



Strengthening EU Values through digital participation

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a person's hands holding a blue European Union flag with yellow stars. The flag is waving, and the background shows green foliage.

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Horizontal priorities



Inclusion and diversity

Reaching out to all participants and fostering inclusive approaches for mobility and cooperation activities

Green

Building up knowledge on sustainability and climate action and promote the use of green travel

Digital

Developing accessible and high-quality digital learning and foster digital capacities

Active participation

Enhancing participation in democratic life and civic engagement

Title

“Participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement”

- Not only about elections and voting
- Not only “traditional” forms (elections, student councils etc.)



- It empowers people to become active citizens
=>promotes social inclusion and strengthens democratic values.
- Ensures that diverse voices contribute to shaping a more inclusive and democratic Europe.



Equips people with skills like teamwork, communication, and problem-solving, while promoting equal access to learning.

15-million participants

- Big milestone achieved in 2024: since the start of the programme in 1987, over 15 million people have taken part in Erasmus+ learning mobility!

Erasmus+
Enriching lives, opening minds.

2021-2027



European
Commission



Overview

Through this priority, the Erasmus+ Programme addresses the citizens' limited participation in democratic processes and their lack of knowledge about the European Union

Why it matters? Civic engagement helps in developing critical skills, leadership, problem-solving, media literacy, intercultural awareness

European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025

Council of Europe



Democratic participation starts here

How the programme contributes



Empower civic engagement projects



Embed EU values in projects



Connect communities



Erasmus+

2021-2027

Enriching lives, opening minds.

Democratic participation starts here

How organisations contribute



Design participation-themed projects



Encourage participatory mindset



Educate about EU values



Connect with local communities



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Erasmus+

2021-2027

Enriching lives, opening minds.

Democratic participation starts here

How participants contribute



Engage in a local community



Take part in projects on EU values



Inspire others to take action



Erasmus+

2021-2027

Enriching lives, opening minds.

Play

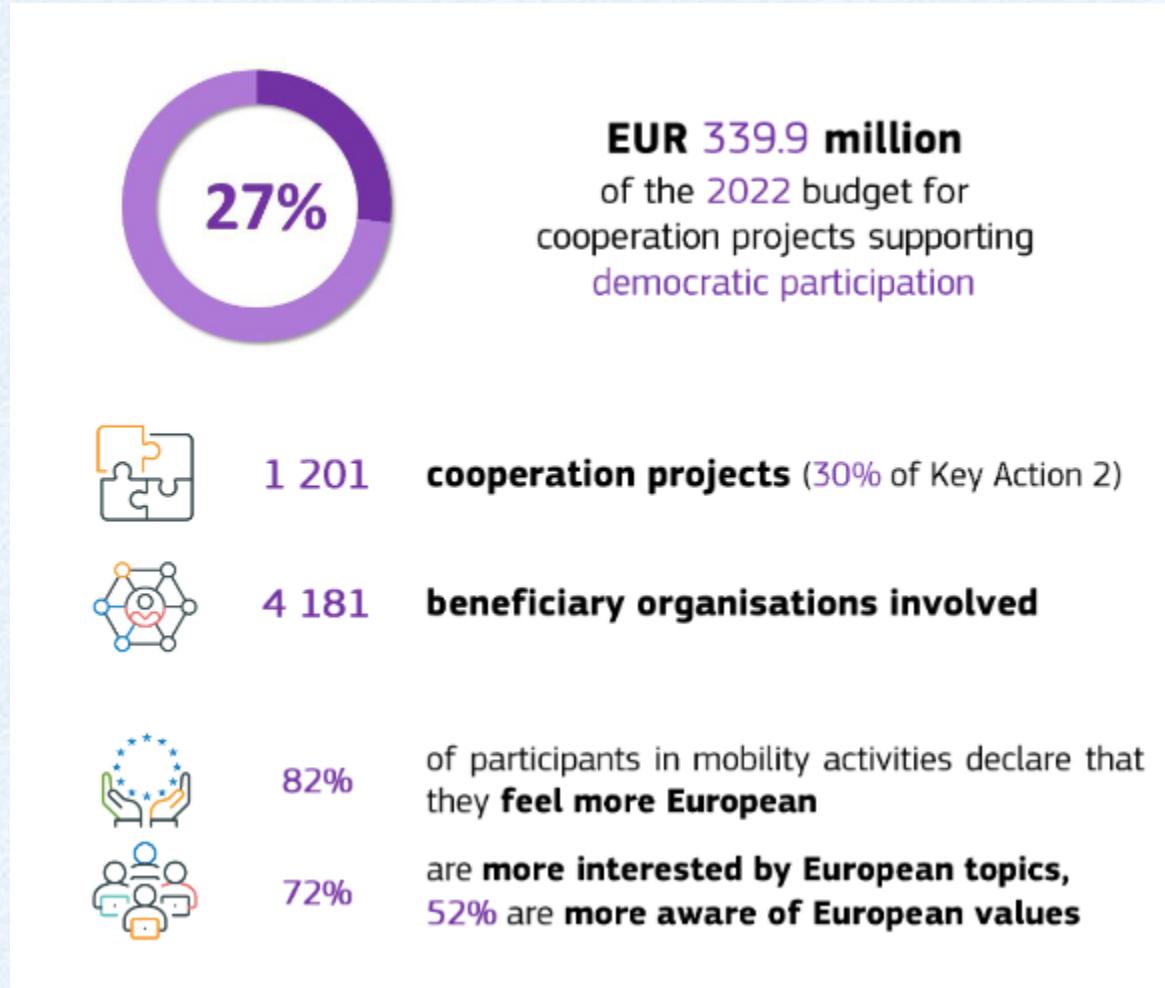


Mid-term review: preliminary results

One of the main distinguishing features of Erasmus+ is its **European dimension** and its ambition to foster a sense of **European belonging/identity**.

Evaluation findings suggest widespread recognition of this feature of the scheme. The most acknowledged impact is an **increase in the sense of belonging to the EU**.

Mid-term review: preliminary results



Mid-term review: preliminary results

The programme's horizontal priorities are considered **extremely relevant** to the current needs and challenges of our societies. This applies also to **participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement**

There is significant progress in **promoting the horizontal priorities**, which are more and more taken on board by beneficiaries, generating a transformative effect.

The Path Forward

The Council conclusions (Nov 2023) on the contribution of education and training to strengthening common European values and democratic citizenship invited the Commission to consider **incorporating tools** to ensure better knowledge of the EU and common European values, prior to or in parallel with an Erasmus+ learning mobility or cooperation partnership, such as **a learning module** adapted to the age and profile of participants.

The Path Forward

Proposal for a

REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

establishing the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028-2034, and repealing Regulations (EU) 2021/817 and (EU) 2021/888

In line with the EU Preparedness Union Strategy ³⁷, preparedness, resilience, participation in democratic life and civic engagement should be fostered through a bottom-up approach, encouraging organisations and institutions to play a key role in fostering digital and media literacy, critical thinking, promoting civic engagement, and learning about democracy and citizenship. People and communities across the EU must engage actively to prevent crises and to be sufficiently prepared to respond to them.

The Programme should encourage participation, in particular of young people, in Europe's democratic life, including by supporting activities that contribute to citizenship education, nurture skills needed for civic engagement and enable to engage and learn to participate in civic society, thereby raising awareness of European common values, including fundamental rights, facilitating interaction with decision-makers at local, national and European levels and contributing to the process of European integration. The Programme should also support the creation of opportunities and mechanisms for meaningful youth participation.

2. The Programme has the following specific objectives.

- (a) support the improvement of education, skills and competences with particular regard to their relevance for the labour market as well as to the professional development and personal growth of the individual and to their contribution to a competitive, sustainable and cohesive society;
- (b) foster a sense of European identity and active citizenship, enhance solidarity and active participation in society and democracy, inducing a positive societal impact, greater resilience and better preparedness to anticipate, prevent and respond to risks of different nature;

The Path Forward

Context of the proposal

Exclusion in the Union, 11% of young people aged 15 to 29 are still neither in employment nor in education or training. The lack of affordable housing further exacerbates this vulnerability, limiting young people's access to education and learning mobility opportunities.

Young people tend to participate less in institutional politics and other democratic processes than other age groups and much less than young people in the past¹¹. They can be confronted with obstacles in their participation in democracy, such as insufficient knowledge of their democratic rights, difficult access to information and limited involvement in decision-making processes. Democratic institutions and processes themselves can be inaccessible and unwelcoming to young people. These challenges, including multiple skills requirements, cannot be met through formal education and training only. Non-formal and informal learning, involvement in activities such as volunteering, or sport bring complementary value. They can offer valuable opportunities for people to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours to grow and become active and engaged citizens. However, opportunities for such actions are limited, thus negatively impacting social capital development, particularly among young people.

Programme contribution and objectives

cultural, social, economic, or geographical background, or any special needs they may have.

Through boosting mobility and accompanying support measures, the future Erasmus+ should strengthen its contribution to the fifth basic skill of democratic citizenship and to the development of a sense of European identity and commitment to EU values. It is a cornerstone programme for promoting democratic and societal participation, by integrating citizenship and engagement in all Programme fields, in particular school education, better aligning with new priorities like preparedness, and unlocking the full potential of the sport field notably through expanding mobility activities in the field of sport to involve athletes alongside coaches.

By offering volunteering opportunities and activities to engage and express solidarity, the Programme will further promote the development of a culture of

Conclusion

- Remember the importance of the priority
- Our “digital world” means that our daily lives are deeply integrated with and shaped by digital technology
- Education and training is also about participation and critical thinking