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TCA International - **Synergy of funds**

Enhancing Education and Employment through Erasmus+ and ESF+ Synergy

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2 Romanian National Agency models

National context and facts

Newcomers/less-experienced beneficiaries vs experienced beneficiaries always created an imbalance in the geographical and homogeneous coverage of Erasmus+ funded educational projects.

In the previous Erasmus+ generation, in many years, RO NA could finance only one out of 3 even 4 qualitative projects in different sectors (VET, ADU, SCH).

Also, at an individual level, many of the students claimed financial barriers when intending to go to study abroad through HED financial support.

Starting from this, even receiving a budget that is increasing from one year to the next, RO NA is unable to meet these needs, despite huge demand.

In this respect, based on other NAs previous experience, we approached the 2 national authorities in Romania to address this need through other EU financial support: Ministry of Education and Ministry of European Investments and projects.

Potential solution

The next step was to propose a concrete set of support measures to be part of the negotiations for 2021-2027 financing mechanism within the European Social Fund+ (ESF+).

As a direct result, the main proposed synergy mechanism between the two programs is the **complementarity of funding**, meaning that ESF+ will provide additional financial support to complement Erasmus+ grants in certain key areas and sectors.

A clear example of this synergy is the support for transnational mobility in the field of adult education and VET sectors.

ESF+ can fund adult and VET mobility projects that have obtained the minimum required score through Erasmus+ but could not be funded due to budgetary constraints.

Another important example is the additional **financial support for students** with fewer opportunities participating in Erasmus+ mobilities. Through the ESF+, these students can receive a top-up of grants to cover their specific needs during their mobility.

This additional support facilitates access to Erasmus+ opportunities for a category of students facing economic, social or other barriers.

What were the reasons behind this?

Shared objectives of the two programs

Quality and Inclusiveness in Education: Erasmus+ and EEP/FSE+ (Education and Employment Program) prioritize the development of inclusive education systems, supporting equitable access for disadvantaged groups.

Lifelong Learning: Both programs emphasize the importance of ongoing skill development to facilitate workforce transitions and adaptability

Adaptation to Technological and Market Changes: EEP/FSE+ addresses the demands of a dynamic labor market, ensuring that educational programs stay relevant and integrate new skills, especially in digital literacy and entrepreneurship

Expected Outcomes

Increased Mobility and Employability: Aiming for at least 23% of higher education graduates to experience educational mobility, and a target where 20% of participants in educational mobility are from disadvantaged groups.

Enhanced Digital and Entrepreneurial Skills: Participants are expected to gain key competencies aligned with the needs of the modern economy.

Greater Workforce Flexibility: By preparing students for current labor market demands, the synergy between Erasmus+ and EEP/FSE+ supports smoother transitions into employment

Financial Mechanisms and Additional Support

Funding Allocation: EEP/FSE+ provides financial supplements to Erasmus+ grants, ensuring that more students, especially those from vulnerable backgrounds, can participate in mobility programs.

Institutional Support: Accredited institutions from VET and ADU sectors will receive financial aid to enhance mobility projects, which are prioritized based on quality standards.

Budgeting and Resource Allocation: Each program strategically allocates resources to maximize impact, particularly in underfunded areas, to improve educational accessibility and quality.

Where are we now

The implementation of the Erasmus+ and ESF+ synergy strategy is not the responsibility of a single entity, but involves close collaboration between a variety of actors at national and European levels.

The thematic Working Group facilitated the dialogue and coordination between different actors involved in the implementation of the synergy between Erasmus+ and ESF+.

Also, the effectiveness of this synergy depends on well-functioning coordination mechanisms and the active involvement of all stakeholders and well established functioning mechanisms such as:

The partnership Agreement establishes the strategic framework for the use of EU funds in Romania, including ESF+ and Erasmus+, ensuring coherence and complementarity of interventions.

The guidelines for Applicants set out the specific eligibility and funding conditions for projects that can benefit from the synergy between Erasmus+ and ESF+.

The EEP Monitoring Committee monitors the implementation of the program and ensures coherence with other EU-funded programs, including Erasmus+.

Thank you for your attention!

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