


 May
2019

Investing in youth

TOWARDS A MORE UNITED, STRONGER AND MORE DEMOCRATIC UNION



'Education and culture are the key to the future – both for the individual as well as for our Union as a whole. It is how we turn circumstance into opportunity, how we turn mirrors into windows and how we give roots to what it means to be 'European', in all its diversity. We must seize the opportunity and make sure education and culture are the drivers for job creation, economic growth, social fairness and ultimately unity.'

Jean-Claude Juncker, European Commission President,
Leaders' meeting in Gothenburg, 17 November 2017

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR

The EU supports Member States' cooperation in the field of education, making it easier for young people to benefit from mobility and for teachers to gain experience and share knowledge by working across Europe. The EU budget is a significant contributor to cross-border educational programmes.

In the past 32 years more than 10 million people have benefited from Erasmus. Between 2014-2020, the Erasmus+ programme is projected to exceed its target of reaching 4 million people in the EU.

In 2018 the EU invested **a record €2.8 billion in the Erasmus+ programme**, resulting in mobility grants for **842,000 Europeans** to study, train, teach, work or volunteer abroad. This brings the total to more than 3.7 million participants since 2014. In the same year, **22,200 projects** received funding, involving **88,000** education, training and youth organisations.

The Commission proposes a stronger youth focus in the next Financial Framework by doubling the Erasmus+ budget to €30 billion for 2021-2027.

Increased mobility generates positive results in terms of the individual participants' employability, in addition to their social integration and participation in democratic life:

In July 2018, the Commission launched **DiscoverEU**, a new EU initiative to give young 18 years old the opportunity to discover Europe by rail for free, learn about its cultural heritage and diversity, make new friends and experience what it feels like to be European. During the first two rounds, around 30,000 participants were able to explore Europe, and more opportunities will follow in 2019. The Commission has proposed to include DiscoverEU in the future Erasmus programme after 2020.

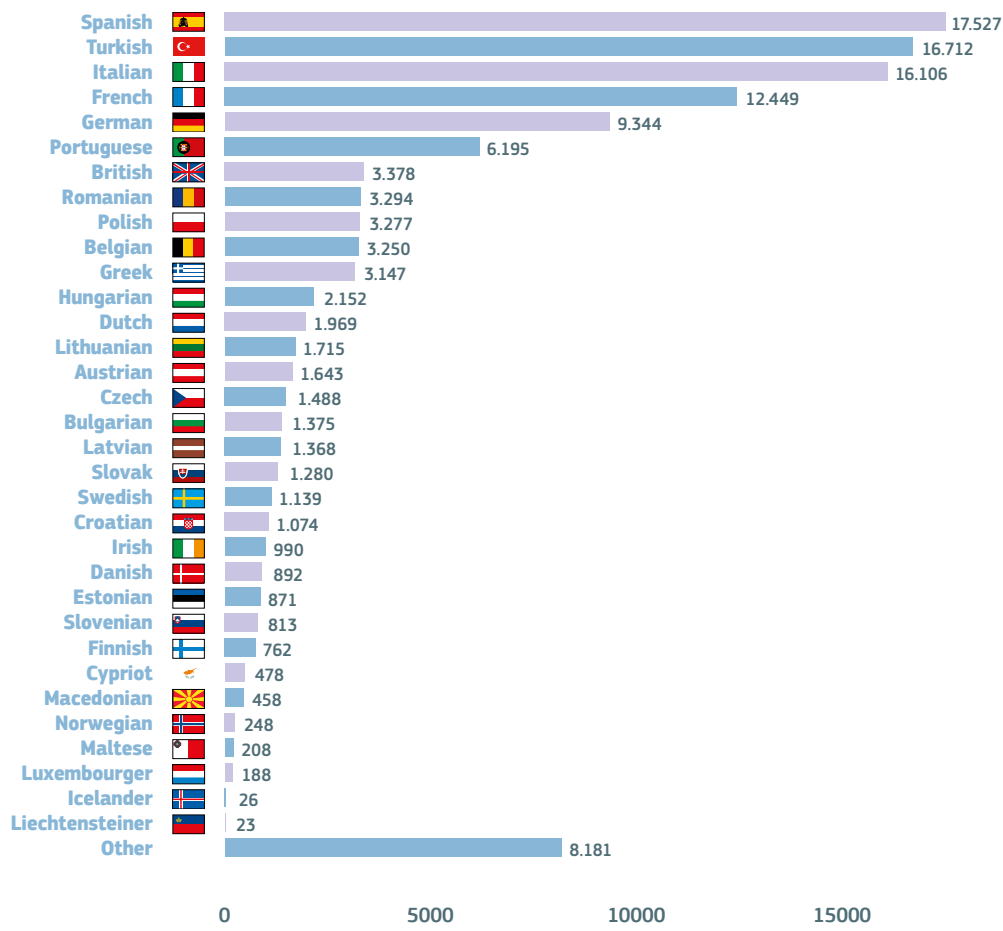
DiscoverEU participants have started building a community, using social media to share their stories, find travel partners, organise meet-ups or exchange tips and recommendations to make the most of their trips.

In September 2016 President Juncker announced the **European Solidarity Corps**: it gives young people a life-changing experience to volunteer, train, work or run their own solidarity projects. New opportunities have been created for 18 to 30-year-olds to support individuals and communities, while developing skills and gaining invaluable experiences.

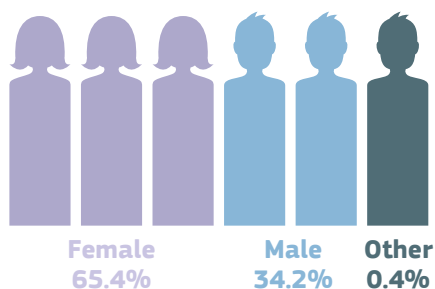
Since then, over 124,000 young people have registered. **More than 14,250 participants** have been participating in projects all over Europe.

The Commission proposed a €1.26 billion budget to strengthen and expand the European Solidarity Corps in the EU's next long-term budget, with the aim of providing at least **350,000 opportunities for young Europeans between 2021 and 2027**.

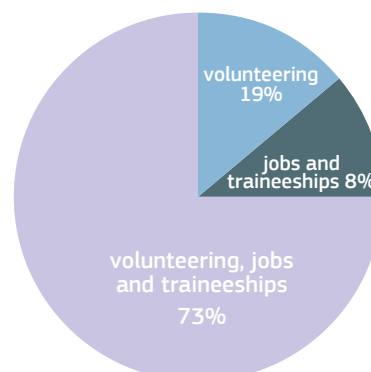
EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS: REGISTRATIONS BY NATIONALITY



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eTwinning is the largest teachers' network in the world from pre-primary to upper secondary schools. This programme allows teachers to create joint projects. eTwinning improves teachers' and pupils' competences and is crucial in building a European sense of belonging.

eTwinning in numbers



6 million
teachers in Europe

- Over **680,000 teachers** have registered on the eTwinning teachers' network.
- Over **205,000 schools** participated through the eTwinning platform.
- Close to **90,000 projects** have taken place in the eTwinning teachers' network since its launch in 2005, covering all Member States.

In October 2018 the Commission launched a new tool to support digital teaching and learning in schools: **SELFIE** (Self-reflection on Effective Learning by Fostering the use of Innovative Educational Technologies) will be offered to 76.7 million students and teachers in 250,000 schools on a voluntary basis.

Every year, the Commission releases the Education and Training Monitor, its flagship annual publication on education and training in the EU. With its international comparison and country analysis, the Monitor fuels the debate on priority themes for education and informs national education reform debates.

TOWARDS A EUROPEAN EDUCATION AREA BY 2025

In November 2017, for the first time in the EU's history, the 28 EU leaders debated the future of education and culture at the Gothenburg Social Summit.

This resulted in the European Council in December 2017 calling on Member States, the Council and the Commission to take forward the agenda discussed in Gothenburg.

As a starting point in November 2017, the Commission set out a vision for a **European Education Area by 2025** in its contribution to the leaders' meeting in Gothenburg: 'a Europe in which learning, studying and doing research would not be hampered by borders. A continent, where spending time in another Member State – to study, to learn, or to work – has become the standard and where, in addition to one's mother tongue, speaking two other languages has become the norm. A continent in which people have a strong sense of their identity as Europeans, of Europe's cultural heritage and its diversity.'

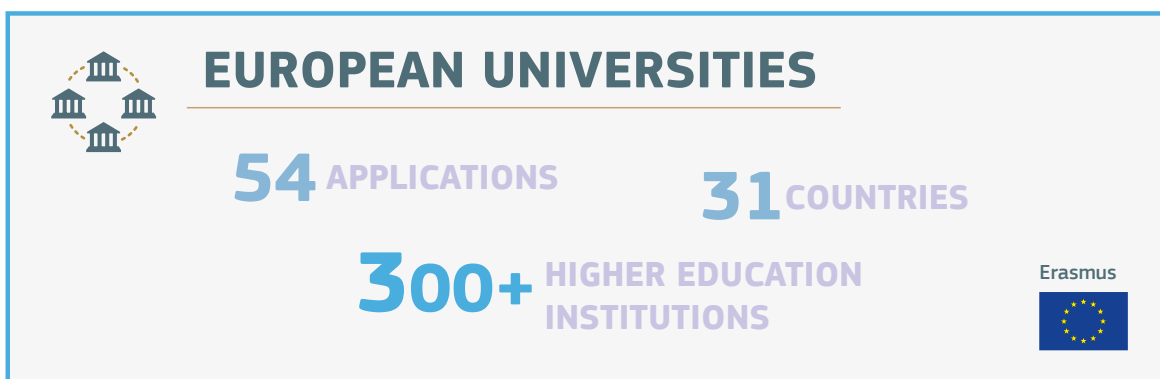
The European Education Area is designed to achieve **3 objectives**. Since the Gothenburg Summit, the Commission and the Member States have made concrete progress on each of them:

1. Promote cross-border mobility and cooperation in education and training

- Commission proposals for a substantially extended and inclusive **future Erasmus programme and European Solidarity Corps** (2021-2027) are under discussion in the European Parliament and the Council. The future Erasmus will support more than 12 million participants and the future European Solidarity Corps 350,000 young people.
- The **European Universities Initiative** will bring together a new generation of creative Europeans, who are able to cooperate across languages, borders and disciplines.

The first pilot call under the initiative resulted in applications from 54 alliances, involving more than 300 higher education institutions in 31 European countries including all EU Member States. The first 12 European Universities are due to be selected by summer 2019. A second pilot call is set to follow later this year, with a full roll out of the initiative envisaged under the future Erasmus programme as from 2021.

- The **European Student Card** to simplify learning mobility abroad and establish a clear European student identity is being tested on the basis of EU funded projects. This includes the **Erasmus without Paper Network** (now involving 800 universities) and the **Erasmus+ Mobile App** (downloaded by 60,000 students so far). The full roll out is foreseen by 2021.



2. Overcome obstacles that hinder learning in another country, the free movement of learners and the creation of a genuine European learning space

- To foster the **automatic mutual recognition** of higher education and upper secondary education diplomas and learning periods abroad by 2025 the Commission proposed a Council Recommendation which the Council adopted in November 2018.
- Boosting the teaching and learning of **languages** is the subject of a Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation scheduled for approval in May 2019. At the end of upper secondary school, young people should be able to fully use the language of schooling, fully use another European language, and confidently use a third language.

3. Support Member States in improving the inclusive, lifelong-learning based and innovation-driven nature of their education and training systems

- The Council Recommendation of May 2018 **on key competences for lifelong learning** was proposed by the Commission to foster the development of basic skills such as reading and maths as well as transversal competences such as learning to learn, citizenship and entrepreneurial skills.
- The Council adopted a second Recommendation in May 2018, on **promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching**. Based on a Commission proposal, it aims to strengthen inclusive learning and young people's experience of European identity, shared values, common heritage and diversity and the functioning of the EU.
- The Commission's **Digital Education Action Plan** of January 2018 aims to reach 1 million teachers, trainers and learners by the end of 2019 in all EU Member States and the Western Balkans to ensure that young people are not only digitally confident but also digitally competent.
- To ensure solid and inclusive foundations for lifelong learning, the Commission's proposal for a Council Recommendation on **high quality early childhood education and care** is due to be adopted in May 2019.

Turning the European Education Area into a reality by 2025 is a decisive step towards ensuring «*a Union where young people receive the best education and training and can study and find jobs across the continent*» as highlighted by the EU Leaders in the Rome Declaration of March 2017.

The **Youth Guarantee** is a commitment by all Member States to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 years receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

Each year more than 3.5 million young people registered in the Youth Guarantee are working or in training again.

The total **Youth Employment Initiative** budget is now **€8.8 billion**. It will continue to support more young people in need throughout the EU.