

IMPACT OF EUROPEAN YOUTH PROGRAMS ON STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PETROSANI

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ABSTRACT: *Education, training, youth activities and sport are essential elements for promoting common European values, social integration, strengthening intercultural understanding and a sense of belonging to a community and preventing violent radicalization. Erasmus + is an important tool for promoting the inclusion of people from disadvantaged backgrounds, especially newcomers. The impact of Erasmus is enormous, not only for each student, but also for the European economy as a whole. Through its support for skills and for a modern higher education system, with closer links between academia and employers, Erasmus helps us combat skills mismatches. The program also gives young people the confidence and ability to work in other countries, where they might find suitable jobs for them, instead of being trapped in a geographical non-compliance.*

KEY WORDS: *students, Erasmus program, education, mobility, social inclusion, foreign languages, skills, training.*

JEL CLASSIFICATIONS: *F 55, I2, I38.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Education, training, youth activities and sport are essential elements for promoting common European values, social integration, strengthening intercultural understanding and a sense of belonging to a community and preventing violent radicalization.

Universities are increasingly focusing on projects for youth, language skills, digital skills, sustainable development, vocational training, which is why an advantage of our students that helps us develop and perceive the world differently than we saw before now it is represented by the exchanges of experience abroad, offered by the Erasmus + program, the program that "enlightens minds and changes lives.", and

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landmarks such as learning, support, mobility, experience, equity, social inclusion, are fully associated with the term "Erasmus + "

2. ERASMUS+ GENERAL ASPECTS

Erasmus was launched in the form of a program to support students in order to study in another European country, with academic recognition of their time at the partner institution. Since 1995, the EU's Socrates program (Community program for cooperation in the field of education) has formed several sub-compartments, including the Erasmus program as a component responsible exclusively for higher education at Community level. The general concept of Erasmus is based on the development of students and teachers through mobility, scholarships, participation in transnational projects and the exchange of intra-European experience.

The ERASMUS + program is dedicated to the individual mobility of students and university staff, inter-institutional cooperation and the exchange of good practices at international level and support for institutional policy reforms. The program is funded by the European Commission and is coordinated at national level by the National Agency for Community Programs in Vocational Education and Training (ANPCDEFP). In order to participate in this program, ATM applied for and obtained in 2014 the Erasmus University Charter (ECHE). Every year, ATM applies to ANPCDEFP and the European Commission to obtain funding for various projects under the Erasmus + program.

All past studies on the professional value of temporary studies in another European country have consistently shown that students who have previously been in mobility clearly differ from those who have not been in these cross-border exchanges in taking on international missions.

The overall occupational value of ERASMUS mobility does not differ sharply, depending on the field of study. The general value was that ERASMUS is not the entry into a highly sought-after career, but rather a successful "door opener" on the labor market. [1]

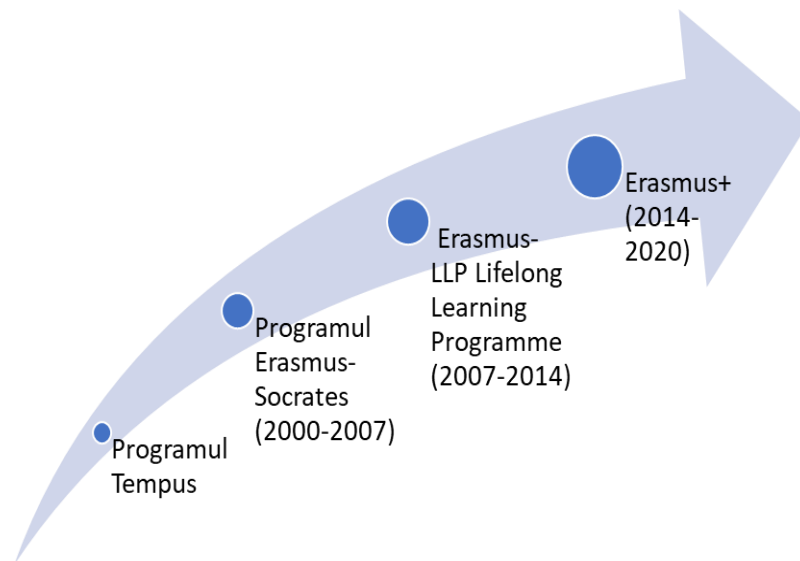


Figure 1.1. Erasmus+ history

Erasmus + is the EU's education, training, youth and sport program for 2014-2020. Education, training, youth and sport can make a major contribution to tackling socio-economic change, the main challenges facing Europe by the end of the decade and the implementation of the European policy agenda for growth, jobs, equity. and social inclusion. Combating high unemployment - especially among young people - is one of the most urgent tasks for European governments. Too many young people drop out of school prematurely, thus risking becoming unemployed and socially marginalized. The same risk threatens many low-skilled adults. Technologies change the way society works, thus requiring their use at full capacity. European companies need to become more competitive through talent and innovation. Europe needs more cohesive and inclusive societies that allow its citizens to play an active role in democratic life.[5]

Education, training, youth activities and sport are essential elements for promoting common European values, social integration, strengthening intercultural understanding and a sense of belonging to a community and preventing violent radicalization. Erasmus + is an important tool for promoting the inclusion of people from disadvantaged backgrounds, especially newcomers.

Another challenge concerns the development of social capital among young people, the emancipation of young people and their ability to participate actively in society, in accordance with the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty, in order to "encourage the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe". This can also be addressed through non-formal learning activities, which aim to improve the skills and competences of young people, as well as to promote active citizenship. In addition, youth organizations and workers need training and cooperation opportunities to develop the professionalism and European dimension of youth activities. High-performance education and training systems and youth policies provide citizens with

the skills they need in the labor market and in the economy, while enabling them to play an active role in society and to achieve on a personal level. Reforms in education, training and youth can strengthen the achievement of these goals, based on a shared vision between policy makers and stakeholders, strong evidence and cooperation between different areas and levels.[4]

The Erasmus + program is designed to support the efforts of the countries participating in the program to make effective use of Europe's talent and social capital, with a view to lifelong learning, by linking support for formal, non-formal and informal learning. in the fields of education, training and youth. The program also improves opportunities for cooperation and mobility with partner countries, especially in the fields of higher education and youth. In line with one of the elements recently introduced in the Treaty of Lisbon, Erasmus + also supports activities aimed at developing the European dimension in sport, by promoting cooperation between bodies responsible for sport. The program promotes the creation and development of European networks, providing opportunities for cooperation between stakeholders and for the exchange and transfer of knowledge and know-how in various fields related to sport and physical activity. Enhanced cooperation will have positive effects, in particular, in developing Europe's human capital potential, helping to reduce the social and economic costs of physical inactivity.

The program supports actions, cooperation and instruments compatible with the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and its flagship initiatives, such as Youth on the Move and the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs. The program also contributes to achieving the objectives of the strategic framework for European cooperation in vocational education and training and the EU Youth Strategy through open methods of coordination. Investing in knowledge, skills and competences will benefit individuals, institutions, organizations and society as a whole, contributing to economic growth and ensuring equity, prosperity and social inclusion in Europe and beyond.

The impact of Erasmus is enormous, not only for each student, but also for the European economy as a whole. Through its support for skills and a modern higher education system, with closer links between academia and employers, Erasmus helps us combat skills mismatches. The program also gives young people the confidence and ability to work in other countries, where they may find suitable jobs for them, instead of being trapped in a geographical non-compliance.

The impact of the Erasmus + program in higher education on youth mobility
The Erasmus + Impact Study in Higher Education measures and analyzes the impact that the Erasmus + program has on students who have benefited from a period of learning or training abroad through the program, in particular the impact on improving individual skills, employability and common European identity.

The study looked at four main target groups and several subgroups: Erasmus + students before and after their placement abroad, Erasmus + experienced graduates, Erasmus + experienced academic and non-academic staff, and higher education institutions involved in Erasmus + projects.

Following this study, almost 77,000 responses to the survey were analyzed, including:

- 47,000 Erasmus + students;

- 12,000 Erasmus + experienced graduates;
- 10,000 Erasmus + experienced staff members;
- 7,000 Others.

The main ideas resulting from this study are transposed below: [6]

Erasmus + students find out what they want to do in the future while abroad. They are exposed to new teaching and learning methods and aim to progress to higher levels of education more than non-mobile students.

Erasmus + students improve their skills related to employment and social cohesion.

Nine out of ten students report gains in adaptability, ability to collaborate with people from different cultures, communication and problem-solving skills. More than half have improved their digital skills.

Nine out of ten Erasmus + graduates also report that they use their skills and experiences gained in their current work.

Erasmus + has been found to have a greater impact than other mobility programs on personal development, social involvement and openness to other cultures. Former Erasmus + participants find a job faster than students who have not had mobility. One in four Erasmus + students goes abroad for an internship leading to job opportunities.

Three out of four Erasmus + graduates consider their experience abroad to be beneficial for finding their first job. 80% find their first job after graduation within three months, a little more than their non-mobile counterparts do.[4]

40% of those who completed an Erasmus + internship abroad were employed or offered a job by the host company (an increase of 20% compared to 2014).

They can also expect faster career advancement; according to the statements of 64% of employers, staff with international experience are entrusted with greater responsibilities.

Graduates with international experience are much better off in the labor market than likely to be affected by long-term unemployment by half, compared to young people who have not studied or participated in training activities abroad; five years after graduation, their unemployment rate is 23% lower.[6]

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One in ten started his own company.

It has been shown that young people studying or participating in mobility abroad not only acquire knowledge in certain disciplines, but also strengthen certain key transversal skills that are highly valued by employers.

The majority of employers, 92%, when making decisions in the recruitment process, look for certain personality traits that the Erasmus + program develops, such as tolerance, confidence, problem-solving skills, curiosity, knowledge of their own strengths / weaknesses and decision. Tests administered before and after the exchange period show that students participating in the Erasmus program get higher scores for these personality traits, even before participating in the program, and by the time they return, the difference between the scores they get and the scores obtained by other students increases on average by 42%.

The impact study of the Erasmus program was carried out by an independent group of experts led by specialists from CHE Consult, a company based in Berlin, with the support of Brussels Education Services, the Compostela Group of Universities and the Erasmus Student Network.[2]

The Erasmus + program has proven to be particularly effective, being highly appreciated by stakeholders and the general public, who identify the program as one of the leading places among the most significant positive results of the European Union. Erasmus + beneficiaries report a satisfaction rate of over 90%. [6]

For students, the mobility of this program has had and continues to have a positive effect on the acquisition of skills and competences, thus increasing the capacity for professional insertion and entrepreneurship and reducing the transition period from education to employment.

The Erasmus + program promotes positive social / civic behavior and a sense of "European belonging", contributing to greater cohesion in the Union. It reaches disadvantaged young people to a greater extent than previous programs or comparable national schemes.

Erasmus + programs have had an impact on the formulation and implementation of policies in the fields of education, training, youth and sport, especially in higher education, where the relevant budget has been large enough or has had an indirect effect by funding cooperation in level of policies between authorities. In the long run, these programs have instilled in Europe the idea that educational mobility benefits people and that their learning outcomes must be validated and jointly recognized. Erasmus + plays an important role in the global influence of the EU, especially in terms of facilitating the recognition of qualifications between Europe and partner countries.[3]

This program has met or even exceeded most of the indicators set out in its legal basis. Demand far exceeds available funding. For the future, without prejudice to the next multiannual financial framework, studies have confirmed the program's ability to absorb an increase in the general budget. In this case, they suggested that the current distribution between the sectors of the program could be modified to strengthen those sectors for which a budget increase would bring the most effective impact benefits.

The Erasmus + program is better aligned with EU policies than previous programs and is flexible enough to adapt to emerging needs at EU level, such as increasing social inclusion and preventing violent radicalization, in line with the Paris Declaration, the new priority areas of the EU. the strategic framework for European cooperation in vocational education and training (ET 2020) and the Youth Strategy or the New Agenda for Skills in Europe.

The Erasmus + program provides direct support to people wishing to study or train abroad and to projects aimed at supporting cross-border cooperation between higher education institutions. However, much remains to be done to ensure educational mobility opportunities for all.

For this reason, the Commission has published a proposal for a Council Recommendation on the promotion of automatic mutual recognition of diplomas and the results of periods of study abroad.[6]

The Commission also supports the European Student Card Initiative, which will facilitate the exchange of information on students and the creation of European university alliances, with a view to enhancing competitiveness, quality and excellence in teaching, research and innovation.[7]

A survey of students who have benefited from this program has shown that Erasmus + scholarships have many advantages over them, and the main benefits of mobility are, first and foremost, the opportunity to visit new places, a valuable experience. spiritual and better knowledge of a foreign language. Secondly, the plus in professional training and enrichment of social life are mentioned.

Within the University of Petroșani, the Erasmus program has been operating since 2007 and enjoys a wide interest among all categories of beneficiaries, registering in recent years a growing number of mobilities.

Table 1. Mobilities at University of Petrosani between 2009-2017

Universitary year	OUTGOING		INCOMING	
	Outgoing students	Number of months	Incoming students	Number of months
2009-2010	51	211	2	13
2010-2011	48	218	2	13
2011-2012	40	139	2	8
2012-2013	34	137	-	-
2013-2014	58	204	4	36
2014-2015	63	161	3	27
2015-2016	73	183	6	45
2016-2017	77	193	8	72
2017-2018 prognose	87	215	12	96

Every year the number of students applying for the Erasmus + scholarship increases significantly, and the reason for leaving is quite simple, it is often the same for all scholarship holders and consists in the desire to study abroad at a progressive institution, where the student meets a more pleasant environment and conditions. higher learning. Arriving on the benches of the European university, the student discovers a new way of teaching, such as listening to and discussing the papers.

3. CONCLUSION

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Following various research and studies, we can see that Erasmus + has been well received among young people who have seen an enormous possibility of educational and personal development in a country other than their own. Combining

better quality studies abroad and the prospect of traveling to new cities by exploring multiculturalism has proven to be gaining at least a huge popularity, so demand significantly exceeds the number of Erasmus scholarships available in most participating countries, which is why decreased the average monthly value of the stock exchange.

For students, the mobility of this program has had and continues to have a positive effect on the acquisition of skills and competences, thus increasing the capacity for professional insertion and entrepreneurship and reducing the transition period from education to employment.

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