

# CO-CREATING ERASMUS+ AND THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

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

## **C8 - Making it easier to join the programmes**

### ***Summary of the discussion***

The Commission presented ideas for wider use of accreditations and quality labels in future Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes. The proposal is aimed at making the programmes more impactful and their management more efficient. The opening presentations were followed with a questions and answers session. The participants then split into groups to discuss specific topics about the accreditation schemes, including the key advantages that the accreditations can offer, the challenges that may be encountered by organisations wanting to benefit from this opportunity, and ideas on how the European Commission and the National Agencies can best support them.

### ***Main outcomes/ operational conclusions of the session***

The participants have identified a number of advantages offered by accreditation and quality labels schemes in both Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps. Less administration and more strategic thinking about programme activities were highlighted as very important aspects. Other simplification effects, such as flexibility of budget and planning, were also brought up. Generally, accreditations are seen as fostering organisational development through sustainable and continuous support. This can lead to significantly increased impact over a longer time because reliable access to funding allows accredited organisations to build capacity, improve quality of their activities, establish a network of reliable partners abroad, innovate, and try out new activities in an easier manner.

At the same time, a number of challenges have been identified which must be taken into account in preparation and implementation of the future schemes. Most importantly, the new system requires very good preparation to inform and support the applicants. There will be a period of getting used to the new concepts and care must be taken to ensure that all organisations feel welcome to the programme. Non-accredited organisations must not be discriminated. In terms of simplification, it is important to ensure that the accreditation process is not too long or heavy, and rules must stay flexible, especially when it comes to changes in plans and objectives.

Groups discussing ways to support organisations in the accreditation schemes have highlighted quality guidance as a key factor. Guidance can take many shapes: easy-to-understand written materials, online tools, workshops and trainings for different profiles of organisations, coaching, mentoring and peer-learning schemes, etc. Organisations also need to have all relevant information about reporting and other requirements in time. To provide the needed guidance and information to the applicants, the National Agencies also require support and resources, including staff training and sufficient budget to successfully launch the accreditations systems.