

**Copyright © 2022 European University Foundation.
All rights reserved.**

EUF Annual Report 2021

Published in June 2022

Authors: EUF Secretariat, Prof. Joana Carvalho, Paul Leys,
Klementyna Kielak, Monika Płatek

Editor: Joachim Wyssling

Design: Debora Lucque



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

This project has been funded with the support from the European Commission. The publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Table of Contents

Foreword	4
2021 at a glance	6
Supporting a skills-based approach in International Relations and mobility	8
Towards increased quality in Erasmus+ teaching mobility	10
Mobility formats: a (r)evolution?	12
Identifying the green challenges of student mobility	14
Striving for more inclusion in student mobility	16
Digital transformation in 2021: a terrific or terrible year?	18
Identification of institutions in a digital world: a solution within reach?	21
Meeting the challenges and objectives of Erasmus+ 2021-2027	23
EUJ as a network in 2021: resilience and evolution	25
Financial overview for 2021	27



2021

Photo by Kelly Sikkema on Unsplash

Foreword

Prof. Joana Carvalho, President of the EUF Steering Committee, University of Porto

The annual report 2021 draws the main conclusions from a year that was marked by the start of the EU multiannual financial framework 2021-2027, which brought a set of new opportunities and challenges. More specifically, the Erasmus+ programme has adopted three priorities which perfectly mirror the priorities set forth by the European University Foundation (EUF) – inclusion, environmental impact and digital transformation. In the higher education sector new features have become available such as the possibility of organising blended intensive programmes or providing students a green top-up grant to contribute to fighting climate change.

2021 a year of transition

In stark contrast with its goals of becoming more inclusive, member universities faced financial challenges in transitioning to this new programming period, since the Erasmus+ grants awarded to students dropped by 50% in some cases compared with the previous year. In many other cases these grants were awarded or transferred too late to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) for students to receive their grants in time of their departure (and sometimes even return from their mobility). In some countries, this caused massive cashflow issues that resulted in students not receiving their grant in a timely fashion, which is why national authorities in some member states have had to intervene to bridge the funding gap. The network has served as a platform to exchange information on these issues and provide the European Commission and higher education stakeholders feedback to help mitigate their impact.

2021 a year to initiate new challenges

We started to address new objectives with the start of two projects tackling the Erasmus+ grant calculation and payment mechanisms to make student mobility more inclusive; a new project focusing on forging intergenerational learning opportunities by involving the elderly in exchange and learning opportunities at transnational level; and a new project supporting student well-being, which is very much needed after recurring restrictions linked to the covid-19 pandemic.

2021 a year of consolidation

After having restructured the network activities following the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic, it was time to assess the new (infra)structure in place, which resulted in the launch of the Project Manager and Advisor community — formalising a long-standing commitment to support members' high quality project incubation and implementation — and of the Knowledge Exchange Community — which addresses the need for exchanging expertise, good practices and knowledge among over 70 member universities to contribute to the modernisation of the European Higher Education Area. In parallel, we also answered to the call for proposals aimed at consolidating the work that was achieved under the umbrella of the European Student Card initiative.

All this and much more is summarised in the Annual Report which we hope you will enjoy reading!

2021 at a glance

70

HEIs in
29 countries



7 new
EU-funded
projects started
with a total of

**€3,7
million**

21
team
members

New

Steering Committee

U. PORTO

represented by

Prof. Joana Carvalho



CHARLES
UNIVERSITY
IN PRAGUE

represented by

Prof. Marketa Krizova



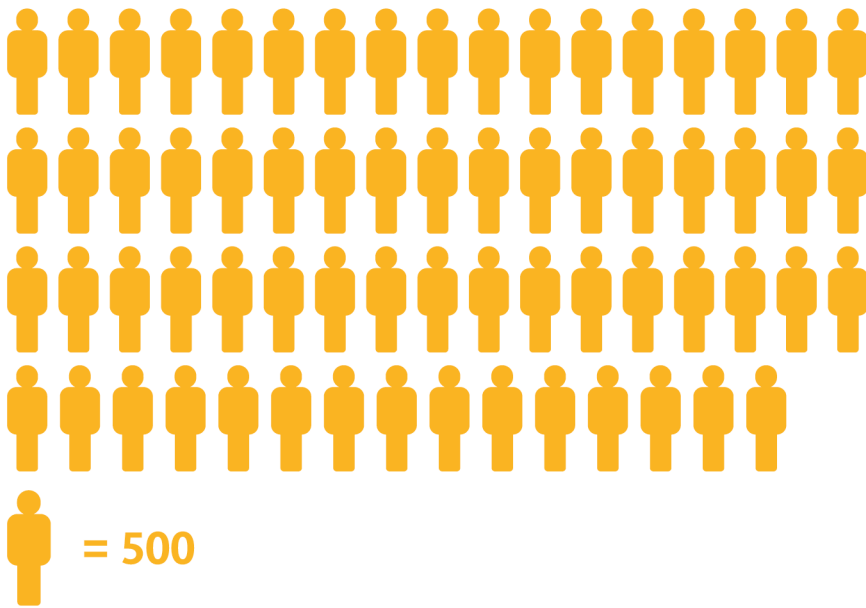
ARISTOTLE
UNIVERSITY
OF THESSALONIKI

represented by

Prof. Nikolaos G. Papaioannou

33,000

people reached with our dissemination activities



7900

followers on social media

62,800

website visits

7

Platforms/websites launched

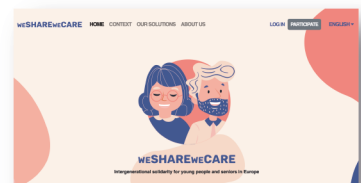
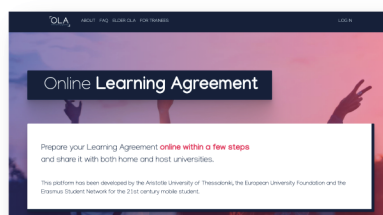
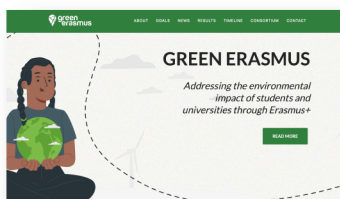
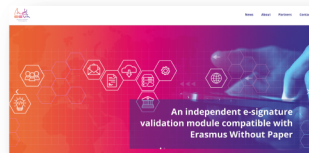
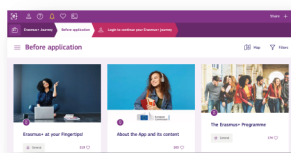
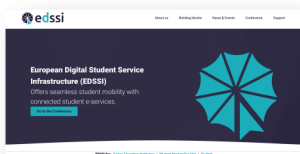




Photo by Jess Bailey on Unsplash

Supporting a skills-based approach in International Relations and mobility

Monika Płatek, Klementyna Kielak, International Relation Office, University of Warsaw

Five European HEIs (University of Marburg, Ghent University, University of Warsaw, University of Latvia and Hanzehogeschool Groningen) and the EUF worked together

HIGHLIGHTS

- 7700 participants to EUF staff trainings
- Creation of a [framework for Erasmus+ Staff Competences](#)
- [Policy recommendations](#)

in the Erasmus+ project “Framework for Erasmus+ Staff Competences” (FESC) to develop a Framework that gives a comprehensive overview of competences that are relevant for staff members working with international mobility and internationalisation of HEIs. As a result, a universal tool was created and designed for a variety of actors within international offices, human resources departments, and for management.

The Framework and Training Toolkit help HEIs to improve both quality and quantity of student mobility by providing

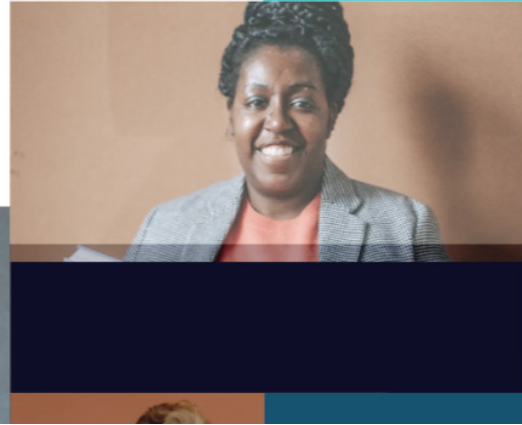
a comprehensive understanding of the competences desired in International Relation Offices. The developed tools were designed for self-assessment purposes and professional development of International Relation Office staff. The outcomes of the FESC project can also be used to identify training needs of staff allowing for the design of a tailor-made training offer and development path.

Throughout the project, the consortium identified the most relevant competences. The input was gathered not only from HEIs' staff but also from a large group of mobile students. By focusing on the perspectives of all actors involved in student mobility, the FESC project serves as a comprehensive referral of the relevance of the competences set. The importance of performance of staff working with international mobility has an impact on the quality of mobility as perceived by students. Therefore, the results of the project should be taken into consideration by institutions to prepare their internationalisation strategies.

The future of internationalisation of higher education was also taken into consideration as new requirements (and, consequently, challenges) have been introduced in the Erasmus+ programme. The Framework was designed with anticipation that the tasks might change and therefore some competences might become even more crucial. It can support Human Resources managers in the recruitment of new staff and can be beneficial

in further professionalising the work of the International Relation Offices and other units dealing with internationalisation by planning relevant trainings and better understanding their needs.

Moreover, professional development strategies are key in improving the quality of services as well as assuring better rates of employee satisfaction. During the lifespan of the FESC project, it became apparent that there is often a lack of awareness and understanding of the competences and expertise nestled in the International Relation Offices. The results of the FESC project can facilitate communication between International Relation Offices, Human Resources, and other units within the institution in order to improve the communication flows within the institution and support a continued and tailor-made development path for the staff working with internationalisation. The Framework, Training Toolkit and all the activities were designed with the intention of empowering the individuals involved in internationalisation processes and allowing them to better plan their career and make use of the training and development offers available within institutions, both nationally and internationally.



Towards increased quality in Erasmus+ teaching mobility

Anikó Makkai-Kovács, Senior Policy and Research Officer, European University Foundation

The Teach with Erasmus+ project (TWE+) was launched in 2018 with the ambition to better understand and provide a comprehensive overview of teaching mobility in Europe. In the centre of Erasmus+ mobility projects, academic staff

HIGHLIGHTS

- [Policy recommendations](#)
- teachingmobility.eu platform

and teaching mobility have a crucial role in:

- Building up and maintaining international partnerships,
- Ensuring the harmonisation of course catalogues,
- Motivating students to apply for scholarships,
- Overseeing the academic aspects of student mobility such as the finalisation of Learning Agreements,
- Ensure recognition after mobility.

In 2021, thanks to the TWE+ project, the Higher Education Community had the chance to learn more about the current state of play in teaching mobility in Europe and better

understand academic staff needs, personal views, attitudes, and concerns through the [Teach with Erasmus+ Research Report, as well as the paper Quality & Impact Tool for Teaching Mobility Assessment](#). The latter was drafted with the aim to provide tools, templates, and ideas to administration and management as well as individual academics to foster institutional quality culture regarding teaching mobility and enhance the teaching mobility experience for instructors.

The www.teachingmobility.eu platform was also launched as a brand-new website, akin to a marketplace, where institutions/teachers can offer and find relevant mobility opportunities easily and effectively. This novel platform aims to propose solutions to many of the existing challenges in teaching mobility (like finding appropriate partners, ensuring quality implementation or proper follow up) and is prepared to be used widely.

The [policy recommendations](#) document on quality teaching mobility was also published in 2021, directed to three main stakeholder groups: policymakers, HEIs and academic staff regardless of their experience level in teaching or training mobility. These recommendations are research-based and provide practical, tangible solutions to the issues faced when realising quality teaching mobility projects, such as applying a strategic approach, offer substitution and recognition for mobility or promote alternative methodologies to be used for teaching mobility.



Photo by Porapak Apichodilok

Mobility formats: a (r)evolution?

*Carla Álvarez, Junior Policy and Research Officer,
European University Foundation*

In March 2021, the Erasmus+ programme for the 2021-2027 period was published with several novelties in relation to different mobility formats and their lengths, in particular the long-awaited blended format. This new edition of the programme came about in a moment where international

HIGHLIGHTS

- [Institutional recommendations](#)
- [Handbook of good practices](#) whose purpose is to create a set of guidelines to plan and perform further successful virtual exchange activities at institutional level

student mobility continued to be deeply affected by the social-distancing restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, the emergence of new mobility formats supported by the new Erasmus+ programme was not only fostered by the pandemic but also by a growing demand for more flexible opportunities for internationalisation and the skyrocketing growth of virtual environments for teaching and learning processes. As a result, in this context, the concepts of physical blended mobility combined with virtual exchange opportunities were at the forefront of policy discussions related to international student

mobility in Europe.

However, amidst the exciting beginning of a new edition of the Erasmus+ programme, several concerns were raised among EUF members; from organisational and pedagogical challenges on how to implement these new types of exchange to ensure quality of delivery, to the terminological entropy between what constitutes a mobility and what does not. Among members, there was an added concern regarding the potential impact on institutions, students and staff of these new types of mobility formats. Moreover, the role of these new mobility formats with respect to traditionally physical mobility was also a pressing concern.

“

Short-term physical mobilities, especially combined with preparatory and follow-up virtual exchange activities are important in developing students' intercultural, language, social and professional competencies by providing them with a first-hand cultural immersion experience that can also trigger the will and the confidence of students to participate in long-term mobilities. However, long term mobilities are essential to deepening this learning process, which is clearly and well reflected in the innovative institutional recommendations developed by the EUF.

Luca Alexa Erdei, Assistant lecturer & Mobility expert, Eötvös Loránd University & CHARM-EU Alliance

As a result, in order to support our network universities, the EUF Secretariat has been involved in the [How Long is Too Long \(HLiTL\)](#) project that aimed to provide scientifically-grounded data on the different mobility formats and lengths and its impact on the students' competence development. Within the project, the EUF developed the [Institutional Recommendations](#)

that aim to provide practical guidelines for European HEIs to improve their institutional strategies and practices regarding student mobility taking into account blended mobility and virtual exchange mobility opportunities. Moreover, as a result of a pilot virtual exchange course developed within the project, we co-authored with the University of Porto a [Handbook of Good Practices](#) for HEIs to successfully plan, carry out and evaluate virtual exchange activities.

Overall, the findings of the project can be considered as a first stepping stone towards better understanding the potential of new mobility types and lengths, but the project calls for further research and data on this front in order to better comprehend the relationship between mobility types and its impact at institutional and

”

individual level.



Photo by Scott Webb from Pexels

Identifying the green challenges of student mobility

Helena Alves, Junior Policy and Research Officer, European University Foundation

Throughout 2021, the EUF has helped to pave the way for a more environmentally sustainable Erasmus+ programme. We have taken the first steps in this long journey, in close collaboration with our members and the consortia we are part of.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Launch of the Green thoughts series on social media
- [Assessment of the transport-related carbon footprint of the Erasmus+ programme 2014-2020](#)
- Green Erasmus [report](#) & [survey results](#) on good practices for sustainable internationalisation
- [10 ways to make your HEIs internationalisation practices more sustainable](#)

During the past year, we contributed to the developments of the Erasmus Goes Green project activities, which focus on the environmental sustainability of Erasmus+ and its transport-related carbon footprint. The consortium published the report “Assessment of the transport-related carbon footprint of the Erasmus+ programme 2014-2020”, which shed light on the actual impact the programme activities have on the environment. In this analysis, we have

demonstrated how the programme risks increasing its carbon footprint further still in the coming years. This, in turn, means we ought to place greater importance and pressure on measures that can effectively invert this trend, not only in the actual CO2 footprint of the Erasmus+ programme, but also in changing the paradigm and the mindsets of the Higher Education students and staff planning to go on mobility.

One of the measures already put in place to promote more sustainable means of transport when going on mobility was the green top up, which has been discussed extensively within the EUF network. In November 2021 an online network meeting focused on the implementation of this incentive and on how our members are dealing with its promotion and administration. The novelty of the measure and the different approaches taken by Erasmus+ National Agencies across Europe put pressure on already strained IROs. In the end, the conclusion of this discussion was that the green top up is a first step in a long journey, and its procedures need to be improved in the following calls for it to be more appealing and administratively agile.

“

Students care about the climate but they need to be able to make sustainable choices. Financial support and accessible information are key. Our duty is to work with all stakeholders to make their needs heard and, finally, have a green and inclusive Erasmus. The earlier we behave sustainably, the higher our chances will be to save our planet. We have just started this journey and the time is ripe.

Paola di Marzo, Project Officer, Erasmus Student Network, Coordinator of the Green Erasmus project.

”

The sharing of experiences that the EUF network fosters was particularly important at this moment, as it meant HEIs were aware of what others were doing and could thus improve their practices with the inspiration drawn from others.

The close connection with its member universities and the general overview the EUF has of the European Higher Education Area

were also fundamental to conduct the research foreseen in Green Erasmus on sustainable internationalisation for Universities. We explored which best practices were already being implemented by Universities across Europe and highlighted them, so they could be used by other institutions. The desk research and

the survey results report showcase the rising importance that environmental sustainability has in the Institutions' strategies, despite the long journey that is still ahead to achieve a truly sustainable internationalisation.



Photo by rawpixel.com

Striving for more inclusion in student mobility

Carla Álvarez, Nicolò Bonato, Junior Policy and Research Officers, European University Foundation

In 2021, the topic of inclusion in international student mobility gained renewed policy support by becoming a key priority in the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme. This translated, for instance, into the strengthened role of Erasmus+ National Agencies in supporting social inclusion within their national contexts. Furthermore, inclusion became an overarching aspect not only in the

Key Action related to mobility of individuals, but also throughout the remaining Key Actions supported by the programme.

For the EUF, inclusion in student mobility has long been and continues to be a central goal to achieve fair and equitable mobilities for all. That is why, since 2019, the network has been involved in the [Social Inclusion and Engagement in Mobility \(SIEM\)](#) project, whose aim is to make the Erasmus+ programme more inclusive and to increase the interaction between international students and local communities, as well as the participation of underrepresented groups.

“

Inspired by the work attained by the EUF in the Erasmus 500 manifesto, U.Porto is coordinating the Erasmus for All project, which aims to develop a more economically viable scholarship scheme that will bring more fairness, inclusion and equity to the Erasmus+ Programme.

Luísa Capitão, Mobility Coordinator, University of Porto

In the framework of this project, in early 2021, the EUF presented the [Guidelines for Inclusive Mobility Promotion](#)¹, a key deliverable that aspires to be a guiding document for European universities in their task to promote and recruit participants for outgoing student credit mobility, ensuring it caters for students with profiles that are not normally represented or in very low numbers in international mobility, such as students from rural backgrounds or ethnic minority students.

Inclusion is a multi-faceted concept which calls for a need to tackle it from multiple perspectives in order to truly and fully achieve inclusion in the long-term. Further affirming our commitment towards achieving inclusivity in the Erasmus+ programme, two new projects tackling key aspects of inclusion were approved at the end of 2021: Erasmus for All and Million of Erasmus Grants (MEGA).

The [Erasmus for All](#) project aims to achieve inclusion from the financial standpoint by tackling low levels of higher education student participation in Erasmus mobility

exchanges by proposing a more economically viable scholarship scheme. This project is strongly rooted in the [Erasmus500 campaign](#), a policy initiative led by the EUF, the European Students' Union (ESU) and the ESN in 2020 that advocated for a better grant system in the Erasmus+ programme.

The project [Million of Erasmus Grants \(MEGA\)](#) aims to remove key obstacles to

participation from the organisational point of view, by exploring how to help universities distribute Erasmus+ grants transparently, efficiently and in a more timely manner. Throughout 2022, the project will focus on mapping the current landscape of Erasmus+ grant management, tracking bottlenecks that delay disbursement and affect economically disadvantaged students disproportionately.

“

International experience should be an essential element in the educational journey of all learners. To ensure staff and especially students equal access to the opportunities Europe has to offer, we have to strive for a more inclusive, more diverse HE environment. EUF supports us in this mission with a strong network of colleagues and experts who cooperate in projects and initiatives like the #Erasmus500 campaign. The numerous trainings and learning opportunities EUF offers throughout the year help us in our professional and personal development.

Christina Bohle, Erasmus+ Institutional Coordinator, Humboldt University of Berlin

”

1. Version II of the Guidelines for Inclusive Mobility Promotion will be made available in the second half of 2022.



Photo by rawpixel.com

Digital transformation in 2021: a terrific or terrible year?

HIGHLIGHTS

- [Erasmus+ App](#) renewal fully completed, with new groundbreaking features added.
- MyAcademicID deemed a “[success story](#)” by the European Commission in the context of the Connecting Europe Facility programme.
- [EWP continues to grow and connects more than 2000 higher education institutions.](#)
- [Identity Provider of last resort](#) was launched to ensure all HEIs across Europe have access to state-of-the-art digital identification and authentication.

Paul Leys, Policy Advisor, Ghent University

The year 2021 was meant to be a pivotal year for the digital transformation of the Erasmus+ administration that had started with small scale pilots and consequently shifted towards a programme-wide implementation. However, when the Erasmus Without Paper (EWP) standards were officially

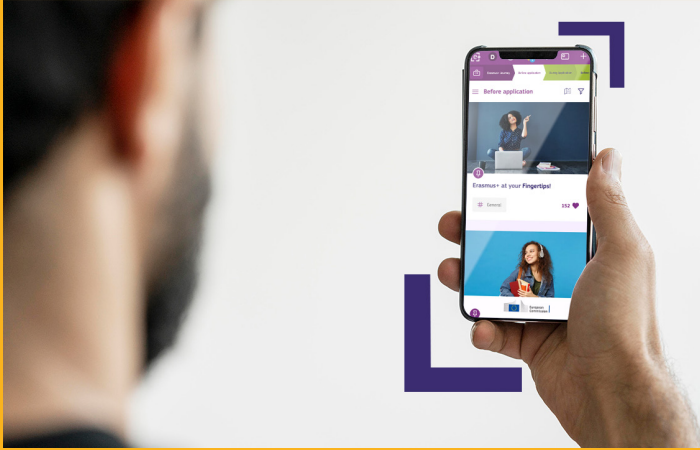
announced to be operational for the higher education community in June 2021, it soon became clear that the level of maturity of technical implementation by third-party providers was not achieved to enable full interoperability of the Information Systems.

In Autumn 2021 many enthusiastic International Relation Office staff members were trying to make EWP work and at the same time had to manage an abundance of emails regarding the renewals of the Inter-Institutional Agreements and high number of interoperability issues. Enthusiasm about the time efficiency gains started to plummet very quickly. Those colleagues who were at that time using the Online Learning Agreement platform had rather more positive experiences, especially when their own partners were also relying on this public infrastructure.

At this stage, one might want to conclude 2021 was a terrible year. However, 2021 was also the year laying foundations for the sustainable development of EWP. On the one hand, a group of motivated International Relation Officers, all of them having vast experience in digitalisation of mobility administration and many of them representing EUF member universities, joined forces in the European Student Card initiative (ESCI) Working Group under the EDSSI project aegis, acting as a Business Owner “sounding board” for evaluating whether the technical developments and solutions under the ESCI umbrella were fit for purpose. Honest feedback, acknowledging issues while at the same time understanding the complexity of the overall picture and the future-oriented vision of those colleagues provided the EWP team with fresh energy to keep pushing to make the overall initiative work.

On the other hand, 2021 was a game changer for the future of the EWP initiative. After years of receiving funding via relative small-scale projects (especially compared to the levels of ambition of the digital transformation process), the EUF gathered a consortium, including some of its members universities, competing for a tender leading to the Framework Contract with the European Commission for the implementation of the European Student Card Initiative; as our bid was successful, we will be working for the next four years to offer increased functionality and enhanced support to HEIs implementing the digitalisation roadmap.

As a result, one could say 2021 has been a missed opportunity to make the digital transition of the Erasmus+ programme as gradual and smooth a process as we would have hoped. It has however also been the year where conditions have finally been put in place to start tackling this colossal change of paradigm, ultimately allowing us to build a strong service environment for operating the digital engine that the Erasmus+ programme undoubtedly needs.



Spotlight on the Erasmus+ App

*Nicolò Bonato, Junior Policy and Research Officer,
European University Foundation*

Since its launch in 2017, the Erasmus+ App has become the single access point for students to Erasmus+ mobility. The renewal of the App has been ongoing since 2020. The new development phase was officially launched in January 2021 in an online conference, which has reached more than 7500 people. Throughout the year, the consortium of ELTE, ESN and the EUF has been working hard to improve and extend the App's functions. In the autumn, new features were presented in webinars dedicated to students and HEIs.

One of the most important new functionalities is the possibility to apply for Erasmus+ mobility directly from the

App. This is a significant achievement in the digital transformation of Erasmus+, as it makes a key step of the mobility process paperless, paving the way for further innovations, in particular in the management of nominations, i.e. the steps following the application phase.

Another pioneering feature enables students to generate their European Student Card within the App, based on the deployment of the European Student Identifier. Fully digital and valid throughout Europe, the student card allows students to use services outside their own university as they would at home, from canteens to libraries and accommodation. Feedback gathered in the months following its launch suggests that this feature has been even more positively received than originally expected, due to its immediateness and ease of use.



Erasmus+ at your Fingertips!



About the App and its content



The Erasmus+ Programme

General

174

Identification of institutions in a digital world: a solution within reach?

Tiago Simões, Backend Web/App Developer, European University Foundation

For the past few years, the EUF has developed, or collaborated in developing, a number of digital tools and applications that have greatly contributed to the digitalisation of Higher Education. From the largest applications such as the Erasmus+ mobile App, the Online Learning Agreement or the

Erasmus+ Dashboard, a common theme stood out: the lack of a reliable set of data describing HEIs in a consistent manner.

Within the scope of some Erasmus+ projects, the developers at the EUF have been building a set of reusable tools focused on modelling data according to the Erasmus Without Paper (EWP) API specifications, in order to improve the consistency of higher education data used across applications. Based on this work, a new service to the higher education community was put forward: to gather as much data as possible from official and reliable sources and compile a full list of HEIs that could serve as a single source of data for any digital application in this field.

Our team set about processing the list of institutions holding the Erasmus+ Charter for Higher Education, published regularly by the European Commission, improving the quality of data for human readability as well as formatting it to facilitate interoperability between digital systems. Drawing from

additional data sets from the Erasmus Without Paper Registry of HEIs, it was possible to capture all kinds of unique identifiers which allow for reliable communication between web applications: the HEIs API was born!

Having compiled all relevant data, the developers at the EUF built a solution to make data publicly available both for specific applications with particular needs and for the general public. The former include the Erasmus+ Dashboard, where the adoption of the Institutions API has allowed to greatly improve the usability of the tool and the consistency of the data contained therein.

“

For EQAR, the Higher Education Institution API developed by the EUF enabled building a useful and concrete enhancement for DEQAR: making it possible to allow anyone to look up an institution using various known identifiers. This is a step towards better interoperability in the European Higher Education Area, and it's important that such interfaces are publicly available to all of the Higher Education community.

Colin Tück, Director of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)

”

As for the public version of the Institutions API, it is used in several websites and applications built by the team in the framework of many ongoing projects, wherever information about HEIs may be needed: ErasmusX, ETMP, POWER, NORM, ERUM and others under current development. It has also been used by partner organisations, including ESN and the European Quality Assurance Registrar (EQAR), which highlights the need for a reliable source of information in the wider European digital ecosystem.

Furthermore, many other pieces of functionality have been built around this tool and continue to be developed. The development team is currently working on further integration with the MyAcademicID Identification and Authentication Platform, thus providing a useful connection between one of the most important convergence solutions for user authentication and a consistent toolkit providing security and usability for user facing applications.



Photo by jcomp

Meeting the challenges and objectives of Erasmus+ 2021-2027

Joachim Wyssling, Senior Programme Manager, European University Foundation

The new EU Multiannual Financial Framework started in 2021 and brought a few features for the Erasmus+ programme aimed at increasing the opportunities for students and staff taking part in the exchange programme. To name a few, it became possible to organise Blended Intensive Programmes (combining physical mobility and virtual exchange components),

HIGHLIGHTS

- [“Funding bottleneck casts a dark cloud over the start of Erasmus+ 2021/2027” statement](#)
- [Erasmus+ Coalition Statement](#)

to allocate up to 20% of regular student credit mobility funds to international student credit mobility (taking place with countries not part of Erasmus+), to allocate a green top-up to individual beneficiaries to decrease the environmental impact of the mobility programme and to start gradually exchanging student data in digital format in the context of the European Student Card initiative.

While these new features are exciting and will bring new implementation challenges for HEIs, there was a challenge we had not anticipated: a funding bottleneck that has negatively affected the start of the new programming period. After the summer break 2021, we were informed that our member

universities and their students had been impacted by sometimes up to 50% funding cuts as per 2021 call for proposals, compared with previous years' level of funding. To add to this challenge a large number of HEIs did not receive the results of their application for mobility funds before September and sometimes even October 2021. Finally, a lot of HEIs did not sign a funding agreement with the respective National Agency in time of the start of the mobilities, which led to many students having to start (and sometimes even finish) their mobility without having received their grant: a serious blow to the objective of making the programme more inclusive.

“

EU network meetings have been instrumental in identifying the extent of the mobilities' funding bottleneck that all EUF members experienced at the beginning of the 2021-2022 academic year, due to delays in receiving the allocated grants from EC, and in orchestrating a coordinated reaction and call for action to the respective EC deciding bodies.

Nikos Liolios, European & International Educational Projects / Networks & Cooperations, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Over autumn 2021 a lot of information was shared among network members to mitigate the impact of the funding bottleneck on the students – e.g. by having institutions mobilising their own funds or advocating for bridge funding support from their national authorities. This situation has affected the ability of HEIs to effectively engage with the new features opened with the new programming period. The EUF also exchanged information with the Erasmus+ coalition members and key higher education stakeholders, such as ESU

and the ESN, to seek a common position and reach out to the European Commission on this question. As an overall outcome of this situation we firmly believe that European authorities should use financial instruments at their disposal to mitigate the decrease of funding available for Erasmus+ when a new Multiannual Financial Framework starts. It is a fact that the programme has continuous commitments (every year a stable or increasing number of student and staff are mobile thanks to the Erasmus+ programme), and involves a large number of institutions (33 national agencies and over 5000 HEIs) and its continued existence is of paramount importance to the European integration process.

”



Photo by Alina Grubnyak on Unsplash

EUF as a network in 2021: resilience and evolution

HIGHLIGHTS

- Launch of the Knowledge Exchange Community
- Launch of the Project Manager & Advisors Community

A series of events featuring keynote speeches by experts from across the EUF network and beyond were followed by interactive exchanges and in-depth discussions in groups.

Liga Kuzmane, Program Manager, European University Foundation

In 2021, we launched the EUF network Knowledge Exchange Community (KEC), providing a new space for sharing expertise, knowledge and know-how among administrative and academic staff members of more than 70 universities from the EUF network.

The monthly KEC sessions held online are already providing higher education practitioners from the network with key insights, putting valuable knowledge at their fingertips. In their own words, “[the KEC sessions] are not only about learning new things, but seeing familiar things being done in a different or unique way”. Particular thanks are due to the colleagues who volunteered their time to lead such sessions - they are:

- Vratislav Kozak, Director of International Relations at Charles University, who led the sessions about staff mobility
- Christina Bohle, Erasmus+ Institutional Coordinator at the Humboldt University of Berlin, who led the sessions about inclusive mobility practices

2021 also saw the emergence of the EUF Project Manager and Advisor Community, which builds on a tradition of many years of innovative projects put forward by the EUF network members. The online sessions organised throughout 2021 quickly reached more than 200 colleagues from our member universities, signalling a strong start to this new EUF Community.

The work of bringing together professionals who share the vision/goal of strengthening international cooperation and making an impact in Higher Education through quality and impactful transnational cooperation with EU projects will obviously be continued in subsequent months. Aside from various

webinars and workshops on how to prepare Erasmus+ project applications, there are also opportunities to explore specific project management aspects, ranging from impact and dissemination to general management, and successful event organisation.

In addition to the above, we also continued the online network meetings, initiated right at the start of the covid-19 pandemic, which from September 2021 onwards have taken place on a monthly basis. These discussions allowed us to tackle issues related to the impact of the pandemic, the funding bottleneck triggered by the start of the EU Multiannual Financial Framework in 2021, and how environmental impact of the Erasmus+ programme can be mitigated.

“

EUF usually goes above and beyond in the topic of modernisation. When you think that there is nothing new to be discovered in the scope of best practice sharing, EUF comes up with the KEC. Here you have a platform where you know beforehand the general topic at hand, you start with presentations from some of the most unique experiences in EHEA and then you have not only the chance to ask whatever comes to mind but there are also very free-minded and yet professional discussions with colleagues from other European HEIs. Sharing best practices on such a scale means not only finding out the unique ideas and processes but also setting up something like a European baseline for the whole IRO, which is just as important.

Vratislav Kozak, Director of International Relations, Charles University

”

Financial overview for 2021



BALANCE SHEET IN EUR

Assets

	2021	2020
Fixed assets	51 014,33	40 186,21
<i>Tangible fixed assets</i>	3 621,05	3 183,12
<i>Financial fixed assets</i>	47 393,28	37 003,09
Current assets	725 394,34	1 142 558,43
<i>Receivables</i>	52 215,36	41 897,62
<i>Cash at bank and in hand</i>	673 178,98	1 100 660,81
Accruals	229 170,86	253 387,92
TOTAL	1 005 579,53	1 436 132,56

Liabilities

	2021	2020
Equity	495 611,78	337 219,94
Short-term liabilities	117 162,25	80 131,02
Accruals	392 805,50	1 018 781,60
TOTAL	1 005 579,53	1 436 132,56

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT IN EUR

	2021	2020
Net revenue	-	4 160,00
Grants	1 698 815,78	1 462 289,89
External charges	717 076,73	465 449,40
Personnel	812 574,13	721 972,01
Depreciation	2 368,47	1 482,22
Other interest rate	12,56	0,03
Other operating expenses	8 417,17	10 324,99
Result of the year	158 391,84	267 221,30

EUF EUROPEAN
UNIVERSITY
FOUNDATION