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Foundation for the Management of
European Lifelong Learning Programmes

INCLUSION & DIVERSITY STRATEGY 2021 – 2027

FOUNDATION FOR THE MANAGEMENT
OF LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMMES



Erasmus+
Enriching lives, opening minds.



Inclusion & Diversity Strategy 2021 – 2027

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INTRODUCTION

The Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes are initiatives committed to promoting inclusion and diversity through the learning and training opportunities offered. People with fewer opportunities can be reached and informed, while their participation should be strongly encouraged. Therefore, a strategic approach to Inclusion and Diversity is essential to increase the impact of the programmes and strengthen social inclusion of young people.

The Foundation for the Management of Lifelong Learning Programmes has developed the current Inclusion and Diversity Strategy in line with the objectives of the Framework of Inclusion Measures of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps (ESC) 2021 – 2027, and following the Implementation Guidelines for the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy.

AIM

This Strategy aims to foster equal opportunities, improve access to learning and enhance participation for everyone to the Erasmus+ Programme¹. This should be achieved by addressing the barriers that prevent full engagement of different target groups (described below) in such opportunities within Europe and beyond. ***The Regulations establishing the Erasmus+ (2021/817) and ESC Programmes (2021/888) define ‘people with fewer opportunities’ as people who, for economic, social, cultural, geographical or health reasons, due to their migrant background, or for reasons such as disability or educational difficulties or for any other reason, including a reason that could give rise to discrimination under Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, face obstacles that prevent them from having effective access to opportunities under the Programme.*** Hence, this strategy provides an enabling inclusion and diversity framework for projects supported through the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes.

The Strategy covers the total duration of the Programme period of Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, namely 2021-2027 and consists of specific objectives, target groups, inclusion approaches and methods for monitoring the strategy’s implementation.

The aforementioned aim follows upon the aims set in “[Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy](#)” listed below:

¹ Implementation Guidelines for the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy

1. Establishing a common understanding of those who may be considered people with fewer opportunities and set up a coherent framework for including them in the programmes;
2. Increasing commitment to inclusion and diversity from all actors in the programmes' actions and a positive approach to diversity of all kinds in the projects;
3. Supporting beneficiary organisations in establishing more quality projects involving people with fewer opportunities (e.g. provide training, tools, funding, coaching etc.);
4. Reducing barriers to participation in the programmes for people with fewer opportunities and helping applicants and potential applicants to overcome these barriers, as well as establishing appropriate conditions for learning, working or volunteering by addressing their support needs;
5. Fostering the recognition of the experience and competences developed by people with fewer opportunities in the programmes and by the people working with them;
6. Ensuring that the focus on inclusion and diversity is taken into account at all stages of the programmes' management and project life-cycle: before (promotion, outreach, support, assessment, etc.), during (participant selection, preparation, implementation, results, etc.) and after the project (evaluation, dissemination and exploitation of project outcomes, follow-up, etc.).
7. Increase the visibility of inclusion and diversity and its role in the high-quality implementation of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programmes.

OBJECTIVES

1. Inclusion of people facing access barriers or having fewer opportunities in education, training, sports, youth work and solidarity activities, which are the sectors under Erasmus+ and the ESC Programmes.
2. Promotion of equal access to the Erasmus+ and ESC Programmes: The strategy shall promote equal access for everyone to the opportunities provided by the Programmes. This will be ensured by identifying potential access barriers to different target groups and addressing those barriers by establishing appropriate measures.
3. Fostering capacity building for all involved actors, which has a twofold objective:
 - a. the strategy shall increase the capabilities of the National Agency and its staff members regarding their role in supporting people with fewer opportunities to access the Programmes and in supporting projects in becoming as inclusive and diverse as possible.
 - b. The strategy shall also build the capacity of target groups to effectively access the Programmes' opportunities.

PILLARS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF NA ACTIVITIES

1. Networking & Establishment of Synergies

- 1.1. Conducting meetings with stakeholders, including ministries and other public institutions, representatives of marginalised groups or people at risk of exclusion, bodies, groups and organizations working with youth.
- 1.2. Establishment of synergies with relevant stakeholders in order to strengthen Pillar 2 (Outreach & Awareness Raising) and Pillar 3 (Capacity-Building) of the current strategy.
- 1.3. Participation in relevant strategic partnerships that complement the NA's actions and facilitate best practices sharing and awareness raising on the needs and potential of the defined target groups.

2. Outreach & Awareness Raising

- 2.1. Organising of public events, info sessions and other activities open to the public, with the aim of raising awareness regarding the opportunities provided by Erasmus+ and ESC for people with fewer opportunities as well as showcasing the inclusion and diversity thematic. Accessibility will be guaranteed by (a) implementing the activities in venues that can be accessed by everyone, (b) by offering the possibility for online participation when and where appropriate and (c) by adapting the informational material according to the audience, etc.
- 2.2. Develop an awareness raising campaign which would include the promotion of information through the NA's website, as well as through its social media channels; design of informative material; promotion of information through mainstream media.
- 2.3. Promoting best practice projects, in order to raise awareness, be a source of inspiration for others and motivate newcomers (participants, bodies, groups, etc.) to participate and actively engage in future programmes.

3. Capacity-Building

- 3.1. Organise and conduct training activities for target group organisations regarding the available actions of Erasmus+ and the ESC, the application process as well as how to highlight the inclusion and diversity priority in their projects.
- 3.2. Organise and conduct training activities for newcomer organisations on the efficient management of their projects. The topics of inclusion and diversity will be adequately discussed during meetings with beneficiaries organised before or at the beginning of the implementation of the projects (kick-off meetings) and in every monitoring and advisory activity carried out by NA.
- 3.3. Organise and conduct capacity-building activities for NA staff regarding Inclusion & Diversity related issues. Ensure participation of NA staff in capacity-building activities organised by the EC, SALTO Inclusion and Diversity (Education and Training and Youth) and/or other NAs.

3.4. Accessibility for all aforementioned actions will be guaranteed by (a) implementing the activities in venues that can be accessed by everyone, (b) by offering the possibility for online participation when and where appropriate, and (c) by adapting the informational material according to the audience, etc. In addition, geographic balance will be ensured. Facilitation of participation with sign language interpretation or any other arrangements required. Targeted promotion of capacity-building and networking opportunities at European level to target groups will be performed. The NA has included in all its Programmes' websites an accessibility menu to facilitate access for everyone, including people with disabilities, to perceive, understand, navigate and interact with the websites.

4. Monitoring of Implementation

- 4.1. Data collection to monitor the efficiency of the strategy will be performed through monitoring of accredited beneficiaries via primary checks and evaluation of feedback received by the beneficiaries, as indicated below.
- 4.2. ECHE and Accreditation monitoring: The NA shall place a lot of emphasis on the evaluation of beneficiary organisations during primary checks. Dedicated questions have already been included in the questionnaires submitted by the beneficiary organisations primary to the checks and the questionnaires filled in by the NA staff during the check.
- 4.3. Feedback received from beneficiaries: The NA shall evaluate all feedback received in the form of complaints, comments or opinions through various sources such as phone calls, emails, formal complaints submitted through the website of the organisation or through comments in the Final Reports of beneficiaries.

5. Impact Assessment

- 5.1. Evaluation of the impact of the strategy through yearly report statistics and feedback received from beneficiary and other organisations.

6. Internal Arrangements

- 6.1. The NA has appointed an Inclusion Officer, who ensures that the I&D Strategy is effectively implemented and continuously improved. The Inclusion Officer acts as the point of contact for all issues related to inclusion and diversity.
- 6.2. Newly recruited employees will be required to familiarise themselves with the NA's Inclusion and Diversity Strategy and ensure that its principles are reflected in their daily work.

DEFINITION OF PARTICIPANTS WITH FEWER OPPORTUNITIES

Within the framework of the National Action Plan for Integration and Diversity, people with fewer opportunities are defined as individuals:

- with physical, mental and psychological disabilities
- with physical and mental health issues, serious illnesses, or chronic illnesses, leading to disability
- with a low socio-economic background
- with an immigrant or refugee background
- who are children of single-parent, three-children or large families and have been approved to receive the Single-Parent Family Allowance and the Child Allowance for families with three children or more, respectively
- who are parents themselves and fall into the category of people with a low socio-economic background
- who come from rural, underdeveloped or remote areas
- who come from rural families monitored by Social Welfare Services and children in care
- who have learning disabilities
- who are parents or have careers, not included in the categories above, and cannot be absent for a long-term period

ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATIONS BY CATEGORY

Below additional clarifications are provided for each category of participants with fewer opportunities. **Examples** of documentation that each beneficiary organisation may request are also presented. **It should be noted that the list and examples are not exhaustive.** Variations may occur depending on the country of origin of the individual, so the beneficiary organisation reserves the right to accept other supporting documents.

Higher Education Institutions or other organizations with their own methods of documenting the categories listed below may continue to use their established documentation processes as per their procedures, which shall also apply for the purposes of the Erasmus+ and ESC Programmes.

In this context, and for personal data protection of individuals falling within any category, those responsible for mobility do not need to request the relevant documentation again, if another department of the organisation has already completed a specific process and assessed individuals as having fewer opportunities.

It is also noted, for informational purposes, that regarding any personal data or supporting files of participants in the Programmes, the NA shall follow the provisions stipulated by the [Law on the Protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data.](#)

Example

If the Student Welfare Office of a Higher Education Institution has already assessed a student as having certain socioeconomic barriers, it is sufficient for the Erasmus Office of that institution to receive a confirmation from Student Welfare (via email is also permitted) stating that this individual falls indeed within a specific category. In this case and in cases where inclusion support is allocated based on actual costs, both the resulting top-ups and the additional organisational costs of the institution per person are justified.

In the event of an audit, the NA shall primarily rely on the confirmation from Student Welfare as proof of the eligibility of the expense. However, it may be requested from the Student Welfare, on a sample basis, to provide specific documentation that was used for the assessment of an individual (i.e. documentation beyond the email sent to the Erasmus Office). Such documentation may take the form of that presented on the following pages.

All organisations in all SECTORS and ACTIONS managing the mobility of individuals categorised as having fewer opportunities, are expected to act in a similar manner. For example, a School Mobility Coordinator may receive confirmation for specific individuals either through the Principal or the School Counsellor.

The above method ensures the protection of the personal data of individuals, as any supporting documents submitted by them to their institution are kept on file by individuals responsible for managing the specific information.

Additional clarifications are provided below for each of the categories of participants with fewer opportunities, including the evaluation criteria that the applicant organization is expected to apply, as well as the evidence attesting to the particular situation.

A. Disabilities and Health Problems

Participants include individuals with:

- physical, mental and psychological disabilities.
- physical and mental health issues, serious illnesses or chronic illnesses, which lead to disability.
- learning difficulties (i.e. dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyspraxia, etc).

Evaluation Criteria:

1. The person is registered in the [National Register For The Disabled of the Department of Social Integration of Persons With Disabilities](#). The Disability Register includes the following forms of disability or chronic illnesses that cause disability:
 - vision impairment
 - deafness
 - movement dysfunction
 - any other physical disability (i.e. hematological)
 - mental
 - psychological

2. The person has learning difficulties, (i.e. dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyspraxia, etc)

Proof:

- The Disability Card, or the Integrated Disability Report, received upon the completion of the disability and functionality evaluation process by the Department of Social Inclusion of Persons With Disabilities, or,
- Diagnosis or evaluation by a specialist in the case of a learning disability.

B. Socio-economic barriers

Participants include:

- People who are coming from a low socio-economic background
- People who are parents themselves and fall into the category of people with a low socioeconomic background
- People with an immigrant or refugee background
- People who are children of single-parent families, three-children families or large families and have been approved to receive the Single-Parent Family Benefit and the Child Benefit for families with three or more children respectively
- People who come from rural, underdeveloped or remote areas
- People who come from families monitored by Social Welfare Services and children in care
- People who are parents or have careers, not included in the categories above, and cannot be absent for a long-term period

B1. Low socio-economic background

This category includes participants who either themselves or their families face barriers due to socioeconomic factors.

Evaluation Criteria:

- The person (or his/her parent or guardian) is/are registered in the [Unified Register of Beneficiaries of the Welfare Benefits Management Services of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance](#), or
- The person (or his/her parent or guardian) is a recipient of the Minimum Guaranteed Income.

Proof:

- Certification or other proof that the person is registered in the Unified Register of Beneficiaries of the Welfare Benefits Management Services, or
- Certification or other proof that the person is a recipient of the Minimum Guaranteed Income

B2. Children of Single-Parent Families, three-children families or large families

This category includes participants who are children of single-parent, three-children families or large families who have been approved to receive the respective Benefit. Participants who are themselves parents of such families, have the same rights.

Evaluation Criteria:

- The person (or the parent or guardian) is/are registered in the [Unified Register of Beneficiaries of the Welfare Benefits Management Services of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance](#), or
- The person (or his/her parent or guardian) is a recipient of the Single Parent Family Benefit and of the Child Benefit for families with three or more children respectively.

Proof:

- Certification or other proof that the person is registered in the Unified Register of Beneficiaries of the Welfare Benefits Management Service, or
- Certification or other proof that the person is a recipient of the Single Parent Benefit and of the Child Benefit for families with three or more children respectively.

B3. Children of families who are being monitored by the Social Welfare Services and children in care

This category includes participants who are children of families being monitored by the Social Welfare Services or are children in care.

Evaluation Criteria:

- The family of the participant is being monitored by the Social Welfare Services
- The participant is registered in the Register of Children in the Care of the Director of the Social Welfare Services.
- The participant is financial aid recipient on the basis of the [Support Plan for Children who were Formerly in the Care of the Director of the Social Welfare Services, after they turn 18](#).

Proof:

- Certification or other proof that the family of the participant is monitored by the Social Welfare Services, or
- Certification or other proof that the participant is registered in the Registry of Children in the Care of the Director of the Social Welfare Services, or
- Certification or other proof that the person is a recipient of financial aid by the Social Welfare Services based on the Support Plan for Children who were Formerly in the Care of the Director of the Social Welfare Services after they turn 18.

B4. Immigrant or Refugee Background

This category includes participants with an immigrant or refugee background.

Evaluation Criteria:

The person holds a temporary residence permit or residence permit or other certificate in accordance with the existing regulations of the [Department of Population and Immigration Archives](#), depending on the category to which he/she belongs.

Proof:

- Temporary residence permit or residence permit or,
- Any other certificate in accordance with the existing regulations of the Department of Population and Immigration Archives, depending on the category to which he/she belongs.

B5. From rural, underdeveloped, remote and borderland areas

This category includes participants who come from rural, underdeveloped, or remote areas.

Evaluation Criteria:

The participant comes from a mountainous or disadvantaged area based on the definition of the Ministry of Interior, as defined within the framework of the [Housing Plan for the Revitalization of Mountainous, Borderland and Disadvantaged Areas](#) Annex B1: Geographical Area of Application A – Rural Areas, [Annex B2](#): Geographical Area of Application B – Mountainous and Disadvantaged Areas and [Annex B3](#): Geographical Area of Application C – Extremely Mountainous and Small and Remote Communities/Areas or [the Housing Scheme for the Revitalization of Specific Rural Areas](#) Annex B - Geographical Area of Application.

Proof:

- An attestation by the President of the Community Council of the particular community regarding the person's permanent residence (or that of his/her family) in his community, or
- A copy of recent electricity and water bills for the address given, or
- A copy of a current tenancy agreement in those cases where the participant (or his/her family) do not own the property in which they reside, or
- Certificate of Permanent Residence from the Department of Population and Immigration Archives or the Citizen's Service Centre.

B6. Parents or individuals with careers, not included in other categories and cannot be absent for a long-term period

This category includes participants who are parents or have careers, not included in the categories referred to above, and cannot be absent for a long-term period abroad due to their family or career obligations.

Evaluation Criteria:

The participant is a parent or an individual with a career (full-time), studying in parallel, and cannot acquire a long-term leave from their employer for educational purposes.

Proof:

- Birth Certificate(s) of Children
- Analytical Statement of Remuneration of the Insured by Employer by Year from the Social Insurance Services of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurances.
- Certificate by their employer stating that they cannot be granted long-term leave due to the internal policy of the organization.

ANNEX I

KEY DEFINITIONS

Target Groups

The Regulations establishing the Erasmus+ [\(2021/817\)](#) and ESC Programmes [\(2021/888\)](#) define ‘people with fewer opportunities’ as people who, for economic, social, cultural, geographical or health reasons, due to their migrant background, or for reasons such as disability or educational difficulties or for any other reason, including a reason that could give rise to discrimination under Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, face obstacles that prevent them from having effective access to opportunities under the Programme.

In order to establish a common understanding of those who may be considered people with fewer opportunities, the NA has conducted a comprehensive mapping exercise which enables it to identify the groups mostly at risk according to the national context. However, the NA considers this list as non-exhaustive, understanding the diversity of beneficiaries and the complexity and unpredictability of barriers they might be facing.

Barriers in accessibility and outreach

A general overview of barriers which inhibit people from participating in the Programme are listed below, as those are presented in the “[Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy](#)”. Previous experience helps to identify the main barriers which may prevent people with fewer opportunities from participating more in the programmes as participants. The list of such potential barriers, spelt out below, is not exhaustive and is meant to provide a reference for taking action with a view to increasing accessibility and outreach to people with fewer opportunities. These barriers can hinder their participation both as a stand-alone factor and in combination among them.

- 1. Disabilities:** This includes physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, when in interaction with various barriers, may hinder someone’s full and effective participation in society on the same level as other citizens.
- 2. Health problems:** Barriers may result from health issues including severe illnesses, chronic diseases, or any other physical or mental health-related situation that prevents one from participating in the programme.
- 3. Barriers linked to education and training systems:** Individuals struggling to perform within education and training systems for various reasons, early school-leavers, NEETs (people not in education, employment or training) and low-skilled adults may encounter barriers. Although other factors may play a role, these educational difficulties, while also linked to personal circumstances, mostly result from an educational system which creates structural limitations and/or does not fully consider the individual’s particular needs. Individuals can also face barriers to participation when the structure of the curricula makes it difficult to undertake a learning or training mobility abroad as part of their studies.

- 4. Cultural differences:** While cultural differences may be perceived as barriers by people representing any background, they can particularly affect people with limited opportunities. Such differences may represent significant barriers to learning in general, for people with a migrant or refugee experience – especially newly-arrived migrants -, people belonging to a national or ethnic minority, sign language users, people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion difficulties, etc. Being exposed to foreign languages and cultural differences when taking part in any kind of programme activities may put off individuals and somehow limit the participation benefits. And such cultural differences may even prevent potential participants from applying for support via the programme, thereby representing an entry barrier altogether.
- 5. Social barriers:** Social adjustment difficulties such as limited social competences, anti-social or high-risk behaviours, (former) offenders, (former) drug or alcohol abusers, or social marginalisation may constitute a barrier. Other social barriers can stem from family circumstances, for instance being the first in the family to access higher education or being a parent (especially a single parent), a caregiver, a breadwinner or an orphan, or having lived or currently living under institutional care.
- 6. Economic barriers:** Economic disadvantage such as low standard of living, low income, learners who need to work to support themselves, dependence on the social welfare system, long-term unemployment, precarious situations or poverty, being homeless, in debt or experiencing financial problems, etc., may represent a barrier. Other difficulties may derive from limited transferability of services (in particular, support to people with limited opportunities).
- 7. Barriers linked to discrimination:** Barriers can occur as a result of discriminations based on gender, age, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation, disability, or intersectional factors (a combination of two or several of the mentioned discrimination barriers).
- 8. Geographical barriers:** Living in remote or rural areas, on small islands or in peripheral/outermost regions, in urban suburbs, in less serviced areas (limited public transport, poor facilities) or less developed areas within third countries, etc., may constitute a barrier.

ANNEX II

Summary of the Programmes' mechanisms to support inclusion and diversity

The programmes offer the methodology, structures and networks to encourage and enable positive personal encounters during its activities, to navigate diversity and contribute to social cohesion. Below there is a brief presentation of the features and mechanisms embedded in the Programmes which support and foster inclusion and diversity.

- 1. Inclusion and diversity form part of the selection criteria process:** Quality projects that actively address inclusion and diversity and that involve participants with fewer opportunities, newcomer and grass-root organisations shall be given priority in the grant awarding process.
- 2. Accessibility and user-friendliness of the Programme:** The programmes follow a user-friendly approach in making programme guidance, application and reporting mechanisms, documents and forms clearer, shorter and more understandable. Online platforms are designed to cater for equal accessibility and participation for all, but especially for participants with fewer opportunities.
- 3. Preparatory visits:** When participants with fewer opportunities are involved in mobility activities, project organisers can carry out planning visits to the organisations hosting the activity in a different country, together with these participants. They can also help provide personalised support and assess the individual needs of the participant, so that relevant arrangements are made.
- 4. Reinforced mentorship:** It is an intensified mentoring process that can be used to support participants with fewer opportunities in certain actions of the programmes, if they are not able to implement an activity independently or with normal mentoring or tutoring support.
- 5. Dedicated financial support:** The programmes offer financial support mechanisms to enable and foster inclusion and diversity across projects including a) additional funding aimed at covering costs of any specific needs of participants experiencing fewer opportunities, b) additional financial support for organisations who run projects actively fostering inclusion and diversity, c) flexible and easy-to-understand financial mechanisms, d) dedicated funding specifically intended to support smaller organisations with little or no prior experience in submitting applications under the programmes.
- 6. Smaller, easier-to-access actions:** Specific sections of the programmes (KA1 small scale projects of all sectors and KA210 projects of all sectors) are particularly suited for organisations with smaller administrative capacity (as organisations supporting people with fewer opportunities can sometimes have) or who are newcomers to the programme. These types of activities are characterised by smaller and more flexible grant amounts, simpler administrative and reporting requirements, as well as shorter project duration, allowing them to grow and build their capacities. Moreover, certain actions of the programme, such as the KA155 DiscoverEU Inclusion action, have been specifically

designed in order to provide support for young people with fewer opportunities to travel across Europe.

- 7. Step-by-step capacity building pathways:** The different project formats in Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps allow to offer cross-border experiences according to people's (particularly those with fewer opportunities) needs and possibilities in different stages in their life, thus building up capacity step by step.
- 8. Project Format and Mobility duration:** Short-term mobilities and small-scale projects can form the first experience for individuals with fewer opportunities who for various reasons may not be able or do not feel prepared to participate in a long-term mobility. Furthermore, group projects can be followed by individual activities (KA1 individual mobility), and a short physical mobility can be combined with online experiences through participation in virtual and blended mobilities.
- 9. European Activities at local level:** The programmes provide opportunities at the local level through the involvement of international participants and/or the project theme. These activities can provide a first experience to the target groups and can serve as a bridge to other cross-border experiences.
- 10. Online exchanges:** The programmes also offer opportunities for intercultural exchanges online as an additional and complementary option for participants with fewer opportunities (i.e. Virtual/ Blended mobilities).
- 11. Language learning support:** Language learning opportunities are also provided, either through the Erasmus+ Online Language Support or through other financial linguistic incentives when the latter is not available or for activities requiring specific linguistic learning.