



I. Framework

The Erasmus+ Programme seeks to promote equal opportunities and access, inclusion, diversity and fairness across all its actions.

Organisations and the participants with fewer opportunities themselves are at the heart of these objectives and with these in mind, the programme puts mechanisms and resources at their disposal. When designing their projects and activities, organisations should have an inclusive approach, making them accessible to a diverse range of participants.

To achieve this, National Agencies are also vital to support projects with a view for these to being as inclusive and diverse as possible. Based on the overall principles and mechanisms at European level, National Agencies will draw up inclusion and diversity plans to best address the needs of participants with fewer opportunities and to support the organisations working with these target groups in their national context.



I.1. EUROPEAN CONTEXT: INCLUSION BARRIERS WITHIN THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME¹



In order to implement these principles, a **Framework on inclusion measures**² as well as an **Inclusion and Diversity Strategy**³ covering all programme fields have been developed to support an easier access to funding for a wider range of organisations, and to better reach out to more participants with fewer opportunities. It also sets up the space and mechanisms for those projects, supported through the programme, which intend to work on inclusion and diversity related issues. This Strategy aims to help addressing the barriers different target groups may face in accessing such opportunities within Europe and beyond.

PRIORITIES OF THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME | ERASMUS+ (EUROPA.EU)

²COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION - FRAMEWORK OF INCLUSION MEASURES OF FRASMUS+ AND FUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS 2021-27 LERASMUS+ (FUROPA FU)

³ IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES - ERASMUS+ AND EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY STRATEGY | ERASMUS+ (EUROPA.EU)

The list of such potential barriers, spelt out below, is not exhaustive and is meant to provide a reference in 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:

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DISABILITIES:

This includes physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder someone's full and effective participation in society on the same footing as others⁴.

HEALTH PROBLEMS

Barriers may result from health issues including severe illnesses, chronic diseases, or any other physical or mental health-related situation that prevents from participating in the programme.





BARRIERS LINKED TO EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEMS:

Individuals struggling to perform in education and training systems for various reasons, early school-leavers, NEETs (people not in education, employment or training) and low-skilled adults may face barriers. Although other factors may play a role, these educational difficulties, while they may also be linked to personal circumstances, mostly result from an educational system which creates structural limitations and/or does not fully take into account the individual's particular needs. Individuals can also face barriers to participation when the structure of curricula makes it difficult to undertake a learning or training mobility abroad as part of their studies.

HTTPS://UN.ORG/DEVELOPMENT/DESA/DISABILITIES/CONVENTION-ON-THE-RIGHTS-OF-PERSONS-WITH-DISABILITIES.HTML



CULTURAL DIFFERENCES:

While cultural differences may be perceived as barriers by people from any backgrounds, they can particularly affect people with fewer opportunities. Such differences may represent significant barriers to learning in general, all the more for people with a migrant or refugee background - 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 benefits from their participation. And such cultural differences may even prevent potential participants from applying for support through the programme, thereby representing an entry barrier altogether.

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 represent 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 in institutional care.

ECONOMIC BARRIERS:

Economic disadvantage like a low standard of living, low income, learners who need to work to support themselves, dependence on the social welfare system, in long-term unemployment, precarious situations or poverty, being homeless, in debt or with financial problems, etc., may represent a barrier. Other difficulties may derive from the limited transferability of services (in particular support to people with fewer opportunities) that needs to be "mobile" together with the participants when going to a far place or, all the more, abroad.





BARRIERS LINKED TO DISCRIMINATION

Barriers can occur as a result of discriminations linked to gender, age, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation, disability, or intersectional factors (a combination of two or several of the mentioned discrimination barriers).

GEOGRAPHICAL BARRIERS:



Living in remote or rural areas, on small islands or in peripheral/outermost regions⁵, in urban suburbs, in less serviced areas (limited public transport, poor facilities) or less developed areas in third countries, etc., may constitute a barrier.

⁵ THE EUROPEAN UNION COUNTS NINE OUTERMOST REGIONS. THESE ARE FRENCH GUIANA, GUADELOUPE, MARTINIQUE, MAYOTTE, REUNION ISLAND AND SAINT-MARTIN (FRANCE), AZORES AND MADERA (PORTUGAL) AND THE CANARY ISLANDS (SPAIN).

I.2. NATIONAL CONTEXT

With the **Equal Educational Opportunities (GOK) policy**⁶ wil de overheid alle kinderen dezelfde optimale kansen geven om te leren en zich te ontwikkelen.

The policy consists of 3 pillars:

ENROLMENT RIGHTS

LEGAL PROTECTION

SCHOOL SUPPORT

The Horizontal Integration and Equal Opportunities Policy Plan 2020-2024 states that "Integration and Equal Opportunities are by definition themes that touch all policy areas. Working towards an inclusive society and creating equal opportunities is a shared responsibility of the entire Flemish Government. This requires a horizontal approach. With the Horizontal Integration and Equal Opportunities Policy Plan, the Flemish Government meets the obligation to draw up an integrated action plan, included in both the Decree on Equal Opportunities and the Decree on Integration and Inclusion. In this way, the Flemish Government, in accordance with the principles included in the Coalition Agreement, largely abandons an explicit target group approach in favour of an inclusive and integrated approach."⁷

⁶GELIJKE ONDERWIJSKANSEN (VLAANDEREN.BE)

⁷BESLISSINGEN VAN DE VLAAMSE REGERING | VLAANDEREN.BE

The Flemish interpretation of Equal Opportunities⁸ relates to gender, sexual diversity, disability and accessibility⁹. That Flemish equal opportunities and equal treatment policy works within the outlines of the framework decree of 10 July 2008 and other regulatory texts¹⁰.



The Flemish integration policy

"focuses on the whole of society, paying special attention to the following special target groups: 1° persons of foreign origin;

2°
persons legally
residing in
Belgium and
living in a
caravan.¹¹

In addition, the Flemish integration policy also focuses on foreigners without legal residence, more specifically foreigners who are in Belgium without legal residency status and who request guidance due to an emergency situation."¹²

Furthermore, the Flemish government also set up a Decree on the fight against poverty¹³, a Literacy Plan¹⁴, a deradicalisation/polarisation action plan¹⁵, an integrity action plan¹⁶, the Flemish youth and children's rights policy plan 2020-2024¹⁷. Different Action plans are in the pipeline of the Flemish government, such as LGBTQI+, seniors, racism.

⁸ INTEGRATIE I VLAANDEREN.BE

^{9 &}lt;u>HTTPS://WWW.VLAANDEREN.BE/GELIJKE-KANSEN-IN-VLAANDEREN</u>

¹⁰ HTTPS://WWW.VI AANDEREN RE/GELLIKE-KANSEN-IN-VI AANDEREN

¹¹ BALS BEDOELD IN ARTIKEL 1.3, § 1, EERSTE LID, 73°, VAN DE VLAAMSE WOONCODE VAN 2021, MET UITZONDERING VAN PERSONEN DIE VERBLIJVEN OP EEN WOONWAGENSTANDPLAATS EN BEWONERS VAN CAMPINGS OF TERREINEN MET WEEKENDVERBLIJF.

¹² DECREET BETREFFENDE HET VLAAMSE INTEGRATIE- EN INBURGERINGSBELEID (VLAANDEREN.BE)

VLAAMSE CODEX > ZOEKEN > DOCUMENT (VLAANDEREN.BE)

STRATEGISCH PLAN GELETTERDHEID (VLAANDEREN.BE)

¹⁵ VLAAMS ACTIEPLAN RADICALISERING EN POLARISERING (VVSG.BE)

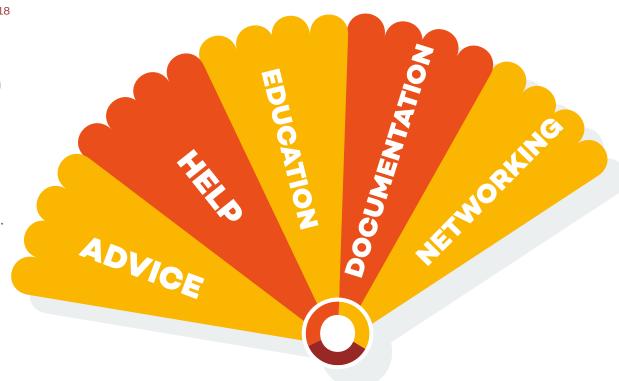
¹⁶ ACTIEPLAN INTEGRITEIT.PDF (DEPARTEMENTWVG.BE)

VLAAMS JEUGD- EN KINDERRECHTEN BELEIDSPLAN 2020-2024 I VLAANDEREN.BE

I.3. MINISTRY POLICY

The Flemish government wants to be an example to all citizens and organisations in the field of equal opportunities and diversity. That is what the Diversity Policy Department wants to work on, together with the Minister and the entire civil service and political leadership.

The Diversity Policy Department¹⁸ offers a broad range of advice, help, training, documentation, networks round diversity through the appointed "Diversity civil servants" that can be contacted at any time. All actions of the department are planned in the framework of the 2020 strategic plan¹⁹ and the 2020 action plan²⁰.



¹⁸ DIVERSITEITSBELEID | VLAANDEREN STAGIAIR

¹⁹ STRATEGISCH MEERJARENPLAN.PDF (VLAANDEREN.BE)

VR 2020 0702 DOC GKDPLAN2020 2 ACTIEPLAN.PDF (VLAANDEREN.BE)

I.4. EPOS

Epos believes 100% in the social added value of internationalisation. Internationalisation contributes to education, training, lifelong learning, and the European priorities on social inclusion, sustainability, digitalisation, and democratic participation. That's why Epos wants to offer such international experiences to as many Flemish individuals and organisations as possible and allow its organisation to grow in supporting and monitoring them.

Epos pursues an inclusive social policy, both internally and towards all stakeholders. Social inclusion is integrated into all layers of the functioning of the organisation due to targeted policy choices and partnerships.



On the basis of the implementation guidelines of the Erasmus+ programme²¹, the national agency sets up measures to make the programme actions and its own working as inclusive as possible. To achieve its goals, Epos will:

- 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. Set up inclusive measures around the programmes' mechanisms to support inclusion and diversity
- 3. Supporting beneficiary organizations in establishing more quality projects involving people with fewer opportunities (e.g. provide training, tools, funding, coaching etc.);
- 4. Develop the national agency's role to make the programme and its own working more inclusive. To do so, Epos has hired an inclusion officer whose role it is to implement and follow-up the present strategy.
- 5. Inspire potential applicants and beneficiaries by publishing successful experiences and good practices.



²¹ IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES - ERASMUS+ AND EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY STRATEGY | ERASMUS+ (EUROPA.EU)

II. DEFINITIONS OF FEWER OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME IN FLANDERS

Epos publishes the decision of the National authority concerning the definitions of participants with fewer opportunities for the 4 sectors of education and training²².

CONTEXT

The Erasmus+ programme guide gives a very broad description of barriers²³ participants with fewer opportunities meet – making their participation difficult if not impossible.

In order to make Erasmus+ more inclusive, certain actions offer special financial support for organisations setting up inclusive projects (inclusion support for project management and/ or the participant).

²² DEFINITIES FEWER OPP 2023 DEFINITIEF.PDF (AMAZONAWS.COM)

²³ SEE ANNEX 1

Epos, in collaboration with the national authorities, set up a list²⁴ of eligible profiles for these supports.

a. In school education

- Participants with special needs
- "indicator students"²⁵

b. In vocational education and training

- Participants with special needs
- "indicator students"26
- Adult learners meeting the definition for low-skilled adult learners (see below)

c. In adult education

- · Participants with special needs
- Adult learners meeting the definition for low-skilled adult learners (see on the right)

d. In higher education

- grant students and Near-grant students
- working students
- Students with disabilities



e. Definition of low-skilled adult learners

To be eligible for KA1 learning mobilities, adult learners must meet following definition:

- The participant doesn't have a diploma of third grade secondary education
 - and/or
- The participant lives of social aids (called "vervangingsinkomen" in Flanders) and does not have sufficient "sustainable skills" to earn a living

²⁴ THIS LIST MAY BE UPDATED EACH YEAR WITH THE NEW CALL

⁺ https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/gelijke-onderwijskansen/ondersteuning-van-scholen

²⁶ HTTPS://ONDERWIJS.VLAANDEREN.BE/NL/GELIJKE-ONDERWIJSKANSEN/ONDERSTEUNING-VAN-SCHOLEN

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN



Epos aims to increase the visibility of inclusion and diversity and its role in the high quality implementation of the Erasmus+ Programme. It also aims at having beneficiaries in Flanders set up more projects with inclusion and diversity as main theme and help them working more inclusively. The Inclusion Plan is the framework and the roadmap to achieve this goal.

Erasmus+ offers different financial support systems to participants with fewer opportunities but Epos strives to go further than that. It seems clear that money is not the only solution to foster inclusion in the projects. Epos wants to also focus on communication and awareness-raising by designing activities and campaigns for existing beneficiaries and for newcomers in the programme.

To succeed, Epos also needs to set up a cooperation system between the different teams in the NA. This work will be steered by the inclusion officer who will review the Inclusion Plan once a year to adapt everything that needs to be adapted in the working of the NA and the planned activities.

These activities are detailed in the action plan below that will also be updated every year at the same time that the NA's yearly work programme (september/october). As part of the action plan, Epos has defined indicators to measure the success of its activities. These indicators will be measured once a year and the inclusion officer will then analyse the results of the organised activities to define the actions to set up in the following year and also to finetune the chosen indicators.

internal collaborations (NA),

international collaborations, networking with stakeholders

IV. ACTION PLAN: WORKING TOWARDS INCLUSION & DIVERSITY

and make it visible

Potential applicants

and Beneficiaries

All activities planned in this action plan are designed to achieve one of the following objectives:



beneficiaries

To achieve these objectives, Epos has defined 6 fields of actions with underlying goals and actions for each. The action plan has been set up in collaboration with all involved teams and it is supported agency wide as well as approved by the management team. It is however the inclusion officers responsibility to follow up all the activities of the action plan and update it once a year.

The action plan defines who is responsible for each activity (initiator) and which partners can be involved in it. It also states if it's a mandatory activity of the NA work programme, defined by the European Commission, or if it's an initiative lead by Epos. Some activities generate outputs which are also listed in the action plan.

This action plan is a "living" document which can be updated at any time if necessary and will, as mentioned above, be updated at least once a year with the NA work programme.

V. INDICATORS AND MONITORING

Epos set up strategic goals and linked indicators to them.

For inclusion and diversity, the existing indicators are:

- SI1. Number and % of KA2 applications indicating inclusion as priority
- SI2. Number and % of successful applications indicating inclusion as priority
- SI3. Number and % of financed KA2 applications indicating inclusion as priority
- SI4. Number and % of applications having inclusion as a topic
- SI5. Number and % of successful applications having inclusion as a topic
- SI6. Number and % of financed applications having inclusion as a topic
- SI7. Number and % of participants with fewer opportunities in KA1 projects
- SI8. There are good practices on inclusion and diversity in all fields (KA1 and KA2)
- SI9. The ratio of the number of social inclusion (priority) projects with a quality label to the total number of social inclusion projects is increasing



The inclusion officer, in collaboration with the other teams, will set up a monitoring tool to follow up on the financed Erasmus+ projects dealing with inclusion and diversity or working in an inclusive manner. This tool will measure both quantitative and qualitative indicators. To get qualitative information, the inclusion officer will get feedback from reports, interviews, call to actions, events and internal collaborations (experts).

These indicators will be measured once a year (with the final report – February) and finetuned if necessary.



VI.EPOS INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN²⁷

FIELD OF ACTIONS I. COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

(GOALS	ACTIONS	TARGET GROUP	OUTPUT	TIMING	MEASURING INDICATOR
	Common understanding of inclusion and diversity	Define national criteria for inclusion support in KA1	Staff Beneficiaries Potential applicants	Document published on website	With publication of the call	October
	Understanding of the existing parriers and needs of beneficiaries	Collecting of questions from the field Beneficiary reports Consultation of the different teams to solve questions and problems	Beneficiaries Potential applicants	"Directory" of cases for internal use	Ongoing and not less than 3 times a year (July, November, march)	October
	nclusion and diversity criteria in the evaluation of projects	Publication of guidelines for external experts for evaluation of applications	External evaluators	Guidelines published by the EC		
×		Training of the external evaluators (applications)	External evaluators		After the call deadlines	October
×		Training of the external evaluators (final reports)	External evaluators		Before final reports	October





²⁷ LAST UPDATE 07.07.2023

FIELD OF ACTIONS II. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

GOALS	ACTIONS	TARGET GROUP	OUTPUT	TIMING	MEASURING INDICATOR
Use of appropriate language for the target groups	Training in the use of appropriate language for the target groups ²⁸	NA Staff		2024	
	Check information materials for appropriate language use	/		2024 – after training	
	Check website for appropriate language use	/		2024 – after training	
Accessible website for all target groups	Perform audit of the website	1		December 2023	
Promoting of possibilities offered by the Erasmus+ programme	Promoting the inclusion mechanisms during information sessions and on the website/social media	Potential applicants	Powerpoints Social media publications website	Ongoing	October
	Give information about the inclusion mechanisms during participation in internal workgroups/events	Stakeholders		Ongoing	October
	Give information about the inclusion mechanisms during participation in internal workgroups/events	Stakeholders		Ongoing/ on demand	October
	Give information about the inclusion mechanisms during events of the NA, show good practices (TCA, study visits, thematic monitoring, internal events, etc.)	Potential beneficiaries Beneficiaries Stakeholders		Ongoing	October
Inclusion as underlying or main theme in events of the NA	Make inclusion a constant theme in communication work, events, publications	All		Ongoing	October
	Make inclusion the year theme of Epos in 2023	All		2023	January 2024

²⁸ BIJZONDERE DOELGROEPEN EN DIVERSITEIT | VLAANDEREN.BE

	Set up of a play to be premiered at the end of 2023	Beneficiaries Stakeholder	Play + didactic materials	7/12/2023	
	Offer financial help to present play in schools in the 3 coming years	Beneficiaries		2024 2025 2026	With yearly report October
	Didactic materials and tools following play + keynote (training, publications)	Beneficiaries		tbc	
	Voxzine- (10 interviews of Erasmus+ projects dealing with inclusion)	All	Digital brochure	7/12/2023	With yearly report October
	O Themepage on the website	All	Website page	Ongoing	October
	Analyse the possibility to publish podcasts on inclusion (best practices, experts)	All		tbd	
	Newsletter (extra newsflash GVL)	All	Newsletter	December 2023	With yearly report October
	Articles on the website/social media	All	Articles	Ongoing	With yearly report October
Gather information and make it visible	Collect information on inclusion (internet, stakeholders, social media, experts)	All		Ongoing	October
	Publish relevant information on the website/social media/newsletter	All	Publications	Ongoing	October
	Promote Salto Awards ²⁹	Beneficiaries		June-august	October





²⁹ HTTPS://SALTOAWARDS.EU

FIELD OF ACTIONS III. SUPPORT OF BENEFICIARIES, POTENTIAL APPLICANTS AND BROAD PUBLIC

GOALS	ACTIONS	TARGET GROUP	ОИТРИТ	TIMING	MEASURING INDICATOR
Accessibility of events and direct contact with Epos	Propose sign language translation (or other type of help) for events organized by Epos, control or monitoring visits of projects. Epos pays for one translator (organized by beneficiary)	Beneficiaries Potential applicants		Ongoing	With final report October
	Plan events in locations that are accessible for people with physical disabilities	Beneficiaries Potential applicants broad public		Ongoing	October
×	Promoting the inclusion mechanisms during kick-offs and on the website (part for project management)	Beneficiaries		Ongoing	With yearly report October
Development of a framework on the allocation of inclusion support for participants with fewer opportunities"	Coordination between teams on financing questions (activity in part I.) result in a "guide" for beneficiaries	Beneficiaries	Directory	Meetings with teams in 07/07 – 11/23 and 03/2024 Guide 04/24	October
Thematic support	Study opportunity to create tools for groups of beneficiaries	Beneficiaries Potential applicants	tools	January 2024	





FIELD OF ACTIONS IV. SYNERGIES & COLLABORATIONS

GOALS	ACTIONS	TARGET GROUP	ОИТРИТ	TIMING	MEASURING INDICATOR
Internal collaborations	Share information on ongoing / closed projects	Internal	Information to be fed into the monitoring tool		
	Cooperate on information and valorization activities				
	Set up indicators and follow them up		Analysis of data		
	Set up communication activities – share information on social media – set up publications around inclusion				
	Cooperation in events				
National collaborations	Set up memorandum of understanding with national stakeholders on collaborations between them and the NA		Memoranda of understanding	December 2024	With yearly report October
	O Internal working groups				
	External working groups				
International collaborations	LTA – Embrace inclusion ³⁰	All sectors	Yearly conference (Zagreb)	November 2023	With yearly report October
	Collaboration with European NA inclusion officers and the Inclusion Education Salto ³¹	All sectors		Ongoing	With yearly report October





³⁰ LTA-SEMINAR - EMPL
31 SALTO INCLUSION EDUCATION

FIELD OF ACTIONS V. STAFF TRAINING

	GOALS	ACTIONS	TARGET GROUP	OUTPUT	TIMING	MEASURING INDICATOR
	Necessary competences level to communicate inclusively	Training in "easy language" or "inclusive communication"	Epos Staff		tbd	With yearly report October
		Gather training needs from the staff	Epos staff		After training	October
X	Necessary information level about inclusion criteria and mechanisms in the Erasmus+ programme	Training of external experts (applications)	External experts		Before evaluation of applications	October
X	Necessary information level about inclusion criteria and mechanisms in the Erasmus+ programme	Training of external experts (final reports)	External experts		Before evaluation of final reports	October





FIELD OF ACTIONS VI. INDICATORS AND MONITORING

GOALS	ACTIONS	TARGET GROUP	OUTPUT	TIMING	MEASURING INDICATOR
Monitoring of inclusion plan	Update information in the inclusion plan in October each year	Epos	Updated inclusion plan	October	October
Analyse of results of the activities of the action plan	Monitoring of results of application rounds	Epos	Analysis of results of selection rounds	December	With final report October
	Monitoring of activities of the inclusion action plan	Epos		October	October
	Finetuning of indicators if deemed necessary after conducting the analysis	Epos		December	October
	Set up of monitoring tool including not only quantitative but also qualitative/content data	Epos	Monitoring tool	2024	With final report October







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