

CO-CREATING ERASMUS+ AND THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

28 & 29 JANUARY 2020, ULB CAMPUS SOLBOSCH BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

A2 - The truth about synergies

Summary of the discussion

The rationale for synergies has been identified as trying to solve common challenges (such as youth unemployment, rapid changes brought by digitalisation, modifications in the world of work, etc.) using different EU funding programmes as instruments, with a more strategic perspective. This entails the identification of 'win-win' situations whereby EU programmes work together in achieving common policy objectives such as high quality, effective, inclusive and relevant education and training, equal access to lifelong learning, boosting competences and skills levels relevant for the future of work and increased digitisation, enabling a more active participation in society, and increasing the effectiveness and performance of education systems in Member States. These are objectives that Erasmus+ and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) both contribute to achieving.

With a view to addressing the needs of particular target groups or policy objectives, collaboration of Erasmus+ and ESF+ can be envisaged at both programme and action level, through regular cooperation among the national authorities in charge. Synergies and complementarities could foster learning mobility, notably for people with fewer opportunities, or test innovative policies effectiveness and scalability through Erasmus+ policy experimentations before their take-up at regional or national level. Where a need is identified at regional or national level, Erasmus+ partnerships could be instrumental in developing occupational profiles, competence standards, or training programmes for specific professional branches that have a great potential for the development of national certifications. Opportunities also exist for involving directly public authorities in Erasmus+ partnerships fostering facilitating the take-up of successful results or of ready-to-use tried-and-tested deliverables at regional and national level, with potential to immediately respond to needs on the ground. The Seal of Excellence quality label is an instrument supported under the Cohesion Policy that enables good quality projects positively evaluated under Erasmus - but that could not be funded due to budgetary limitations- to seek alternative funding under Cohesion Policy funds such as the ESF+, when these projects fit their objectives. The building blocks to implement effective synergies cover awareness raising, enabling dialogue and collaboration among programmes' implementing bodies, facilitating common understanding of common challenges, priorities and objectives, sharing good practices and identifying opportunities for cooperation. Building trust among concerned bodies fosters the willingness to cooperate and facilitates coherent and coordinated actions at operational programming level.

Main outcomes/ operational conclusions

The session main conclusions were clustered around the needs, the key success factors and the cooperation fora allowing to effectively implement synergies and complementarities. There is a clear need to foster an approach of breaking the silos and further encouraging a proactive dialogue between the implementing authorities and bodies in the Member States. Specific needs have been respectively identified for beneficiaries, implementing bodies and national authorities, covering information, guidance and training, peer-learning. For example, joint events would help building knowledge about other funding instruments (funding mechanisms, rules and objectives). There is also a need to make funding rules more coherent. Other concrete proposals covered items such as valorising planned synergies in evaluation processes. The appropriate channels to communicate, interact and exchange best practices should maintain the link between the European, national and also regional levels, while the process of synergies should be steered with the support of an 'authority based driver'.