of new teacher study programmes abroad | The Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic \(minedu.sk\)](https://www.minedu.sk/en/education-research-development-and-youth-of-the-slovak-republic/grant-programme-for-universities-for-the-support-of-new-teacher-study-programmes-abroad)

³⁴ <https://itakademia.sk/>

³⁵ „Digital transformation of education and school (DiTEdu)“, MŠVVaM SR, November 2023, [15.11.2023 – The MŠVVaM SR announced a call to support the implementation of the digital transformation of education in schools | The Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic \(minedu.sk\)](https://www.minedu.sk/en/education-research-development-and-youth-of-the-slovak-republic/digital-transformation-of-education-and-school)

³⁶ www.envirofond.sk

³⁷ <https://greeneducationfund.sk/sk>

³⁸ https://greeneducationfund.sk/sites/greeneducationalfund.sk/files/PDF/Decision%20of%20minister_ZVF%205%202023.pdf

³⁹ <https://public.itms2014.sk/call?id=697d0b04-e0a4-457c-9dad-64c98b83b51c>

improvement of secondary vocational education in the regions of Banská Bystrica and Prešov.⁴⁰ Both national projects will be financed from the funds of the European Social Fund plus.

The Erasmus+ programme in the SE sector is evaluated as an important supplement to national education programmes, especially in professional development programmes for pedagogical and professional employees (PE/PRE). Based on a questionnaire survey, as many as 90.2% of school principals and coordinators of the Erasmus+ programme agree or *completely* agree with the statement that the Erasmus+ programme is a necessary supplement to the concept of professional development of PE/PRE in Slovakia.⁴¹

In **the VET sector**, further investments will be directed to the „Support for the comprehensive development of secondary vocational education“ within the call of the Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization (MIRRI).⁴² They will be provided from the Fund to secure a fair transformation for secondary vocational schools in selected districts of the regions of Banská Bystrica, Košice and Trenčín, support for procurement of material and technical equipment, modernization of schools, updating of the existing educational programmes, education of pedagogical staff including the involvement of experts in the teaching process to increase the quality and attractiveness of secondary vocational education and help selected territories to solve the social, economic, and environmental consequences of the transition to climate neutrality at the same time. On November 2, 2023, the MŠVVaM SR announced a call for a national project called Centres of Excellence in Vocational Education and Training (CEOVP) via the Programme Slovakia in 2021-2027.⁴³ The national project is intended to contribute to the promotion of the quality, flexibility, and adaptability of vocational education.

The sector of higher education is synergistically or complementary interconnected with the national educational and scientific research projects of Slovak grant agencies, such as APVV, VEGA, KEGA and others, from which it either draws inspirational ideas and topics worthy of processing in its projects or becomes a bank of ideas for projects in the following period. In this sector, large European schemes for the support of science, innovation and education in the HORIZON Europe programme and the national programme of Recovery and Resilience Plan are another important source. In 2022, MŠVVaM SR announced the call for „Support of the strategic development of the infrastructure in the higher education sector“.⁴⁴ In December 2021, MŠVVaM SR approved the „Strategy for the Internationalization of Higher Education in Slovakia until 2030“⁴⁵. It is aimed at increasing the availability of international experience during university studies and modernizing higher education in the context of internationalization.

He is a dominant player **in the youth sector** and his role in this sector is very important and irreplaceable. Besides the Erasmus+ programme, the grant scheme „Youth 2014-2020 Programmes“ became available in the field of youth. The grant scheme „Subsidies in the field of youth work“ has also been available since 2021. The implementation of the latter scheme was/is being guaranteed by the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic through the organization directly managed by the MŠVVaM SR (NIVAM) which is responsible for youth work. However, these other (mainly national) grant schemes are rather a contribution to the basic functioning of organizations, while the Erasmus+ programme further stabilizes successful project applicants both in the context of personal and programme issues. Other sources (e. g. from municipalities or private foundations and endowment funds) are less significant in terms of volume.

There are no financial resources allocated in the state budget for **adult education**. Direct support of AE from public sources is available, for example, as part of active labour market measures under the Employment Act. AE in Slovakia is implemented within the support from various programmes, for example from structural funds for the Slovak Republic (OP ĽZ, IROP, FPU, OP VaI, PRV). The Erasmus+ programme is the only programme that systematically and purposefully finances AE in Slovakia. It is not only a supplement to these national or regional programmes; however, it fulfils the objectives of AE in the first place. The ESIF projects have brought about a positive change since 2024 as its funds have been allocated to improve the quality of the adult education system.

⁴⁰ <https://www.minedu.sk/27092023-support-of-modernization-and-improvement-of-secondary-vocational-education-in-the-region-of-Banska-Bystrica-and-Prešov/>

⁴¹ Act No. 138/2019 Coll. on pedagogical employees and professional employees and on the amendment of certain laws as amended.

⁴² <https://public.itms2014.sk/call?id=cab7c122-8c1d-4535-814f-a652b1f79393>

⁴³ <https://www.itms2014.sk/call?id=fc0234f7-f23d-4ab0-8040-1e6cb3558976>

⁴⁴ Support of the strategic development of the infrastructure in the higher education sector, MŠVVaM SR, August 2022, [Call No. 1: Support of the strategic development of the infrastructure in the higher education sector | Documents and regulations | The Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic \(minedu.sk\)](#)

⁴⁵ Strategy for the Internationalization of Higher education in Slovakia until 2030, MŠVVŠ SR, December 2021, [Strategy for the Internationalization of Higher education in Slovakia until 2030 | Documents and regulations | The Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic \(minedu.sk\)](#)

An unresolved area in the education sectors (SE, VET) remains the fulfilment of one of the objectives of the Erasmus+ programme: to facilitate the validation of informal education and informal learning and to interconnect this type of education with formal educational channels. In the final reports from the schools, the methods, and tools for recognizing the results and outputs of the participants of mobilities and training activities within their formal education or professional development have not yet been mentioned to a significant extent.

28. *From your country's point of view, can you compare the level of cohesive strength within the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme with that of the Erasmus+ 2014-2020 programme? Has it improved in the new generation of programmes?*

The cohesion within the Erasmus+ 2014-2020 programme has improved compared with that of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme. Some new financial instruments harmonize management practice and the substantive focus of projects. For example, the financial motivation for „green travel“ strengthens the internal cohesion of projects reflecting the horizontal priority of „green transformation“. In this way, pupils' positive attitude towards ecological behaviour is being supported and the „green agenda“ becomes consistent. The pressure on „green“ administration - the use of digital documents and limiting the printing of documents has a similar effect on the agenda. In this way, project management also fulfils the support of green transformation (online materials, E+ applications, train travels, etc.). The increased financial motivation to support inclusion has also a similar effect to the transformation, which strengthens the internal cohesion of projects reflecting the horizontal priority of „inclusion and diversity“ and contributes to changes in setting pupils' values due to the perception of their needs for making differences in real life.

The results of questionnaires and the experiences of school managers and teachers show that schools within **the HE sector** manage to synergistically interconnect projects and activities in the individual actions of the Erasmus+ programme (key actions KA1 and KA2). According to the respondents, the introduction of accreditation and small partnerships contributes to the improvement of the programme cohesion (Chart 7, Annex 6 Charts). The general interest in the accreditation system has been increasing to a larger extent over the last two years (Chart 8, Annex 6 Charts).

In the VET sector, we are focusing on two sources of improvement, of which one is universally valid (mentioned above), and the other is specifically related to Slovakia, because it is related to the nature of the initial VET programme in our country. In Slovakia, the initial VET programmes are not purely of the „apprenticeship“ type, with an almost exclusive focus on the practical skills required for the relevant craft activity. The curriculum also includes a strong component of general education, although much of the knowledge and many skills developed within the latter are to be developed in the context of the economic sector and with the needs of a wider range of relevant professions. Vocational schools that intended to involve teachers of general education subjects in the past and thus send their employees to participate in courses without any restrictions or wanted to send teachers of general education subjects to take part in courses relevant to the school requirements and the VET programme and send out students at the same time, had to apply in within both the VET sector and the school education sector. A positively perceived expansion of authorized activities in the VET sector could be noticed within the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme. Thanks to the new changes, schools submit only one application to the new programme. This change is very important for Slovakia. It does not only increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the projects, but also the cohesion of the programme. This also solved the problem pointed out in the previous evaluation report from 2017.⁴⁶

In the new Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme **within the youth sector**, there were several changes in the Erasmus+ programme, which, according to the successful applicants, had an impact on the cohesion of the programme. It is about the introduction of the Accreditation in the Youth Area (KA1) system and the creation of a new sub-programme of the key action KA2 – Small Partnerships. These changes give space to accredited organizations to focus more on the content and quality of their activities, as they have long-term guaranteed support from the Erasmus+ programme (KA1). At the same time, the introduction of the Small Partnerships (KA2) sub-programme is helpful for youth organizations to take an intermediate step from less simple mobile projects within key actions KA1 to more difficult professional and administrative projects aimed at building Cooperative Partnerships (KA2). Similarly, based on the statistics of the evaluation report from 2017, greater synergy across areas/sectors remains a challenge due to the differences in target groups and the specifics of project work in various areas and sectors of the programme. Concerns about the same expectations of all potential programme

⁴⁶ Vantuch and coll., 2017. *Continuous evaluation of the Erasmus+ programme and previous programmes*. Bratislava, June 9, 2017.

applicants (from informal groups of young people to public institutions such as universities) have not been met. The National Agency (NIVAM) applies a supportive approach to individual applicants, while sufficiently reflecting their specifics as well as the specifics of the sector itself (output from communication with experts). As part of the evaluation of the cohesion of the Erasmus+ programme, we should not forget the new programme of the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) created by the outsourcing of the European Voluntary Service (EVS) from the Erasmus+ programme. Regarding the cohesion of the Erasmus+ programme, it is just the ESC that „brings up“ the future applicants for the Erasmus+ programme through small solidarity projects and puts the priority topics (which are almost identical for both the Erasmus+ programme and the ESC) into practice and awareness of young people.

3.5 European added value and sustainability

29. *What is the added value and benefit resulting from the EU's activities compared to what could be achieved through similar measures initially introduced in your country only at regional or national level? What does the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme offer apart from the other support systems of vocational education and training available in your country at regional or national level? Do you see any possibilities of modifying either the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme or the follow-up programme to increase its European added value?*

For all sectors of education, vocational training, youth and sport, the added value of the Erasmus+ programme for the individual mainly represents significant work and personal qualitative changes. Respondents to the questionnaire survey rated mostly the following elements: internationalization at the level of all school levels and individuals, networking, partnerships and strengthening the European belonging. The mentioned aspects make the Erasmus+ programme unique, which cannot be replaced at the regional or national Slovak level.

For national policies, schools and organizations, the added value of the Erasmus+ programme is the internationalization of education within the significant impact of innovation and the exchange of proven practices on changing the quality of education and research. The accumulation of financial subsidies of the Erasmus+ programme forms a motivational and accelerating component of the transformation in the education, youth, and sports sectors.

From the sectoral perspective:

- in **the sector of school education and vocational education and training**, teachers have made the greatest visible progress in their professional and personal growth. Teachers evaluated mostly key actions KA101, KA102, KA201, KA202, based on which they introduced innovations in teaching, were able to compare themselves with each other and gained more self-confidence, improved their communication, language, and IT skills, enriched their knowledge within the intercultural surroundings and diversity, gained respect for other customs, religions and, thanks to their travels, they got to know the world's cultural heritage, etc. Regarding the VET sector, it is necessary to re-emphasize that it is not only about an experience with a different support system for vocational and education training, but also about important innovation impulses in the view of the debt for modernization of most of the VET providers in Slovakia. Facilities that are not available in Slovakia also induce the other content of related retraining and continuous professional development in general. In the opinion of the national agency, this is exactly why the Erasmus+ programme cannot be replaced in terms of added value by other measures at the regional or national level.
- in **the higher education sector**, respondents rated the added value of Erasmus+ in the use of newly acquired experience, knowledge, best practices, and new methods within the daily course of their work and handling the work agenda at the university, in deepening cooperation with the partner university and in the exchange of experience and knowledge between university employees with the aim of streamlining the work process (teaching and research). Other strong multiplier effects of cooperation include joint international scientific conferences, professional international forums, international projects, publications, etc. The EC initiative in the Erasmus+ programme called „European Universities“ is seen as a big challenge for the added value. In 2020, three Slovak universities got involved in the alliance of the European universities: Comenius University Bratislava, Slovak University of Agriculture Nitra, Technical University of Košice. In 2023, there were five universities involved the alliance: Comenius University Bratislava, Slovak University of Agriculture Nitra, Technical University of Košice, Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava and University of Performing Arts in Bratislava.
- in **the youth sector**, 93% of respondents rated the added value of the Erasmus+ programme as significant and very significant, as it has an impact on developing cooperation, soft skills, sharing experiences, and solving common problems. 84% of respondents rated the development of knowledge

about the European integration and its values as significant, as it is particularly important for young people who must face a great pressure of negative information about the benefits and the importance of the EU during the reviewed period. The benefit and added value of the Erasmus+ programme is also described in the international RY MON survey.⁴⁷

- in **the adult education sector**, the Erasmus+ programme provides the most opportunities for organizations implementing the education of adults. In cooperation with foreign partners, organizations create new educational programmes, increase the quality of their work, and their reputation improves at the international level, whereby foreign institutions are becoming more interested in Slovak partners to be involved in the projects through EPALE.

30. *To what extent does the Erasmus+ programme in your country contribute to the development of knowledge in the field of European integration, to raising the awareness of common EU values and to strengthening the European sense of belonging?*

ERASMUS+ is a key programme in Slovakia in changing and developing the perception of European integration, EU values and a sense of belonging, especially among the young and middle-aged generation. Based on the conducted questionnaire survey as well as the analysis of completed projects in all sectors, we see a significant impact of the Erasmus+ programme on school education, vocational education and training, higher education, and youth. We can clearly state that the personal experience of each programme participant is the most important for strengthening the European sense of belonging and understanding of EU values.

Examples: In **the sector of school education** in 2020, up to 60% of projects were implemented within the horizontal priority of *Social and educational value of European cultural heritage*. In the period of 2014-2020, 4% (KA1), 6% (KA2), 15% (KA2 only schools) of projects were completed on the topic of *EU citizenship, awareness, and democracy* within the Erasmus+ programme. In 2021, the topics: *Awareness of the EU* recorded 2% (KA1) of completed projects, *Overcoming the intercultural, intergenerational, and social differences* recorded 2% (KA1) of completed projects, and *European identity, citizenship, values* recorded 2% (KA1) of completed projects.

In **the VET sector**, there is no data available to quantify the extent to which the Erasmus+ programme contributes to the development of knowledge in the field of European integration, raising the awareness of common EU values and strengthening the European sense of belonging, but the respondents to the survey stated that the contacts itself and networking of institutions supporting the development of professional competences in an international context significantly contribute to raising the awareness of common EU values and building European belonging.

An interesting fact can be observed in **the higher education sector**, where both groups of respondents - students and employees - answered the question almost identically. 63% of students and 62% of employees said that the Erasmus+ programme significantly contributes to the development of the knowledge of the academic community of higher education institutions in the field of the European integration, increasing the awareness of the common EU values and strengthening the European sense of belonging among the young generation. At the same time, another 20% of respondents (21% of students and 24% of employees) hesitated whether they should agree or disagree. The significant benefit of the Erasmus+ programme is also confirmed by the fact that 95% of university employees are convinced that the Erasmus+ programme is an important tool for internationalization. 89% of them claim that participation in mobilities abroad motivated them to further professional development and acquisition of additional international experience and helped them (65%) to promote their career growth. Such statements were also made by higher education managers and coordinators of the Erasmus+ programme.

In **the adult education sector**, no data on the given issue was provided. In the case of the older generation, there are several factors that affect the strength of the feeling of the European belonging, such as: language and digital barrier. Several activities are carried out mainly in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, and some of them were also implemented in the Great Britain.

⁴⁷ Vanoch, M. 2020 National report: RAY MON-Results and impacts of the Erasmus+ programme in the field of youth and sport, Bratislava, pp. 1-36, 2020. Data reflected in the time period of 2014-2020.

Besides the Erasmus+ programme, there is also a national grant scheme **in the youth sector** ^{48, 49} that does not allow the participation of informal groups of young people. At the same time, there are no other activities/programmes at the local, regional, or national level that would have a comparable long-term effect as the Erasmus+ programme. This is exactly why the Erasmus+ programme is currently irreplaceable for entities working with youth in terms of the programme objectives and has a great future potential to activate informal groups of young people who can file applications under key actions KA1. According to 84% of respondents, the development of knowledge in the field of European integration is significant, or rather *very significant*. In practice, it sometimes happens that good project results are identified more often as the values and contributions of the project implementer and not the funder (the European Union). Although the Erasmus+ programme is associated with the European Union in a significantly positive sense in the non-formal education sector, the promotion of its common values, principles and benefits is still considered as the area that needs to be consciously addressed and developed (especially when the importance of membership of Slovakia in the European Union is currently being questioned). Political rhetoric, as well as the attitudes and opinions of some parents of young participants do not promote its reputation among young people. Respondents to the evaluation questionnaire recommend implementing more educational activities and transnational initiatives with the involvement of participants from geographically excluded regions following the example of the EGL. It was the EGL that interconnected the European Union with local structures and vice versa. To strengthen the European sense of belonging, the most important thing is one's own experience. Therefore, to enhance the impact of promoting the sharing of the EU values, youth workers and youth work coordinators would adopt the elaboration of methodology and proposals for various activities on how to work with youth to increase the chances of communicating the European added value to young people.

31. *To what extent does the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme support the co-operation between member states and third countries associated with the programme and between member countries and third countries not associated with the programme?*

In the current programme period, the sectors of school education, vocational education and training, youth and sport have built cooperation mainly with the EU member states and third countries affiliated to the programme (80% to 85% in individual sectors). After the withdrawal of Great Britain from the EU, we have seen a shift in interest in the projects submitted in key actions KA1 and KA2 toward Ireland, Malta, and other English-speaking European countries. The greatest interest is shown in the cooperation with the Czech Republic, Poland, Ireland, Germany, Italy, Spain in key actions KA1 (Chart 9 Annex 6, Charts). Cooperation has been built mainly with the third countries affiliated to the programme, such as Turkey, Serbia, and Norway (10% to 15% in sectors). The partners most involved in key actions KA2 within cooperative partnerships (KA220) in the years 2021-2022 came from Slovakia and the Czech Republic. The third country appearing most frequently in call for the year 2022 is the affiliated Turkey, which is mainly due to the greater openness of the Erasmus+ programme and the relaxation of some rules. The countries of Serbia and Norway will follow next. From the third countries not affiliated to the programme, there were countries from 11 regions with the highest representation in the actions [Great Britain, North Macedonia, Ukraine (5%-10% in sectors)]. The added value of the implemented Erasmus+ programme is a large selection of partners from the third world countries (affiliated and non-affiliated), which is also reflected in the increased interest to cooperate with partners from these countries, especially in the SE, VET, AE, and youth sector. In the HE sector, there has been a permanent interest in this cooperation since the beginning of the Erasmus+ 2014-2020 programme as well as in the current ongoing programme. Without the Erasmus+ programme, it would not be possible to establish bilateral and multilateral cooperation where the know-how of the EU countries is being transferred to the third world countries to ensure their economic development.

⁴⁸ Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth for the years 2014 – 2020. The Government of the Slovak Republic approved the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth for the years 2014 – 2020 by virtue of Recommendation No. 192 as of April 23, 2014.

<https://www.bing.com/search?q=National+grant+scheme+for+youth&form=ANNT1&ref=e79108dd60ba43ec85ce49668388e79e>

⁴⁹ Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth for the years 2021 – 2028. The Government of the Slovak Republic approved the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for youth for the years 2021 – 2028 by virtue of Recommendation No. 754 as of December 14, 2021. [Documents and regulations | The Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic \(minedu.sk\)](#)

32. *What is the benefit and added value of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme and the Erasmus+ 2014-2020 programme for individuals or organizations participating in the programme compared to the uninvolved persons in your country?*

The benefit and added value of the Erasmus+ programmes for individuals is indisputable, and pupils/students as well as employees who were active in both programme periods are aware of it. Without having participated in the activities abroad, their view of the world would have been different, more down-to-earth, and they would not have acquired the knowledge, competences and experiences that enriched them professionally and personally. Thus, disengaged students and employees lose a significant impetus for personal and professional growth. By not participating in the VET sector project, students and employees also lose the opportunity to familiarize themselves with new equipment and new technologies.

Employees in all sectors (teachers and administrative staff) see the benefit and added value in 4 main areas:

- in expanding their own horizons, insight, and motivation in the field of personal growth by getting to know other cultures and European values, comparing educational systems and processes, and gaining feedback on their own activities and the need for innovations in the Slovak educational system;
- in increasing their own expertise by acquiring and expanding knowledge, professional skills, and foreign language experience;
- in acquiring, expanding, and strengthening professional contacts with foreign institutions, but above all with certain employees – networking;
- in the development of mutual international cooperation (networking of schools) in the field of education, research, publishing, and project activities, in the common organization of scientific-pedagogical activities and events.

High school students and university students, as well as the youth sector, present in e-questionnaires how participation in the programme's activities helped them in their working life, but also in their personal development. In the context of personal development, the participants within the Erasmus+ programme especially value the fact that during the stay:

- They matured, became more self-confident, more independent, more responsible, more persistent, more determined, more creative, and flexible, more patient, braver, more tolerant (it helped them to eliminate prejudices); they also became open-minded people perceiving diversity and differences more positively.
- They learned to function in a foreign environment and to work and perform in an international team. During their stay abroad, many clarified their future career destination, made several new international contacts necessary for their further working life.
- They got to know many other cultures, thanks to which they can understand things in broader contexts and understand not only the people around them, but also themselves and the influence of human values on their behaviour and the European dimension of their own being.

Students would welcome higher scholarships for mobilities in the EU countries with a high standard of living, where, from a social and economic point of view, many Slovak students are still unable to finance the given mobility independently.

The heads of organizations and institutions (vice chancellors, vice-deans, school principals, directors of organizations) stated in a questionnaire survey that both Erasmus+ programme periods have a significant impact on education and benefit for the strategic direction and basic functioning of schools. They paid special attention to the added value of the Erasmus+ programme for internationalization and the fulfilment of the school's strategic intention, whereby their open answers highlighted three areas:

- creating contacts and deepening quality partnerships on an institutional and individual basis;
- deepening the external experience in the field of education (innovations, pedagogical skills), scientific research
- activity (research procedures, foreign projects) and school development;
- improving language and communication skills.

Chart 10 (Annex 6 Charts) presents the added value of the Erasmus+ programme for individuals and schools involved in both programme periods in the sector of school education. Data were obtained from 241 managers (school directors, heads of organizations) who see a greater benefit of the programme for individuals than for schools and organizations, because transformational processes in education need a longer time scale.

The greatest impact of internationalization is seen in the higher education sector, where the management of the universities regularly evaluates reports and statistical data from mobilities for the two evaluated programming periods, further evaluates new opportunities for cooperation and agreements on transfer of credits. It is proposed to include the results of mobilities in their career growth. Data collection is carried out based on written documents, but also based on personal meetings and discussions. The qualitative and quantitative results of the evaluation are presented in the annual evaluations and annual reports of the universities and are published on the websites.⁵⁰ Gradually, the mentioned evaluation procedures also appear in the sectors of school education, vocational education and training, and youth sectors.⁵¹

33. *To what extent are the results of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme and the Erasmus+ 2014-2020 programme sustainable upon cessation of projects in your country?*

Questionnaire surveys and interviews in individual sectors demonstrated good sustainability and dissemination of the results of the Erasmus+ programme in both evaluated periods. In the VET sector, the respondents stated that the results of the Erasmus+ programme projects at their school remain sustainable even at the end of the projects (more than 90% in both sectors). In the HE sector, 59.59% of respondents said that they manage to spread the results and outputs of the projects to other schools. According to the respondents in the VET sector, the results and outputs of projects are being disseminated to an even greater extent (76.70% in secondary schools, 95.75% in other organizations). In the sector of school education, schools most often ensure the sustainability of the programme by continuing to use teacher created materials and tools (83.67%), continuing to cooperate with partners (64.9%), optimizing the educational process (54.29%), providing internal training to PE/PRE in the school (43.27%), innovating the school's educational programme (34.69%). In the VET sector, schools most often ensure the sustainability of the programme by continuing cooperation with partners (72.46%), continuing to use teacher created materials and aids (66.53%), optimizing the educational process (66.53%), innovating the school educational programme (61.02%), providing training to internal employees (41.10%).

Other ways that are used by schools to ensure the sustainability of results and outputs from the Erasmus+ programme include the creation of promotional materials, information panels about activities, online dissemination of outputs, etc. The introduction of the accreditation system, which strengthens sustainability through more stable funding and pressure for long-term planning, is of great importance for the sustainability of the programme's results. At the same time, accredited schools tend to send out not only students but also employees to strengthen the innovative impulse of the project, its sustainability and long-term planning goals. The accreditation system has a positive effect on sustainability, and thus one can speak justifiably of a positive shift in the sustainability compared to previous programme periods.

From the level of the education system, it is possible to ensure the sustainability of the positive impacts of the Erasmus+ programme **through legislative changes** that are initiated by status and professional organizations acting on behalf of pedagogues (associations of primary and secondary schools, private schools). They propose the inclusion of positive impacts in the SEP or implementing regulations. As of September 1, 2023, the Slovak Act No. 138/2019 Coll. (on pedagogical employees and professional employees and on the amendment of certain laws as amended) introduced a new **career position of supervisor** at schools. According to the current legislation, the director can designate within the internal regulations the career position of school counsellor who performs specialized activities in the career position of supervisor and entrust him with management activities in the preparation and implementation of the Erasmus+ projects. It is new legislation that must gradually be put into the implementation practice. Another positive impact on the sustainability and dissemination of results is also awarding of teachers involved in the Erasmus+ programme, which is implemented within the e-Twinning programme at the national contact point at the University of Žilina in Slovakia, as well as through the European Language Label, the European Innovative Teacher Award, etc.

In the higher education sector, the sustainability and dissemination of knowledge, experience, and effects of the Erasmus+ programme is implemented systemically through presentations at the organized information and presentation events, by sharing experiences on internet and intranet sites and social networks, at conferences,

⁵⁰ Example 1 Annual report of the Comenius University, Bratislava 2022

https://uniba.sk/fileadmin/ruk/osa/Annual_report_on_the_activities_of_the_Comenius_University_in_year_2022.pdf

⁵¹ Example 2 [Erasmus+ KA1 \(2016 - 2018\) – Dissemination of the project and its impact - SSOŠ Pro scholaris, Žilina \(soaza.sk\)](#)

workshops, etc. Direct personal meetings with participants of the Erasmus+ programme as well as informal events such as „Open Days“ or „Exchange of Ideas“ and others are the most appreciated events.

In the adult education sector, the respondents stated that the sustainability of the project results is greater than 95% and they manage to successfully spread the project results to other organizations. 87.8% of respondents state that they continue to use project materials and aids, 78.8% of them continue to cooperate in the established partnerships, 66.7% of respondents innovated their adult education programmes based on project outputs, 63.6% of them also educate other workers at the organizations (these were not involved in the projects). 21.2% of respondents spread project results to the organizations that were outside of partnerships through volunteer services and within cooperative fundraising (educational target groups that have other financial resources).

In the youth sector, successful applicants within the Erasmus+ programme expressed that only stable and reputable organizations can devote their attention to the sustainability of the project. Small organizations that organize projects and „make a living“ from them do not have any personal or financial capital to focus on the sustainability of the implemented projects. However, the perspective of regional coordinators for working with youth and municipalities also brings a different perspective on the sustainability of projects. The regional coordinator from the region of Banská Bystrica observed an interesting effect in her region. If the projects are focused on and accepted by the community, their sustainability can be ensured. The community „adopts“ the given projects and continues to implement the activities even at the end of the project. At the same time, the employees at the municipality pointed out that projects focusing on the topic of participation and environmental issues are better accepted by young people as well as urban residents. In the regions and cities that implemented projects within key actions KA3 (currently also key actions KA1 YPA), built partnerships and positions of youth work coordinators are still functioning today – the long-term development of the quality of youth work in the regional/urbanistic territory are primarily supported this way.

34. *What would be the most likely consequences in your country if the Erasmus+ programme ceased to exist?*

In the sector of school education and the VET sector, almost 80% of the interviewed school employees agreed or *completely* agreed that if the Erasmus+ programme has not continued since 2028, they would be significantly lacking the implementation of their goals and ambitions (77.05% and 79.34%). Without the Erasmus+ programme, the internationalization of the school in the school education sector could not develop (66.53%). In the VET sector, 58.5% of schools and 57.5% of other organizations did not agree with the statement: „We could keep developing the internationalization of our school/organization even without the Erasmus+ programme“. In the VET sector, 88% of schools and 96% of other organizations marked the Erasmus+ programme for internationalization and cooperation support as of high or very high importance.

The answers of the respondents mostly emphasize that the implemented activities in Slovakia would not be sustainable if the Erasmus+ programme was terminated, which further underlines the impossibility of this programme to be replaced by any other completely. According to the experts, the most likely consequences of termination of the Erasmus+ programme would be as following:

- the motivation to learn foreign languages among students and teachers would decrease;
- the quality of students' practical training would decrease;
- the attractiveness of many fields of vocational education and schools that offer the latter in connection with participation in the Erasmus+ programme would also decrease;
- valuable innovative impulses for personal development and institutional changes would get lost.

The irreplaceable status of the Erasmus+ programme in the HE and VET sector is also confirmed by the round tables at the MŠVVaM SR.

- Such support, as provided by the Erasmus+ programme, would certainly not be available from the central level, schools would have to deal with it individually;
- Through actions from the European Commission, we are „pushed forward to implement many policies“ that we would not have done on our initiative, nor would we have the necessary financial resources.

In the higher education sector, the termination of the Erasmus+ programme would have a negative impact on the development and quality of the internationalization of universities. This would be most significantly reflected in a significant limitation of mobilities, which would affect cooperation with foreign universities and lower the possibilities of professional and intercultural development of students and employees. Without the Erasmus+ programme, there would not be sufficient motivation to transform the education in Slovakia.

In the youth sector, up to 74% of respondents to the evaluation questionnaire said that the Erasmus+ programme would be greatly/or very greatly missed by them if it ceased to continue after 2028. During the

interview with experts, the possible impacts of the absence of the programme such as Erasmus+ were highlighted as follows:

- Many youth organizations would cease to exist, as the Erasmus+ programme is an important source of funds for their activities;
- Work with young leaders would be significantly affected, extremism and negative propaganda would increase (e. g. against the EU);
- There would be no interest in working with youth in society and in politics;
- Opportunities for young people would only be available in large cities, no one would be interested to stay in geographically excluded regions, regional differences would further deepen;
- International mobilities would not be implemented, international partnerships would not be formed, the international dimension would be missing. International know-how associated with the participation of foreign volunteers or partners would not exist in the organizations at all.

4. Recommendations and topics for the Erasmus+ programme for the next time period

4.1 Recommendations for the EC as to the changes and supplements to the ongoing Erasmus+ programme

The main result of our research study at the National Authority, National Agencies and 6263 respondents to the questionnaire survey reached the consensus on the recommendations **to continue with the Erasmus+ programme** which has begun to change Europe since 1987. The Erasmus+ programme is valued as an opportunity for the new generation of Europe to learn, get to know and appreciate European values and gradually transform education to a higher quality level and the quality of life in Europe as well.

A large research sample and analysis of the obtained data allows us to formulate valid recommendations and topics for the ongoing programme, as well as topics for the preparation of the next Erasmus+ programme.

Based on the sectoral reports created by experts, the answers of the respondents to the evaluation questionnaires and interviews, we can state the following conclusions and recommendations:

- The Erasmus+ programme has been well implemented in stable national education and youth structures in Slovakia since 2014.
- The Erasmus+ programme has a strong positive impact on the transformation processes in the education and youth sectors in Slovakia (many examples of good practice are shown in Annex 3).
- The Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme is well structured and has clearly defined programme priorities and horizontal priorities (fewer priorities and more consistent priorities than in the previous programme).
- Changes in EC communication within the Erasmus+ programme were positively evaluated (better formal and informal communication, quick transfer of information, problem solving, etc.).
- The greatest contribution of the Erasmus+ programme in Slovakia are the priorities of internationalization and digital transformation.
- We recommend the EC focus on further **simplifying the administration** of the Erasmus+ programme and to aim toward results, sustainability, and impact of implemented activities.
- Stabilization of new high-quality IT tools remains a challenge. We recommend carrying out any further development in smaller steps and giving priority to proven solutions.
- Within the existing horizontal priority of the Erasmus+ programme (digital transformation), we recommend the EC to supplement and expand this priority by focusing on the following areas:
 - **strengthening the fight against disinformation, especially in areas related to the EU functioning**
 - **setting the balance in the digital society** - humanware (Besides hardware and software it is necessary to pay more attention to the human aspect of digitalization).

Based on the research study conducted in Slovakia, we also present new proposals for priorities for the EC during **the next period of the Erasmus+ programme**:

- **artificial intelligence and its impact on the education and youth system**
- **innovations for the future of the EU**⁵² and preparations for the latter in common areas and topics of the European Union such as democracy, migration, interconnections and deepening of the cooperation in the common European educational space, partnership with countries outside the EU.
- **mental health support** appears in all evaluation activities, not only because of the pandemic, but also as a challenge that is faced cross-sectionally in all areas of society, to which they may belong; **support of emotional intelligence of young people, cultivation of media communication, etc.**
- **Support of active aging**, which is currently a very relevant issue in aging Europe.

⁵² [*Literacy of the future as a competence in the 21st century*](#), UNESCO

4.2 Recommendations and topics for the national authorities and national agencies

From the research study conducted on the implementation and significance of the new Erasmus+ programme over the past ten years, we can conclude that the programme is already leaving a significant track not only within the transformation of the educational process, but also in the lives of young people, teachers, and the older generation. We have identified many positives for education and society; however, there are many other open challenges related to the growing interest in the Erasmus+ programme. The financial contribution of the Erasmus+ programme over the last ten years invested in Slovakia is **300 511 079 EUR for the SE, VET, HE and AE sectors** and **34 065 139 EUR for the youth sector**. Annex 3 of the National Report shows some examples of good practice that fulfil the goals and priorities of the Erasmus+ programme, but there are many more inspiring examples of schools, institutions and individuals who are changing the education process. In Slovakia, we recommend to further strengthen the publicity of the Erasmus+ programme also on the part of the key actors of educational policies.

To improve the results of the implementation and the importance of the Erasmus+ programme in Slovakia, the collective of authors of the National Report recommends to:

the National Authority (MŠVVaM SR)

- To strengthen synergies between the Erasmus+ programme and national structures of innovations in education; for example, to stimulate the dissemination of outcomes in the form of open educational resources on the departmental portal in order to disseminate and recommend the implementation of good results of the programme and to appreciate the most significant examples of good practice at the level of schools, organizations, teachers and students, which can contribute significantly to the motivation of becoming more active in the Erasmus+ programme and to the synergy of the goals and priorities of Erasmus+ and national education policies in Slovakia;
- to explore the possibilities of recognizing the results of education in the Erasmus+ programme, such as **teachers' activities (PE/PRE), mainly in key actions KA2, but also in key actions KA1 in the system of further education and professional development in terms of the Act No. 138/2019 Coll. PE/PRE (1 and 2 attestation);**
- The policy of active aging is still becoming a more up-to-date issue in an aging Europe. We recommend paying additional *attention to the adult education sector in Slovakia within the Erasmus+ programme*.

the National agencies Erasmus+

- to prepare a book publication from the implemented research study on the implementation and significance of the Erasmus+ project for the evaluated period of 2014-2023 (We have obtained lots of valuable data, which we recommend for further publication.);
- to deepen cooperation with institutes of higher territorial units in the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme.

5. Appendices: more detailed justification, explanations or statistics of arguments in the main document.

5.1 Annex 1 List of used abbreviations

AE	Adult Education
APVV	Slovak Research and Development Agency
BA	Bratislava
BIP	Blended Intensive Programmes
BSK	Self-governing region Bratislava
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
ESC	European Solidarity Corps
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
DofE	The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award
HE	Higher Education
IT	Information and Communication Technologies
IPSE	Internal working group Erasmus+ (Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth SK)
KA1	Key Action 1: Learning Mobility of Individuals
KA101	School Education Staff Mobility Projects
KA102	VET Learner and Staff Mobility Projects
KA103	Higher Education Student and Staff Mobility Projects
KA104	Adult Education Staff Mobility Projects
KA105	Youth Mobility Projects
KA121	Mobility for learners and staff of accredited organisations
KA122	Short term projects mobility of learners and staff.
KA131	Mobility of higher education students and staff supported by internal policy funds
KA171	Mobility of higher education students and staff supported by external policy funds
KA2	Key Action 2: Cooperation Among Organisations and Institutions
KA200	Strategic Partnerships in Several Sectors
KA201	Strategic Partnerships in SE
KA202	Strategic Partnerships in VET
KA203	Strategic Partnerships in HE
KA204	Strategic Partnerships in AE
KA205	Strategic Partnerships in Youth sector
KA210	Small-scale partnerships
KA219	School Cooperation Project
KA220	Cooperation partnerships
KA229	School Exchange Partnerships projects
KA3	Key Action 3: Support to Policy Development and Cooperation
KA347	Dialogue between young people and policy makers
KEGA	Cultural and educational grant agency (MŠVVaM SR)
LAEP	Local Adult Education Policy
MŠVVaM SR	Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic
NA	National Agency
NAE+	National Agency of Erasmus+ Programme
NIVAM	National Institute of Education and Youth
PE/PRE	Pedagogical / Professional Staff
RAY	R esearch-based A nalyses of European Youth Programmes
SAAIC	Slovak Academic Association for International Cooperation
SAŽP	Slovak Environmental Agency
SE	School Education
SR	Slovak Republic
TCA	T raining and C ooperation A ctivities
VEGA	Science grant agency of MŠVVaM SR and Slovak Academy of Sciences
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VUC	Self-governing region

Road Map – Steering Group

Roadmap – Group of Experts

53

5.3 Appendix 3 Examples of good practice in the ERASMUS+ program in Slovakia

School education sector

1. Gymnázium bilingválne, Ul. T. Ružičku 3, Žilina

From the published information and outputs, the continuity and connection of the KA1 and KA2 projects up to accreditation is evident. [GBZA Erasmus+ newsletter](#) – Bilingual High School, T. Ružičku, Žilina.

Based on the experience and cooperation of the school with parents and a foreign partner, a long-term mobility in a partner school in Finland was also successfully implemented for a student with SEN (with Asperger's syndrome) - in Finland a project called: **Education Without Frontiers: 2019-1-SK01 -KA229-060774_1**, Verified partner, intensive communication even before the stay with the teacher, parents, host family, supporting information, support during the stay created good conditions for effective implementation and the mobility participant herself appreciated it the most. The school has continuity and connections between the KA1 and KA2 projects.

2. Gymnázium Andreja Vrábla, Mierová 5., Levice



the European Union

DIGISCHOOL

Multiplier event invitation
15.02.2023 9:00 - 14:00
Venue: Gymnázium Andreja Vrábla Mierová 5, Levice Slovakia

The program:

- dissemination of the DIGI school project results
- the website of more than 300 files in 14 subjects
- aimed at students 11 - 18
- workshops in the individual subjects
- the event is free of charge
- we finance the accommodation, travel expenses, refreshments, lunch, and the educational and dissemination materials

Erasmus+ 2020-1-SK01-KA226-SCH-094350

Project DigiSchool 2020-1-SK01-KA226-SCH-094350

A cooperation partnership project created programs that responded to the special challenge of digitization during the corona period. In the Digiškola project, more than 40 teachers were involved and outputs were created in 14 subjects. The project received the mark of an example of good practice, it was completed in 2023. The outputs are still used. [Search | Erasmus+](#)

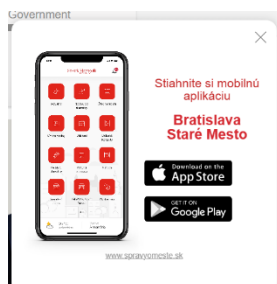
3. Odborné učilište internátne, Hviezdoslavova 668, Ladce, Slovensko

Save nature and climate 2020-1-DE03-KA229-077578 – for disadvantaged groups in 3 cooperating EU countries. The school, with students with disabilities (with mental disabilities) together with partners from Germany and Hungary, was ecologically focused on insect hotels in Slovakia. The whole school was involved in the project, the school staff did carpentry work together with the children, painters and painters got involved, students from the cook department cooked lunch for them all, etc. [Search | Erasmus+ \(europa.eu\)](#)

4. Materská škola Juhoslovanská, Košice

The kindergarten gradually built up its capacities and successfully participated in the KA1 and KA2 projects.:
[Projects \(msjuhoslovanska.sk\)](#)
[ERASMUS plus KA2 2019-22 \(msjuhoslovanska.sk\)](#)
[ERASMUS plus KA2 2019-21](#)
[ERASMUS plus KA1 2019-20](#) : 2019-1-SK01-KA101-060416
[ERASMUS plus KA2 2015-17](#) : 2015-1-SK01-KA219-008985

5. Bratislava Old Town Borough Public Administration, www.staremesto.sk



2022-1-SK01-KA220-SCH-000089195

The self-governing region of Bratislava has included schools within its jurisdiction in the cooperative partnership KA220. Develops a mobile application:
MUNIP - How self-government works - interactive education for elementary school students

6. Stredná odborná škola chemická, Bratislava

Supporting individuals in the acquisition of basic skills and key competencies" appropriate to the circumstances and conditions that existed during the period of anti-pandemic measures.

2019-1-SK01-KA229-060794

Colourful journey

<http://elearning.sosch.sk/>

7. Základná škola, Hrnčiarska 2119/1 Zvolen

Long-term experience with international projects (since 1998 Socrates), which are part of the educational practice of the school, resulted in the application and approval of Erasmus accreditation: [Erasmus+ \(edu.sk\)](http://Erasmus+(edu.sk))

VET Sector – digital transformation

8. Technical University of Košice

Industry 4.0 related technologies for teachers and trainers in VET,

2019-1-SK01-KA202-060772, <http://projectti4.eu/>;

It is important that among the other collaborating partners there is also a connected secondary school in Bardejov, providing high school education and also professional education in the field of mechanical engineering, electrical engineering and construction, which can use and verify the project's outputs in practice. The goal of the project was to create educational and informational materials for the study of Industry 4 technologies (advanced robotics, Internet of Things, digital twin, additive manufacturing, virtual reality, big data analysis, cloud computing, artificial intelligence) for teachers and masters in VET. The developed educational materials⁵³ are available for e-learning using the interactive e-learning platform Coursevo⁵⁴. The intellectual outputs⁵⁵ of the project are available in English, Greek, Polish and Slovak.

9. INAK Kremnica

STEP IN to the online world/virtual learning, Facilitation of access to vocational practice through online teaching at secondary technical schools,

2020-1-SK01-KA226-VET-094400,

<https://stepintolearning.eu/>

The coordinator of the project focused on the creation of digital materials for secondary vocational schools in the field of mechanical engineering, hydraulics and pneumatics, and logistics was the civic association INAK Kremnica⁵⁶. All five other partners from Italy, Finland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia have experience in providing professional education. The project responded to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which faced unexpected challenges for schools, teachers and students. Teachers and students had to face problems such as lack of experience in the use of ICT and online tools, lack of teaching materials that would improve online teaching, lack of cooperation between schools in sharing teaching resources and methods, and limitations in

⁵³ http://projectti4.eu/vystupy_projektu.html

⁵⁴ <https://coursevo.com/>

⁵⁵ <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2019-1-SK01-KA202-060772>

⁵⁶ www.trochuinak.sk

providing professional practical training. The project analysed⁵⁷ the needs of target groups of teachers and students regarding online teaching and practical training in the fields of Mechanical Engineering, Hydraulics and Pneumatics, and Logistics and prepared educational video materials in four languages (English, Czech, Finnish, Slovak and Italian), including online modules that support practical teaching and tests to verify input and output knowledge and skills for mechanical engineering⁵⁸, hydraulics and pneumatics⁵⁹, and logistics⁶⁰.

10. Obchodná akadémia v Lučenci

Accredited projects of the Business Academy in Lučenec,
for example 2021 č. 2021-1-SK01-KA121-VET-000011168;

http://www.oalc.sk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=674&Itemid=378

The Business Academy in Lučenec⁶¹ has long-term experience with the Erasmus + program, including mobility and partnerships. The national agency highly evaluates the quality of the school's work in mobilities.

Students of the 3rd and 4th year of the business academy are sent on mobility. Pupil mobilities are always carried out on one date at the beginning of the school year, or even at the end of the holidays. The school strives to ensure that mobility participants miss as little other subjects as possible and that the implementation of foreign mobility coincides with the compulsory professional practice of other pupils. Foreign mobilities are included for participants with a grade from abroad. Mobility focuses on digital marketing, and based on foreign experience, the school developed a new educational unit "digital marketer"). In the 2021 call, mobilities focused on human resources were also implemented. The results of students' work are available for use on the Erasmus+ project results platform⁶², e.g. a handbook on the marketing strategies of companies, which also includes the creators' own ideas about marketing promotion⁶³ and fourth-year students on what to do and what not to do when looking for a job⁶⁴ (based on the experience of Malta).

VET Sector – participation in democratic life and civic engagement

The horizontal priority of the program "participation in democratic life and civic engagement" is usually addressed by projects partially or complementary. The following example of good practice is an exchange partnership project in which engaged topics were successfully used to strengthen professional skills.

11. Škola umeleckého priemyslu Svidník

Facing ARTS together,

2020-1-SK01-KA229-078292_1,

<https://facingartstogether.weebly.com/>

The coordinator of the project is the School of Art Industry Svidník⁶⁵ in cooperation with three art schools in the Czech Republic, Croatia and Latvia. The goal of the project was to improve and modernize art education in the participating schools through long-term cooperation between selected secondary art schools, and at the same time to respond to social problems in contemporary society through artistic creation through four artistic forms, photography, poster, multimedia object, video - an educational campaign addressing four themes expressed in an acronym ARTS – A: abuse, R: racism, T: threats, S: stereotypes. The results of the project include⁶⁶

- 16 documentaries about local artists
- 16 student presentations on A.R.T.S.
- Artistic outputs of international groups of pupils on the topic "Abuse"
- Artistic outputs of international groups of pupils on the topic "Racism" (racism)

⁵⁷ <https://stepintolearning.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Needs-Analysis-Questionnaire-EN.pdf>

⁵⁸ <https://stepintolearning.eu/strojarstvo/>

⁵⁹ <https://stepintolearning.eu/hydraulika-a-pneumatika/>

⁶⁰ <https://stepintolearning.eu/logistika/>

⁶¹ <http://www.oalc.sk/>

⁶² <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2021-1-SK01-KA121-VET-000011168>

⁶³ https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content/d48451e7-f2d9-49a8-a9b9-d3a42c70f344/Digi_Line_Marketing.pptx

⁶⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content/03cf90d2-0edb-49dd-93f4-ab0d943984fe/Job_Interview_Do_s_and_Dont_s.pptx

⁶⁵ <https://supsvidnik.sk/>

⁶⁶ <https://supsvidnik.sk/projekty/erasmus-ka2-facing-arts-together/>

- Artistic outputs of international groups of pupils on the topic "Threats"
- Artistic outputs of international groups of pupils on the topic "Stereotypes" (stereotypes)
- Traveling exhibition "Facing ARTS together"
- Presentations on education at secondary art schools of project partners
- Plans for four lessons on the topics of A.R.T.S.
- Comparative report on the education system at partner secondary art schools in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Croatia and Latvia

VET Sector – green transformation

There is no finalised green transformation project available that could be identified as a good practice example, but one of the new projects has a very good chance of becoming a good practice example, as it has a strong potential for systemic change in supporting green transformation.

12. Association for career counselling and career development

Exploring green guidance

2023-1-SK01-KA220-VET-000158513)

<https://www.green-guidance.eu>

The coordinator is an experienced player in counselling Association for career counselling and career development⁶⁷. The project starts in October 2023 and will last almost 3 years. It has the ambition to formulate an academic concept of green consultancy and is focused on research, sharing practice and creating a model of practice and tools to support this model. The following products will be created in the project:

- Green Career Guidance Manual which defines green guidance and sets out the approach to its provision. It will draw on existing research on the topic as well as findings from the project to provide models, advice and examples for practitioners working in the field.
- A toolkit for providing green advice based on experience gained from partner countries. They will likely include interview schedules, learning resources and curriculum...
- Sustainability audit tool for career guidance. It will provide practitioners, services and organizations with a simple tool to audit their existing practice and identify ways in which environmental advice could be incorporated.
- An impact report summarizing the experience and recommendations from the implementation of green advice in practice with different target groups based on the test phase⁶⁸.

Adult Education Sector

13. Akadémia Istropolitana NOVA

LEAP

2020-1-SK01-KA204-078381

<https://ainova.sk/project/leap/>

The toolkit contains educational resources such as case studies, guides/recommendations, best practices and a glossary to increase the understanding, implementation and integration of European Union priorities, strategies and programmes, as well as the resulting national strategies in the field of VD policy. It responds to the need to balance the differences in the implementation of EU policies in local/regional policies:

- LEAP Platform and Community of Practice (Open educational resource) <https://leap2local.eu/>
- Trends and dynamics in the creation of local VD policy (Research)
- VD policy making tools for local authorities (Training and pilot course)
- How-to Guide for Local Policy Makers (Guide) - A practical tool providing guidance for municipal policy makers on how to formulate a basic plan for adult education at the local level.

⁶⁷ <https://rozvojkariery.sk/>

⁶⁸ <https://rozvojkariery.sk/zdruzenie-ziskalo-projekt-pre-rozvoj-zeleneho-poradenstva/>

14. OZ Spoluprácou pre lepšiu budúcnosť Veľký Meder

Innovative building of ecological awareness and culture by developing environmental skills and shaping the attitudes of citizens with mental disabilities - ECO-COMPASS

2021-2-SK01-KA210-ADU-000048280

<https://eco-compass-project.eu/>

- Innovative ECO-COMPASS environmental education aimed at forming ecological awareness, skills, competences, attitudes and responsible behaviour of citizens with mental disabilities
- ECO-COMPASS electronic collection of examples of good practice, which are aimed at environmental education and raising ecological awareness with special emphasis on citizens with intellectual disabilities

15. Univerzita Komenského

Educational Senior Network (EduSenNet),

2014-1-SK01-KA204-000437

<http://edusennet.efos-europa.eu>

The EduSenNet project focused on mapping and creating educational opportunities for older people over the age of 50 in selected countries in conjunction with the goal of conducting surveys of opinions on formal, informal and informal education of the elderly, exchange of good practices and innovations in education programs. The issue is important for the development of educational opportunities based on the needs of the target group. Education of older people and active participation in programs are extremely important not only for the target group, but for society as a whole throughout Europe.

16. Divadlo bez domova

Methods of Education for Disadvantaged Adults Rooted in Theatre (MEDART),

2015-1-SK01-KA204-008982

<http://www.divadlobezdomova.sk>

The MEDART project was aimed at creating a methodological guide for the education of socially disadvantaged adults through theatre and drama therapy approaches and techniques. We found, created and used theatre exercises, procedures, techniques and methods to help disadvantaged adults increase their chances of finding work.

The main output of the project is an open educational resource called "[MEDART - Educational methods for disadvantaged adults rooted in theatre - Methodological guide](#)", which is available in PDF version on the websites of all partner organizations.

17. Asociácia inštitúcií vzdelávania dospelých na Slovensku

Age Management Uptake (AMU),

2017-1-SK01-KA204-035420

www.agemanagementuptake.eu

The goal of the Age Management Uptake (AMU) project was to review the evidence, apply scientifically proven methods, create, test, apply and expand the Age Management Advisor curriculum, for both formal and informal education systems. A curriculum that will enable educators to achieve relevant and high quality skills and to broaden and develop their competencies to become age management consultants.

18. HARMONY Academy

Happy School 2020

2018-1-SK01-KA104-046112

<https://www.harmony.sk/projects/happy-school-2020>

The common goal of the project was to create an environment for school life (HAPPY SCHOOL), which is defined as a school with an international dimension, high quality and availability of services and a system of lifelong learning of the entire organization.

The main goal was achieved by strengthening the positions of lecturers-specialists in the field of adult education, especially in the CLIL methodology and organizational quality management in the EFQM (European Framework for Quality Management) model, strengthening the organizational management of the language school with the help of strengthening the positions of lecturers-leaders within the career path foreign language lecturer (CJ) Learn & Lead in the field of mentoring, coaching and leadership, by connecting the career development path of the CJ Learn & Lead lecturer with the professional competence framework of the CJ Prolant Cap lecturer. We deepened partnerships with existing professional partners within Slovakia and the EU in order to develop cooperation in the Learn&Lead system, we created three new educational programs for adults in the Learn&Lead system.

Youth sector

19. Change your self

ReflAct-reflective learning in youth work

2019-3-SK02-KA105-002278

<https://yourchange.eu/2020/03/24/reflection/>

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2019-3-SK02-KA105-002278>

ReflAct - reflective learning in youth work aimed to connect 27 youth workers and youth leaders from Erasmus+ program countries and Eastern Partnership countries to acquire skills and tools to support non-formal learning, to be reflective professionals with critical thinking and to analyse their experiences and worked on their self-development.

20. OZ YouthWatch

The syllabary of informal education

2018-1-SK02-KA205-001754

<https://youthwatch.sk/slabikar-neformalneho-vzdelavania-2/>

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2018-1-SK02-KA205-001754>

In the Czech-Slovak context, there was a lack of comprehensive methodological support intended for youth workers on how to prepare, implement and properly evaluate informal education activities in youth work. The informal education syllabary is an inspiration for how to set up such activities. E-learning was also created for "syllabary", thanks to which youth workers can learn in a safe environment how to correctly define educational goals through Bloom's taxonomy. Both outputs can be downloaded in Slovak and Czech language versions. The outputs from the project were presented during the final conferences in Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

21. Nezisková organizácia EPIC

Your career is waiting – get ready!

2019-1-SK02-KA205-002145

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2019-1-SK02-KA205-002145>

The goal of this project is to help young people better prepare for entering the labour market and at the same time to support greater inclusion and acceptance of disadvantaged groups, especially people with disabilities. The project was intended for young people aged 16 to 20 and was implemented in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Italy and Belgium.

Platforma dobrovoľníckych centier a organizácií

Volunteering as an Educational Opportunity (EDUVOL)

2019-2-SK02-KA205-002174

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2019-2-SK02-KA205-002174>

EDUVOL is an international project - a strategic partnership, the goal of which is: - to build the capacities of organizations working with youth so that they more effectively use the potential of volunteering as opportunities for learning; - support the development of personality, key competences and civic engagement of young people through the experience of volunteering based on the service-learning method. The project was based on the experience and expertise of the partners in the field of implementing volunteerism and the service learning method. This method has been adapted and used in education in Western Europe and America for several years.

Central and Eastern Europe is just getting to know this method. The project therefore set itself the goal of creating and providing training in the field of service learning to the public, training materials for trainers and a manual for youth workers and youth on how to implement projects within the framework of service learning.

22. Združenie informačných a poradenských centier mladých v SR

Let's talk more - youth participation and interdepartmental cooperation

2015-2-SK02-KA347-000618

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2015-2-SK02-KA347-000618>

The goal of the project was to verify in practice the more effective work of the Interdepartmental Working Group of the MŠVVaM SR and Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic for the creation of state youth policy and at the same time to define recommendations for the areas of the Slovak Youth Strategy for the years 2014-2020, the goals of which were insufficiently met (Education, Volunteering, Health and a healthy lifestyle).

5.4 Appendix 4 Images

Video instructions for applicants for ERASMUS+ program actions

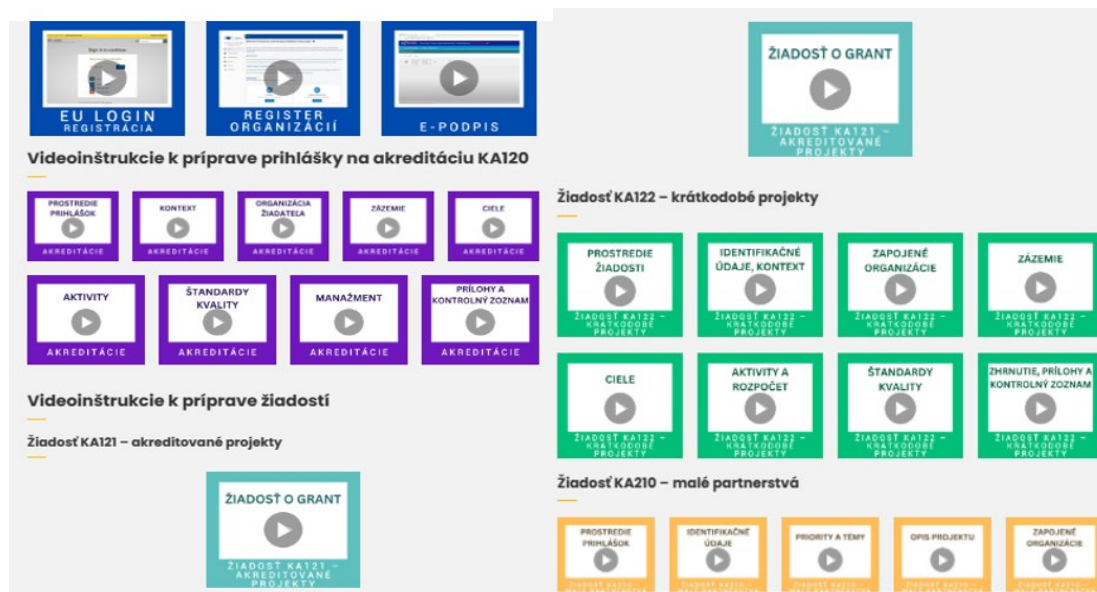


Figure 2 SAAIC video instructions <https://www.erasmusplus.sk/materialy/kniznica/#1690381503557-eac0ace9-3602>



Figure 3 ERASMUS+ Podcast <https://www.erasmusplus.sk/erasmus-inspiracie/>

5.5 Appendix 5 Tables

Table 9 Percentage of completed projects by themes and horizontal priorities of ERASMUS+ 2014-2020 in the education and training sectors

Priorities of the Erasmus+ Programme	Topics of project	Sector	All Calls 2014-2020
Inclusion and Diversity	Access for disadvantaged	Adult Education	20%
	Inclusion - equity	Adult Education	33%
	Inclusion - equity	Cross Field	33%
	Open and distance learning	Cross Field	33%
	Open and distance learning	Higher Education	20%
Digital Transformation	ICT - new technologies - digital competences	School Education	27%
	ICT - new technologies - digital competences	Vocational Education and Training	20%
	ICT - new technologies - digital competences	Cross Field	33%
	Open and distance learning	Cross Field	33%
	ICT - new technologies - digital competences	Higher Education	32%
	Open and distance learning	Higher Education	20%
	ICT - new technologies - digital competences	School Education	24%
	ICT - new technologies - digital competences	Schools Only	40%
Environment and fight against climate change	Energy and resources	Adult Education	4%
	Environment and climate change	Adult Education	11%
	Health and wellbeing	Adult Education	7%
	Social/environmental responsibility of educational institutions	Adult Education	2%
	Cooperation between educational institutions and business	Higher Education	4%
	Health and wellbeing	Higher Education	8%
	Cooperation between educational institutions and business	School Education	2%
	Energy and resources	School Education	4%
	Environment and climate change	School Education	7%
	Health and wellbeing	School Education	6%

Youth (Participation, Youth Work, Youth Policy)	Higher Education	4%
Civic engagement / responsible citizenship	School Education	2%
Cultural heritage/European Year of Cultural Heritage	School Education	28%
Economic and financial affairs (incl. funding issues)	School Education	1%
Ethics, religion and philosophy (incl. Inter-religious dialogue)	School Education	1%
EU Citizenship, EU awareness and Democracy	School Education	6%
International cooperation, international relations, development cooperation	School Education	19%
Migrants' issues	School Education	2%
Recognition, transparency, certification	School Education	1%
Regional dimension and cooperation	School Education	5%
Romas and/or other minorities	School Education	2%
Rural development and urbanisation	School Education	2%
Youth (Participation, Youth Work, Youth Policy)	School Education	1%
EU Citizenship, EU awareness and Democracy	Schools Only	15%
Home and justice affairs (human rights & rule of law)	Schools Only	2%
International cooperation, international relations, development cooperation	Schools Only	13%
Migrants' issues	Schools Only	2%
Recognition, transparency, certification	Schools Only	4%
Social dialogue	Schools Only	2%
Youth (Participation, Youth Work, Youth Policy)	Schools Only	4%
Cultural heritage/European Year of Cultural Heritage	Vocational Education and Training	2%
Economic and financial affairs (incl. funding issues)	Vocational Education and Training	2%
International cooperation, international relations, development cooperation	Vocational Education and Training	17%
Recognition, transparency, certification	Vocational Education and Training	11%
Regional dimension and cooperation	Vocational Education and Training	4%
Romas and/or other minorities	Vocational Education and Training	4%
Rural development and urbanisation	Vocational Education and Training	4%
Social dialogue	Vocational Education and Training	2%

	Social entrepreneurship / social innovation	Vocational Education and Training	2%
	Youth (Participation, Youth Work, Youth Policy)	Vocational Education and Training	2%

Source: [Factsheets and statistics on Erasmus+ / Erasmus+ \(europa.eu\)](#)

Table 10 Percentage of completed projects by themes and horizontal priorities of ERASMUS+ 2021-2022 in the education and training sectors

Priorities of the Erasmus+ Programme	Topics of project	Sector	All Calls 2021-2022
Inclusion and Diversity	Disabilities	School Education	2%
	Inclusion, promoting equality and non-discrimination	School Education	13%
	Quality assurance	School Education	2%
	Social assistance and welfare	School Education	2%
	Development of disadvantaged rural and urban areas	Vocational Education and Training	2%
	Equal access and transition to labour market	Vocational Education and Training	4%
	Inclusion, promoting equality and non-discrimination	Vocational Education and Training	12%
	Quality assurance	Vocational Education and Training	2%
Digital Transformation	Digital content, technologies and practices	Adult Education	29%
	Digital skills and competences	Adult Education	57%
	Digital content, technologies and practices	School Education	19%
	Digital safety	School Education	2%
	Digital skills and competences	School Education	25%
	Information and communication technologies (ICT)	School Education	8%
	Digital content, technologies and practices	Vocational Education and Training	9%
	Digital skills and competences	Vocational Education and Training	9%
	Information and communication technologies (ICT)	Vocational Education and Training	7%

Environment and fight against climate change	Green skills	Adult Education	14%
	Environment and climate change	School Education	6%
	Green skills	School Education	6%
	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)	School Education	2%
	Environment and climate change	Vocational Education and Training	5%
	Green skills	Vocational Education and Training	5%
	Green transport and mobility	Vocational Education and Training	5%
Participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)	Vocational Education and Training	2%
	Bridging intercultural, intergenerational and social divide	Adult Education	14%
	Awareness about the European Union	School Education	2%
	Bridging intercultural, intergenerational and social divide	School Education	2%
	Cooperation between educational institutions and business	School Education	6%
	Cultural heritage	School Education	4%
	European identity, citizenship and values	School Education	2%
	International relations and development cooperation	School Education	9%
	Overcoming skills mismatch and addressing the needs of the labour market	School Education	2%
	Awareness about the European Union	Vocational Education and Training	1%
	Cooperation between educational institutions and business	Vocational Education and Training	15%
	Cultural heritage	Vocational Education and Training	1%
	Employability	Vocational Education and Training	10%
	European identity, citizenship and values	Vocational Education and Training	3%
	International relations and development cooperation	Vocational Education and Training	6%

	Overcoming skills mismatch and addressing the needs of the labour market Support for European and regional innovation and smart specialisation strategies	Vocational Education and Training Vocational Education and Training Vocational Education and Training	2% 1%
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Source: [Factsheets and statistics on Erasmus+ | Erasmus+ \(europa.eu\)](#)

Table 11 Percentage of completed projects by ERASMUS+ 2014-2020 objectives and priorities in the education and training sectors

Field	Priority	AllCalls(2014-2020)
Adult Education	Extending and developing educators' competences	20,0%
Adult Education	Extending and developing the competences of educators and other personnel who support adult learners	17,8%
Adult Education	Improving and extending the supply of high quality learning opportunities tailored to the needs of individual low-skilled or low-qualified adults	31,1%
Adult Education	HORIZONTAL: Social inclusion	28,9%
Cross Field	Aligning VET policies with national, regional or local economic development strategies	33,3%
Cross Field	Developing partnerships between education and employment	33,3%
Cross Field	Developing short-cycle post-secondary or tertiary qualifications in accordance with the European Qualifications Framework	33,3%
Cross Field	Facilitating the validation of non-formal and informal learning and its permeability with formal education pathways	33,3%
Cross Field	Supporting the production and adoption of Open Educational Resources in diverse European languages	66,7%
Higher Education	Contributing to the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems as outlined in the 2011 EU Modernisation Agenda	12,0%
Higher Education	Promoting and rewarding excellence in teaching and skills development	12,0%
Higher Education	HORIZONTAL: Open education and innovative practices in a digital era	12,0%
School Education	Improving the attainment of young people, particularly those at risk of early school leaving	17,1%
School Education	Revising and strengthening the professional profile of the teaching professions	19,5%
School Education	SCHOOL EDUCATION: Promoting the acquisition of skills and competences	12,2%
School Education	SCHOOL EDUCATION: Strengthening the profile of the teaching professions	14,6%

School Education	SCHOOL EDUCATION: Strengthening the profile(s) of the teaching profession	19,5%
School Education	SCHOOL EDUCATION: Strengthening the profiles of the teaching professions	12,2%
Schools Only	HORIZONTAL: Social and educational value of European cultural heritage	14,2%
Schools Only	HORIZONTAL: Social and educational value of European cultural heritage, its contribution to job creation, economic growth and social cohesion	12,2%
Schools Only	HORIZONTAL: Supporting individuals in acquiring and developing basic skills and key competences	15,0%
Schools Only	SCHOOL EDUCATION: Promoting the acquisition of skills and competences	29,7%
VET	Further strengthening key competences in initial and continuing VET	19,6%
VET	Further strengthening key competences in VET	13,0%
VET		65,2%
VET	HORIZONTAL: Innovative practices in a digital era	19,6%

Source: European Commission databases for the Erasmus+ programme (PMM, BM, E+Link), processing SAAIC 2023

Table 12 Percentage of completed projects by ERASMUS+ 2021-2022 objectives and priorities in the education and training sectors

Field	Priority	All Calls (2021-2022)
Adult Education	Developing forward-looking learning centres	50%
Adult Education	Improving the competences of educators and other adult education staff	100%
Adult Education	HORIZONTAL: Common values, civic engagement and participation	50%
Adult Education	HORIZONTAL: Inclusion and diversity in all fields of education, training, youth and sport	50%
School Education	Improving the availability of high quality learning opportunities for adults	20%
School Education	Improving the competences of educators and other adult education staff	20%
School Education	HORIZONTAL: Environment and fight against climate change	40%
School Education	HORIZONTAL: Inclusion and diversity in all fields of education, training, youth and sport	60%
School Education	Development of key competences	20%
School Education	Supporting teachers, school leaders and other teaching professions	20%
School Education	Tackling learning disadvantage, early school leaving and low proficiency in basic skills	60%
VET	HORIZONTAL: Addressing digital transformation through development of digital readiness, resilience and capacity	67%
VET	HORIZONTAL: Inclusion and diversity in all fields of education, training, youth and sport	67%
VET	Adapting vocational education and training to labour market needs	67%
VET	Contributing to innovation in vocational education and training	33%
VET	Improving quality assurance in vocational education and training.	33%

Source: European Commission databases for the Erasmus+ programme (PMM, BM, E+Link), processing SAAIC 2023

Table 15 Basic overview of ERASMUS+ 2014-2022 - number of projects administered by Slovak NAs by sector, call year and project cycle stage

Field	Project stage	Call year							2014-2020 total	Call year		2014-2020 total
		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020		2021	2022	
Adult Education	Received	42	34	29	25	34	27	59	250	46	89	135
	Awarded	10	11	13	16	24	24	34	132	27	31	58
	Contracted	10	10	13	16	24	24	34	131	27	30	57
	Finalised	10	10	13	16	23	23	24	119	6	2	8
Higher Education	Received	49	64	65	71	68	61	86	464	47	63	110
	Awarded	36	50	56	56	57	56	69	380	45	58	103
	Contracted	36	50	56	55	57	56	69	379	45	58	103
	Finalised	36	49	54	54	56	50	31	330	0	0	0
School Education	Received	130	96	115	130	139	154	195	959	108	188	296
	Awarded	55	70	52	85	114	126	103	605	91	136	227
	Contracted	55	70	52	81	111	125	101	595	89	135	224
	Finalised	55	70	52	81	111	118	75	562	41	12	53
Schools Only	Received	28	41	43	45	54	66	83	360	-	-	-
	Awarded	8	15	15	22	28	40	49	177	-	-	-
	Contracted	8	15	15	21	28	39	49	175	-	-	-
	Finalised	8	13	14	21	28	34	7	125	-	-	-
Vocational Education and Training	Received	149	174	214	210	212	205	233	1397	151	168	319
	Awarded	88	90	93	117	109	172	102	771	134	152	286
	Contracted	87	89	93	117	109	169	100	764	134	152	286
	Finalised	87	89	93	117	109	153	80	728	97	7	104
Youth	Received	224	310	397	362	311	204	251	2059	185	274	459
	Awarded	134	143	152	140	126	103	107	905	103	137	240
	Contracted	134	143	151	136	126	101	107	898	103	135	238
	Finalised	133	142	149	135	120	95	90	864	71	38	109
All fields total	Received	622	719	863	843	818	717	907	5489	537	782	1319
	Awarded	331	379	381	436	458	521	464	2970	400	514	914
	Contracted	330	377	380	426	455	514	460	2942	398	510	908
	Finalised	329	373	375	424	447	473	307	2728	215	59	274

Source: European Commission databases for the Erasmus+ programme (PMM, BM, E+Link), own processing SAAIC 2023

Table 16 Basic overview of ERASMUS+ 2014-2022 - numbers of Slovak organisations involved in projects administered by Slovak NAs by sector and call year

Field	Call year							2014-2020 total	Call year		2021-2022 total
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020		2021	2022	
Adult Education	10	10	15	19	28	28	28	138	11	3	14
Cross Field	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0
Higher Education	37	49	55	54	62	51	35	343	0	0	0
School Education	63	73	59	87	127	154	96	659	48	21	69
Schools Only	0	13	14	21	28	35	7	118	-	-	0
Vocational Education and Training	94	98	97	123	121	168	87	788	115	7	122
Youth	144	156	163	161	139	101	103	967	47	20	67
All fields total	355	399	403	465	505	537	356	3020	221	51	272

Source: European Commission databases for the Erasmus+ programme (PMM, BM, E+Link), own processing SAAIC 2023

Note: These are the numbers of participation of organisations in the projects (i.e. one organisation could have participated more than once).

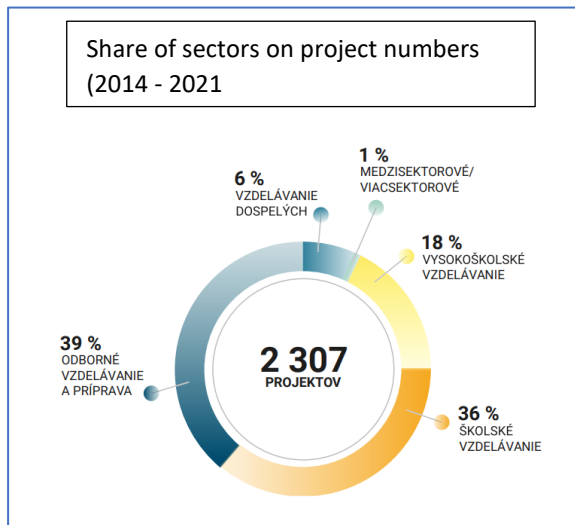
Table 17 Basic overview of ERASMUS+ 2014-2022 - numbers of completed project mobilities in projects administered by Slovak NAs by sector, type of participant and call year

Field; participant profile	Call year							2014-2020 total	Call year		2021-2022 total
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020		2021	2022	
Adult Education	113	146	123	183	129	253	332	1279	55	285	340
Learner	25							25		3	3
Staff	88	146	123	183	129	253	332	1254	55	282	337
Higher Education	5199	5795	5982	6656	6458	5094	2800	37984	4785	4777	9562
Learner	3861	3970	3901	4133	3780	3164	1742	24551	3092	3129	6221
Staff	1338	1825	2081	2523	2678	1930	1058	13433	1693	1648	3341
School Education	387	351	292	688	588	845	500	3651	950	1857	2807
Learner				43			16	59	532	1223	1755
Staff	387	351	292	645	588	845	484	3592	405	626	1031
Unassigned								0	13	8	21
Schools Only	3	1185	1258	1564	3744	4891	271	12916			0
Learner	3	1051	1258	1564	3744	4891	271	12782			0
Staff		134						134			0
Vocational Education and Training	2355	2303	2400	2820	3161	4160	2352	19551	2904	4068	6972
Learner	2126	2138	2241	2527	2893	3850	2055	17830	2550	3531	6081
Staff	229	165	159	293	268	310	297	1721	345	510	855
Unassigned								0	9	27	36
Youth	4208	5418	5266	7106	5928	4435	5550	37911	1651	2781	4432
Learner	3374	4462	4318	5924	4847	2879	3702	29506	1035	2064	3099
Staff	834	956	948	1182	1081	1556	1848	8405	596	684	1280
Unassigned								0	20	33	53
All fields total	12265	15198	15321	19017	20008	19678	11805	113292	10345	13768	24113

Source: European Commission databases for the Erasmus+ programme (PMM, BM, E+Link), own processing SAAIC 2023

5.6 Annex 6 Charts

Education - all sectors



From Figure 1 we can see the share of the different education sectors in the total number of 2307 ERASMUS+ projects for the years 2014-2021. The VET sector has the largest share, followed by the Education sector, then the Education and Training sector. A smaller share is held by the HE sector and few projects are implemented as cross-sectoral or multi-sectoral. There is a very positive increase in interest in projects in the VET and SE sectors from 2021 onwards.

Chart 1 Share of education sectors in the total number of ERASMUS+ projects 2014-2021

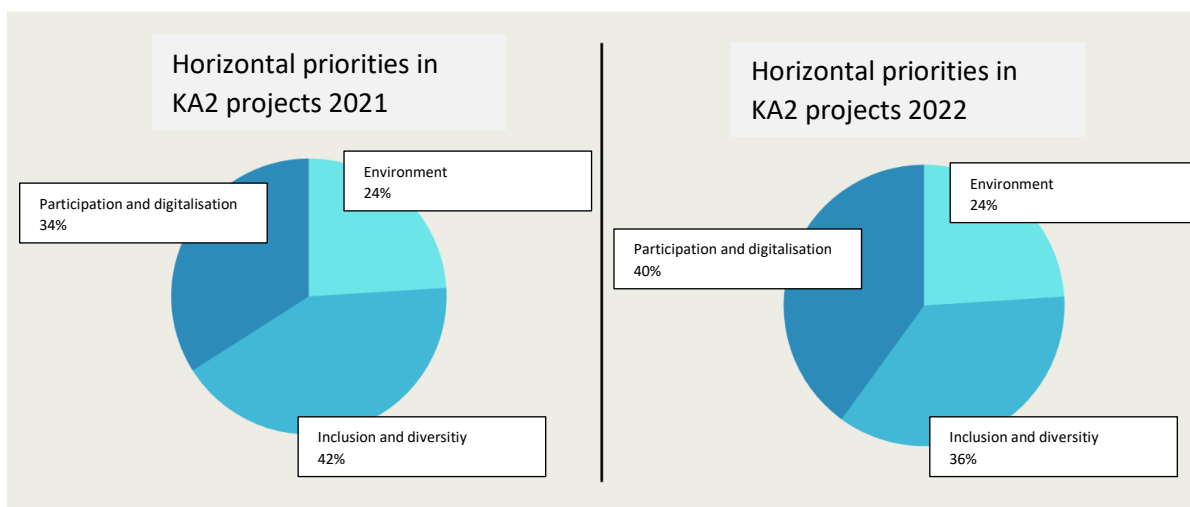


Figure 2 Horizontal priorities represented in KA2 projects 2021-2022

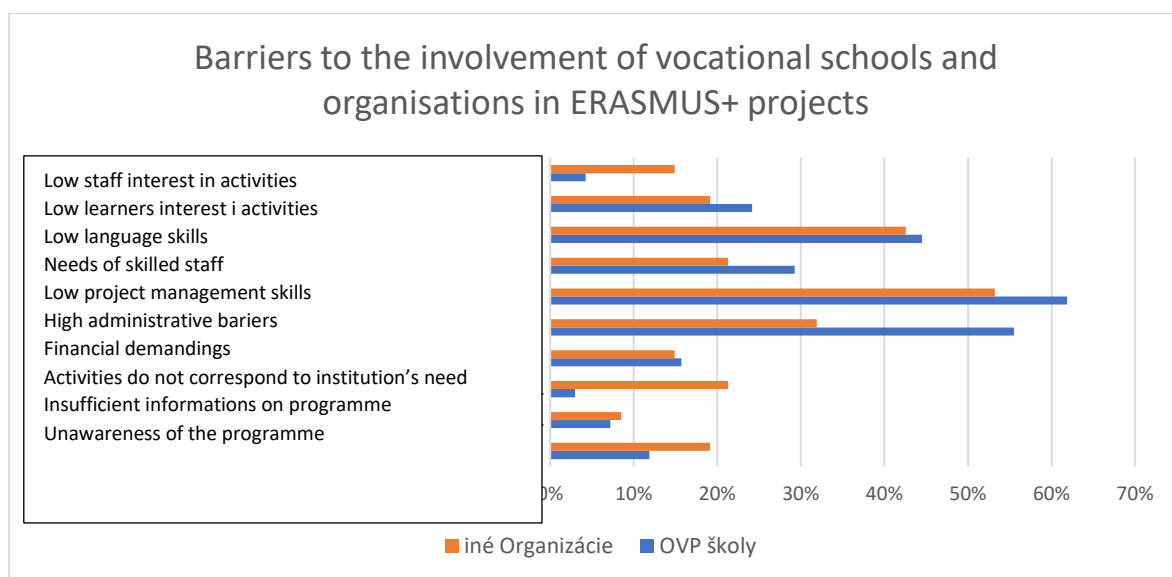


Chart 3 Barriers to the involvement of vocational schools and training organisations in ERASMUS+ projects

From the research investigation, we found that the biggest barriers to engaging in ERASMUS+ projects in the VET sector in schools and educational organisations are (Figure 3): lack of experience in preparing and writing projects, perceived administrative complexity, insufficient language skills. And lack of interest from teachers and staff. There are very similar findings in other sectors.

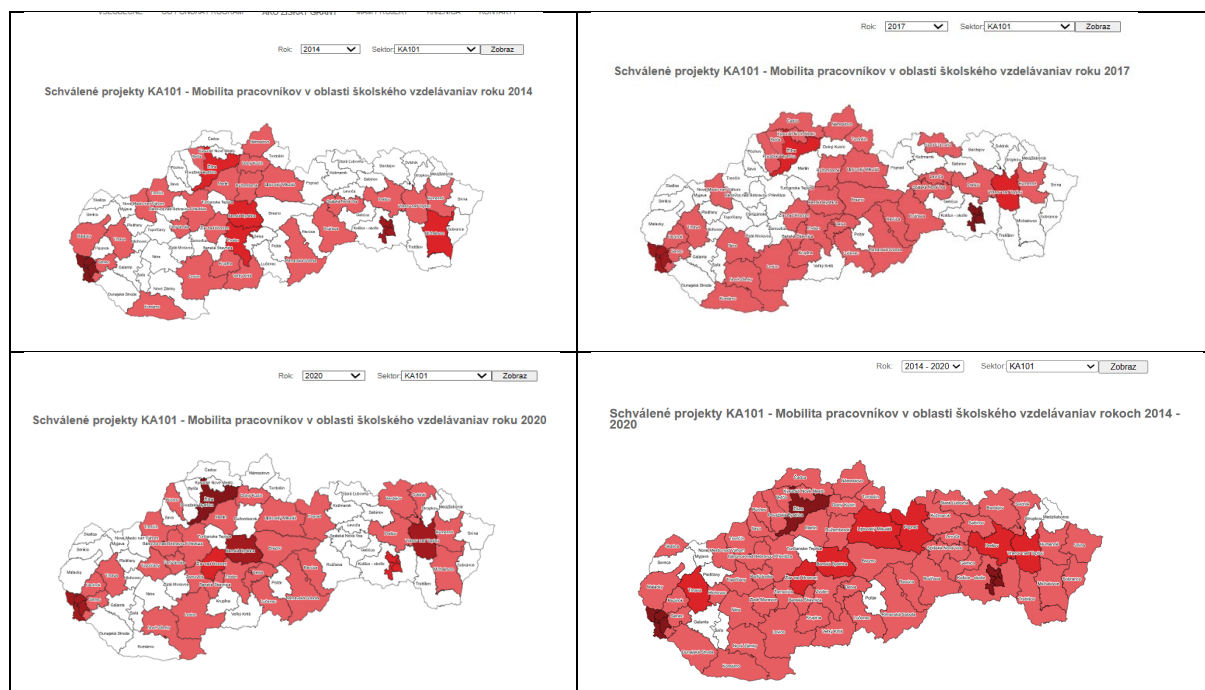
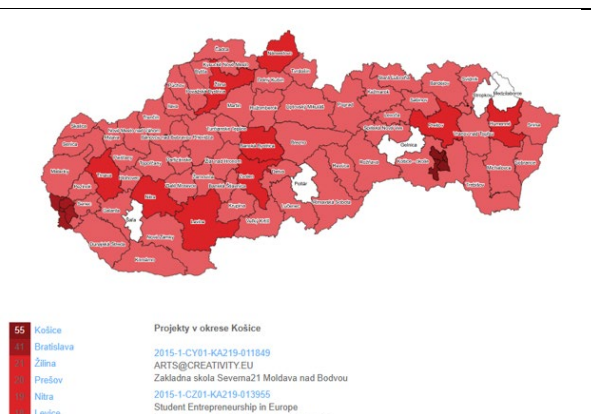
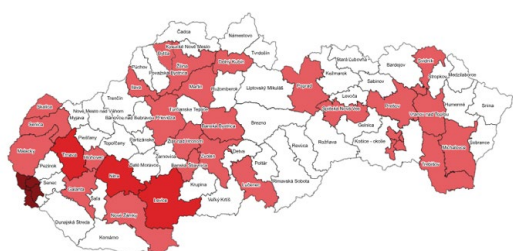


Chart 5 Regional distribution approved projects of KA1 Actions in Slovakia by sector

Charts 5 and 6 present the regional representation of KA1 and KA2 projects in each sector in 2014-2020. The number of projects in each region is represented by colour saturation (the darkest shade of colour represents the largest number of projects and the lightest shade of colour the smallest number of projects). The graphical map of Slovakia also shows the distribution of active and inactive counties, which is a good feedback for the national authority and the two national agencies to target information and education subsidies.



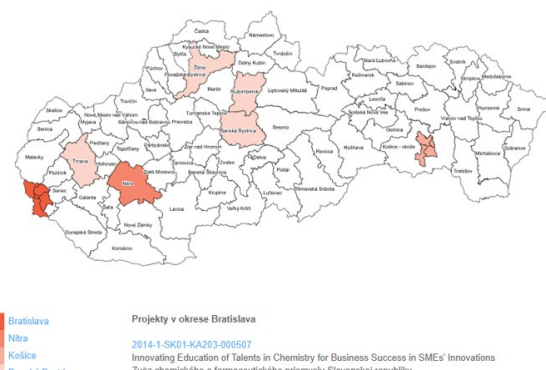
Schools only partnerships KA229 2014-2020



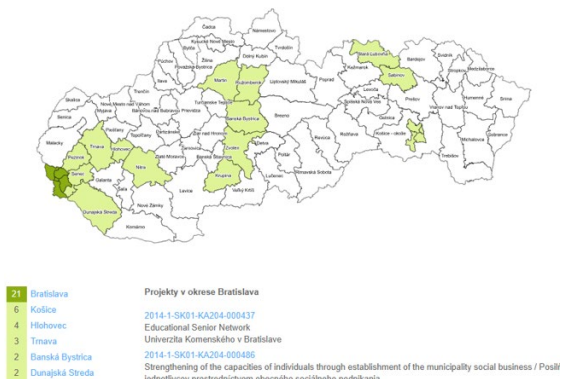
KA201 Strategic Partnerships – schools sector 2014-2020



KA202 Strategic Partnerships – VET sector 2014-2020



KA203 Strategic Partnerships – HE sector 2014-2020



KA204 Strategic Partnerships – AE sector 2014-2020

Chart 6 Regional distribution of strategic partnerships in Slovakia by sector

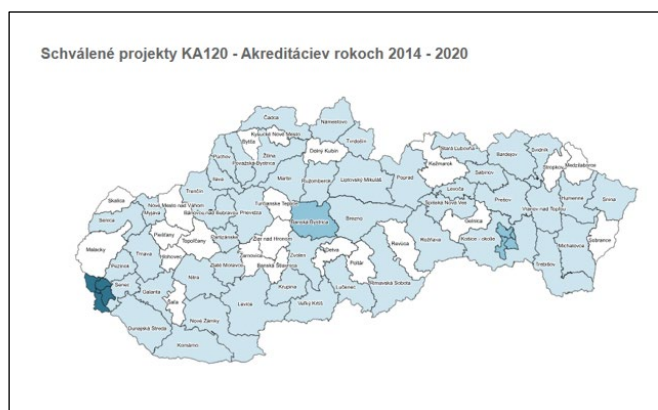


Chart 7 Approved accreditations 2014-2020

The Accreditation Scheme is a powerful new tool to motivate applicants to be continuously active in ERASMUS+ (Chart 7).

We have also seen a significant increase in applications for accreditation in 6 Selfgovernd regions in Slovakia in 2022-2023

- 85 podaných a schválených žiadostí → nárast počtu žiadostí oproti výzve 2022 o viac ako 100 %
- Žiadosti podané zo všetkých krajov Slovenska
- Najčastejšie typy aktivít v žiadostiach:
 - Skupinová mobilita žiakov
 - Kurzy a odborná príprava
 - Pozorovanie pri práci

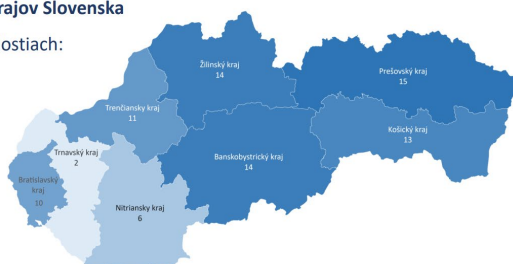


Chart 8 Approved accreditations 2022-2023



Chart 9 Ranking of countries (TOP 10) involved in Slovak projects (period 2014-2021)

The ten most frequently occurring foreign partners in ERASMUS+ projects coordinated by Slovak partner for the period 2014-2021 clearly show that these are mainly EU countries and, among the associated third countries, Turkey. The Czech Republic is the most represented country, which results from a common historical, economic and cultural background. The UK was also relatively well represented, but is gradually being replaced with Ireland following the EU withdrawal.

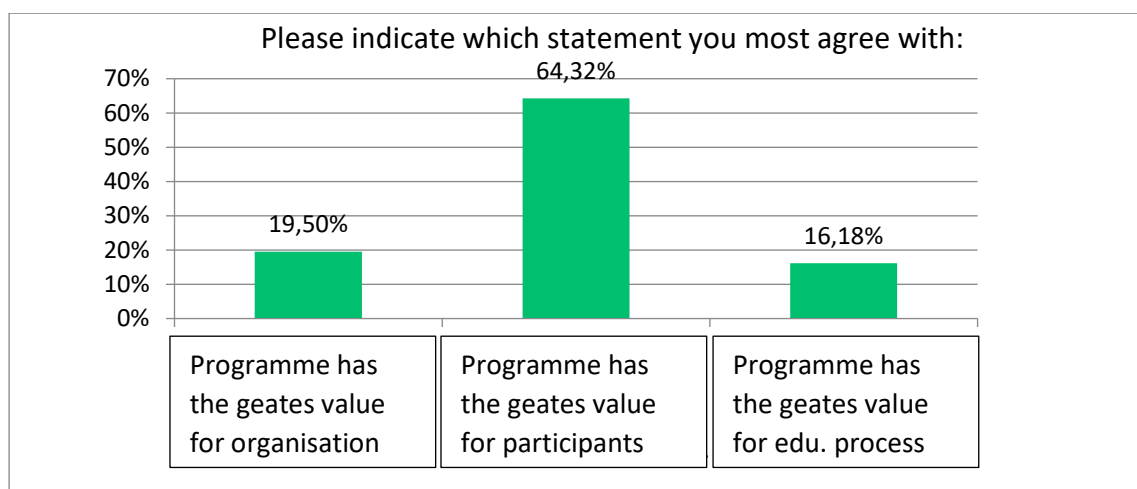


Chart 10 Added value of ERASMUS+ in education in the school education sector

School principals (241 responses) see the greatest added value of ERASMUS+ for the participants themselves (teachers and students) involved in the projects. They perceive this mainly through the significant personal and competence growth of the individuals. They perceive less added value for the school involved, as the actual change in the atmosphere and technical background of the school requires a longer time course and gradually more individuals involved. From their point of view, ERASMUS+ has the lowest added value for the educational process. We also found similar attitudes among principals in the VET sector. The transformation of education is a very complex process which, in addition to international and grassroots support, mainly needs support from above, i.e. from the government and the MŠVVaM SR.

Youth sector - distribution of projects by self-governing regions

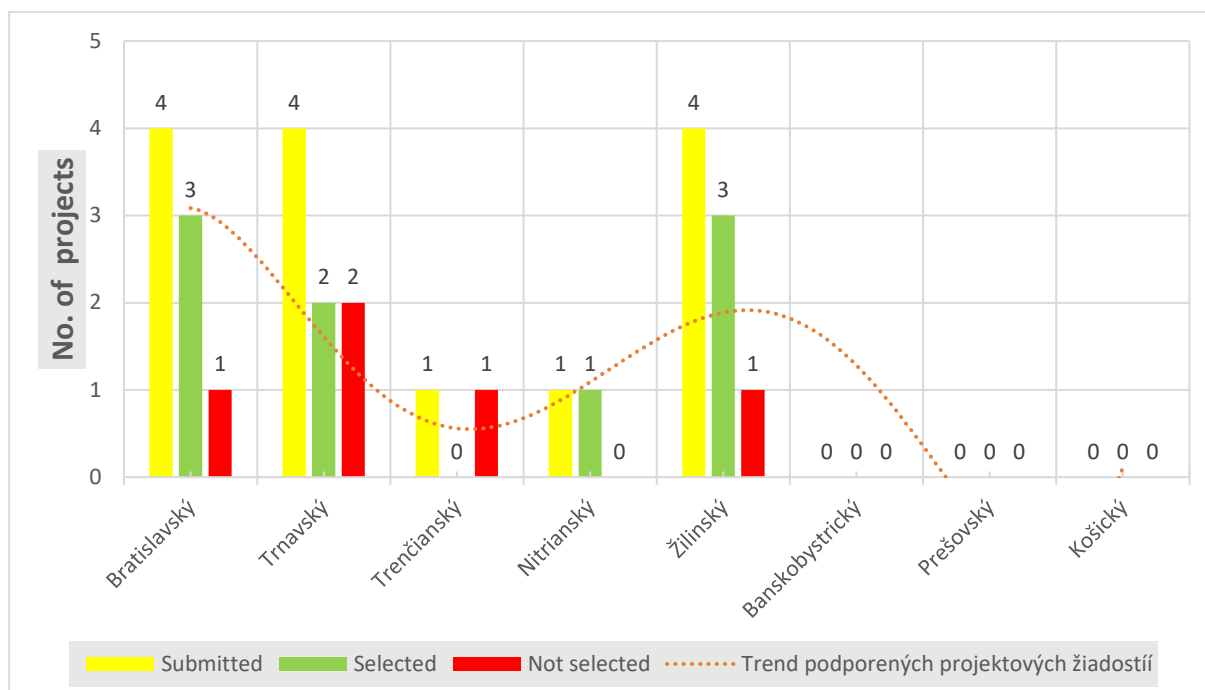


Chart 11 Regional distribution of accredited organisations in the youth sector (2021-2022)

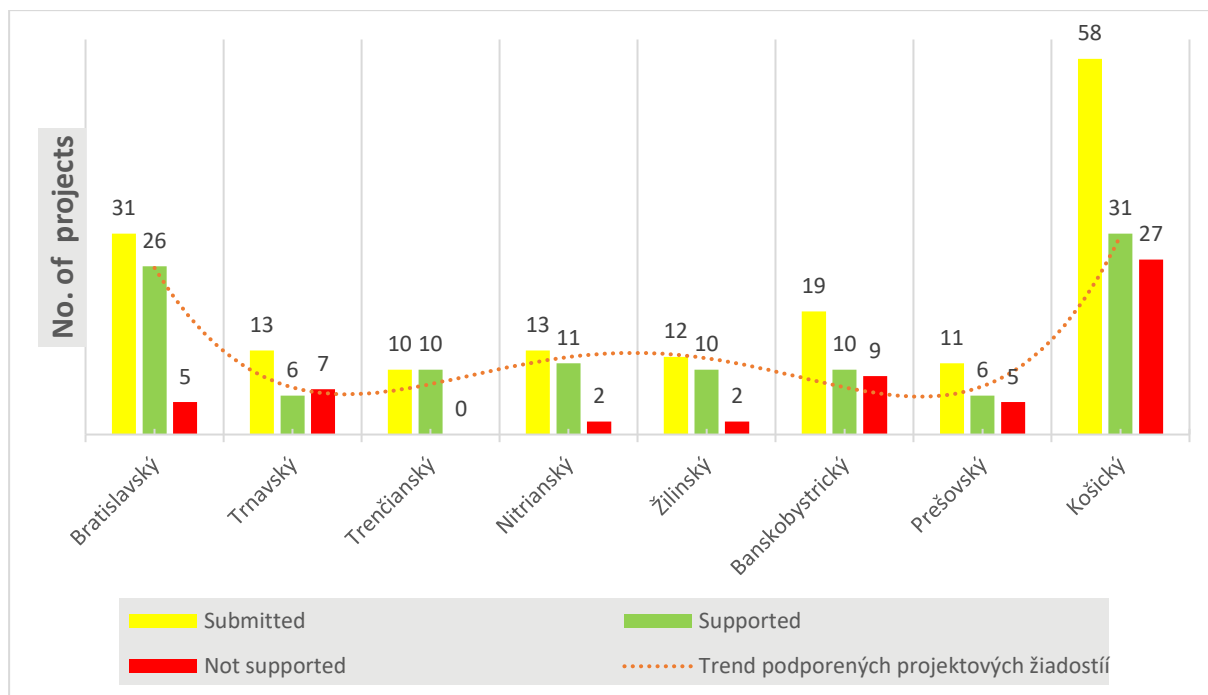


Chart 12 Regional distribution of mobility projects (KA1) in the youth sector (2021-2022)

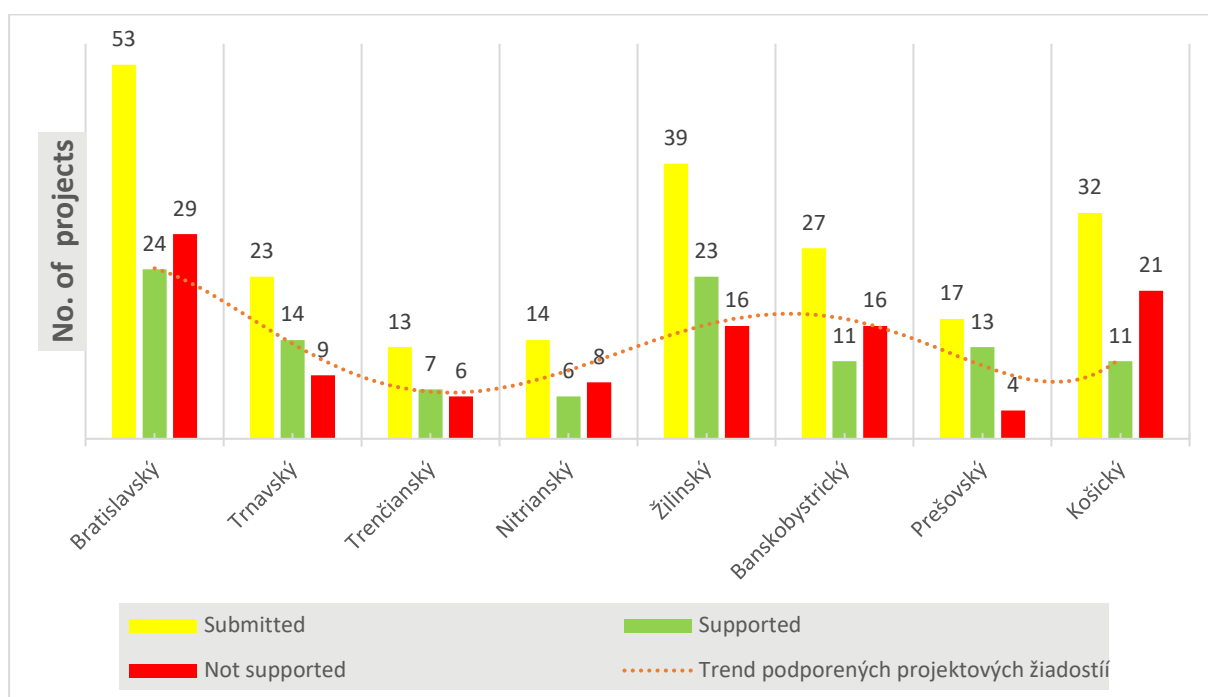


Chart 13 Regional distribution of partnerships, solidarity and volunteer projects in the youth sector (2021-2022)