



2018

Annual Activity Report

**Directorate-General
for Education, Youth,
Sport and Culture**



Education, Youth, Sport and Culture are at the heart of what citizens appreciate about the EU. These policy areas are fundamental drivers of job creation, economic growth and social fairness, as well as the primary means through which citizens experience European identity in all its diversity. In 2018, to harness their full potential, the Commission put forth its vision for a **European Education Area**; organised the **European Year of Cultural Heritage**, we set up a **European Solidarity Corps**; and implemented the **DiscoverEU** pilot project.

Education is also at the centre of the international policy agenda. Last year, for the first time ever, the G20 organised an Education ministerial meeting, focusing on inclusive education and the skills we will need to succeed in the future. Moreover, this year, the G7 is also organising another education ministerial meeting, highlighting the need to invest in early childhood education and care and teacher education. This presents unique opportunities, and we are eager to take advantage of them.

Last year started strong with the organisation of the first **EU Education Summit**, which showcased education as a vital force for economic growth and social cohesion. Ministers of Education from all over the EU came together to reflect on the modernisation of education policies. As we started to work towards the **European Education Area**, the European Union adopted a series of policy initiatives aimed at making education systems more inclusive and based on lifelong learning, as well as improving key competences, scaling up digital and innovative education practices, and promoting the common values that bind us together. Our work continued as the Commission spearheaded initiatives such as the **European Universities** or the **European Student Card**, both of which are geared towards the transformation of European higher education in the digital era. To overcome obstacles to the free movement of learners, the Commission set ambitious goals towards improving language learning in secondary education and guaranteeing the automatic recognition of school and higher education qualifications, as well as that of learning periods abroad.

Beyond formal education, the Commission also delivered on a Communication proposing a new EU "**Youth Strategy**" for 2019-2021 and presented a **New European Agenda for Culture** based on experience gained from EU cooperation on culture over the last decade. Additionally, we responded to President Juncker's call to set up the **European Solidarity Corps**, the adoption of which will allow thousands of young people to give back and, in the process, enrich themselves with those unique experiences. In parallel, we prepared the Commission's proposals for the **next generation of programmes**, which will support education, youth, sport and culture policies within the future Multi-Annual Financial Framework. These proposals are ambitious and aim to make the programmes more accessible and inclusive. We also contributed to the Commission's new Investment Programme - **InvestEU**.

And, of course, we contributed to the new generation of Research and Innovation programmes with novel proposals for the **European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)** and the **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)**. In 2018, the MSCA continued to support a new generation of promising young researchers in Europe. The EIT also designated two new Knowledge and Innovation Communities in the fields of "Added-value Manufacturing" and "Urban mobility", reinforcing the innovation capacity of the Member States – and the Union – in new fields.

These achievements are largely thanks to the ideas, enthusiasm and dedication of DG EAC staff. With 2018 being my first year at the helm, I am looking forward to steering DG EAC towards harnessing the potential of Education, Youth, Sport, and Culture, so that we can promote lifelong learning and build inclusive, cohesive societies.

Themis Christophidou
Director General DG EAC

Table of Contents

THE DG IN BRIEF	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	10
1. A) KEY RESULTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE DG	10
2. B) KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs).....	13
3. C) KEY CONCLUSIONS ON FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROL (EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF SECTION 2.1)	16
4. D) PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO THE COMMISSIONER(S)	17
1. KEY RESULTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE DG 18	
A. POLICY ASPECTS OF THE MAIN OUTPUTS FOR 2018.....	18
B. DELIVERING ON THE NEXT EU LONG-TERM BUDGET	26
C. ERASMUS+, THE UNION PROGRAMME FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, YOUTH AND SPORT	31
D. HORIZON 2020, THE EU FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION.....	60
E. CREATIVE EUROPE, THE EU FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME FOR SUPPORT TO THE CULTURE AND AUDIOVISUAL SECTORS	70
F. CORPORATE ACTIVITIES	78
2. ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROL	83
2.1 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROL	83
2.1.1 CONTROL RESULTS	85
2.1.2 AUDIT OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	106
2.1.3 ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS	111
2.1.4 CONCLUSIONS ON THE IMPACT AS REGARDS ASSURANCE	114
2.1.5 DECLARATION OF ASSURANCE	115
2.2 OTHER ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT DIMENSIONS	116
2.2.1 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	116
2.2.2 BETTER REGULATION	116
2.2.3 INFORMATION MANAGEMENT ASPECTS	117
DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT.....	117
KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT.....	118
DATA PROTECTION	118
2.2.4 EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES	119
2.2.5 EXAMPLES OF ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY	121

Mission Statement

Directorate-General Education, Youth, Sport and Culture plays a key role in the implementation of the overall objectives and political guidelines of the European Commission particularly through its contribution to a **knowledge-based Europe** that reconciles a competitive economy and an inclusive society. In this regard, DG EAC's mission covers areas of substantial societal and political significance:

- to **foster equity and excellence in modern education systems** at schools and in higher education, promote career development of researchers and cross-fertilisation between education, research and innovation, including through the European Institute of Innovation and Technology,
- to **promote culture as a catalyst for innovation**, by maximising the sector's contribution to jobs and growth, particularly among the young, and our cultural diversity,
- to **maximise the potential and well-being of young people** and their active participation in society and work life,
- to **develop the European dimension in sport**,
- to **ensure the strategic implementation of 3 EU flagship programmes**, Erasmus+, Creative Europe, and (under H2020) the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions as well as the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, exploit and strengthen synergies between policy and programme actions, and promote their systemic impact.

In each of these fields, DG EAC aims to stimulate the development of competences, the mobility of individuals, mutual learning, cross border cooperation, involvement of stakeholders, and policy reform in Member States and Partner Countries around the world.

Under the leadership of the Commissioner responsible for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, DG EAC contributes to the Commission's priorities¹ for growth, jobs and investment.

Guided by the Treaty on the European Union², DG EAC's mission and political priorities are further defined on the basis of **President Juncker's political guidelines**³ set for the Commission 2014-2019 and its translation in Commissioner Navracsics' mission letter.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/priorities/sites/beta-political/files/juncker-political-guidelines_en.pdf

² C 326/13

³ A New Start for Europe: My Agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change, http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/publications/president-junckers-political-guidelines_en

DG EAC is in charge of multiple policy areas, for which the Treaty limits the competence at the European level to complementary and support activities, such as policy cooperation, in particular via the open method of coordination.

With its vision for a **European Education Area**, the European Commission has committed itself to an ambitious agenda aligned with the Sustainable Development Goal 4 -"Quality education" set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015.

In 2018, DG EAC has also supported the Goal "Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning", not only via Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 funding but also by building on the Commission's 2017 Communication on a "renewed impetus of the Africa EU Partnership" and the creation of a new EU-Africa Alliance for Sustainable investments and Jobs, which puts youth, knowledge and jobs at the heart of the **EU's cooperation with Africa**. The new **EU Strategy for the Western Balkans** also sets out new flagship initiatives for the reform-driven region, including doubling the amount of Erasmus+ funds allocated to the region.

Following the Commission Communication on "**Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture**"⁴, the ambition is to work towards a shared European agenda in education and training and to create by 2025 a **European Education Area** in which learning, studying and doing research would not be hampered by borders and where spending time in another Member State – to study, to learn, or to work – has become the standard.

DG EAC manages the implementation of the **Strategic Framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020)**, involving i.a. the High-Level Group on education and training; seven Working Groups; the European Education Summit; the Education, Training and Youth Forum; and the Education and Training Monitor. The DG is also responsible for preparing the future Commission proposal for the new cooperation framework after 2020.

Alongside this Strategic Framework, the vehicle for promoting education at EU-level is the **Europe 2020 Strategy** with its annual policy coordination of the European Semester. DG EAC contributes to all its deliverables, including the Annual Growth Survey, Joint Employment Report, Country Reports and country-specific recommendations. As from the 2018 European Semester, principles and rights of the European Pillar of Social Rights, proclaimed at the Gothenburg social summit on 17 November 2017, are also being monitored in the European Semester, with education, training and lifelong learning being principle 1.

DG EAC coordinates the contribution of education, culture and sport to the preparation of the post-2020 **Structural and Investment Funds**. DG EAC is actively involved in fostering the role of inclusive education and common values in preventing radicalisation in the framework of the Security Union Task Force.

DG EAC is promoting the implementation of the education dimension of the Action Plan on the integration of Third country nationals and of the Roma integration Strategies and contributing its goals with actions in the field of youth, culture and sport.

The **DG spending programmes** implement actions mainly by means of grants funded under Title 15⁵ of the budget complemented with funding from Heading 4⁶ as regards external actions:

- The programme **Erasmus+** (EUR 14.5⁷ billion from heading 1 –"Smart and Inclusive Growth" + EUR 1.7 billion from heading 4 "Global Europe" + EUR 85 million for EDF

⁴ COM(2017)673

⁵ "Education and Culture"

⁶ "Global Europe"

⁷ Initial envelope EUR 14,7 billion updated following the adoption of the "REGULATION (EU) 2018/1475 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 2 October 2018 laying

over 2014-2020), integrating education, training, youth, Jean Monnet activities and sport, including the new Erasmus+ Student Loan guarantee facility and the international dimension of higher education and youth cooperation;

- The programme **European Solidarity Corps** (Regulation adopted 02/10/18 - EUR 375,6 million) which provides further opportunities for the engagement of young people and organisations in accessible and high-quality solidarity activities;
- The programme **Creative Europe** (EUR 1.46 billion), covering the culture and the audio-visual sectors, including the new guarantee facility for SMEs in the cultural and creative sectors ;
- The research and innovation programme **Horizon 2020** (EUR 77 billion), in which DG EAC is tasked with the implementation of 9% with the **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions** – MSCA (EUR 6.2 billion) and the **European Institute of Innovation and Technology** – EIT (EUR 2.4 billion).

In 2018, the total available budget in commitment appropriations for the EU programmes and actions under the policy portfolio of DG EAC⁸ amounted to about **EUR 4.697 billion (+13% as compared to 2017)**, including administrative budget and the contribution of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA/EEA), the financial participation of third countries as well as internal revenues.

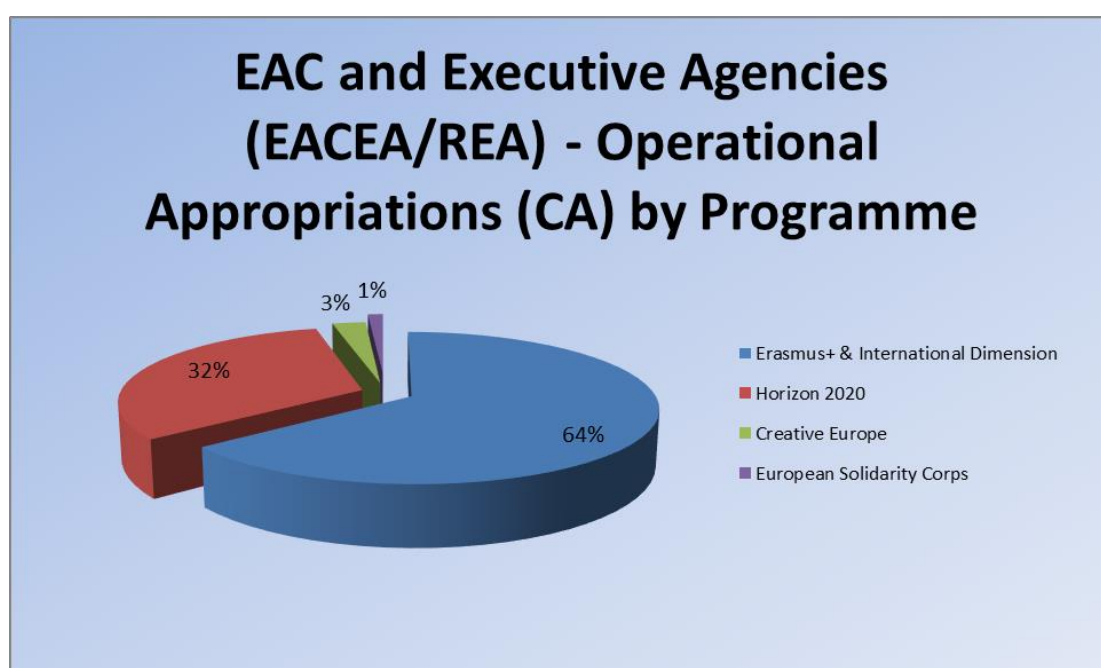


Figure 1: % expenditure by programme

down the legal framework of the European Solidarity Corps and amending Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013, Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 and Decision No 1313/2013/EU"

⁸ The Education and Culture domain led by DG EAC includes Marie-Sklodowska Curie Actions (MSCA) and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). MSCA encourage researchers to work and collaborate in other countries, at all stages of a researcher's career, backing initiatives that break down barriers between academia, industry and business. The EIT reinforces Europe's innovation capacity by connecting and empowering people and organisations to create, educate and innovate.

Figure 1 shows the relative importance of the programmes and highlights the predominance of Erasmus+. DG EAC's own budget, i.e. expenditures which are covered by the assurance of the DG, is narrow and amounts to EUR 2.781 billion (in commitment appropriations) or EUR 2.571 billion (in payments made).

DG EAC's main programmes typically contain many diverse actions with a direct interaction with citizens in most cases. With the exception of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, the programmes generally finance a high number of small actions and projects with a relatively short duration (rarely more than two years). The main actions can be summarised as follows:

- **Mobility actions**, consisting of hundreds of thousands of individual grants, particularly in the Erasmus+ strands: Education and Training and Youth, as well as in the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions;
- **Cross-border Partnerships**, involving with other partners several thousands of organisations in the fields of education, research, youth, sport or culture;
- **Support for networks**, European platforms or operational grants to certain organisations;
- **Policy cooperation and support**, such as peer learning activities, policy experimentation, studies or comparative research in the fields of education, youth, sport or culture.

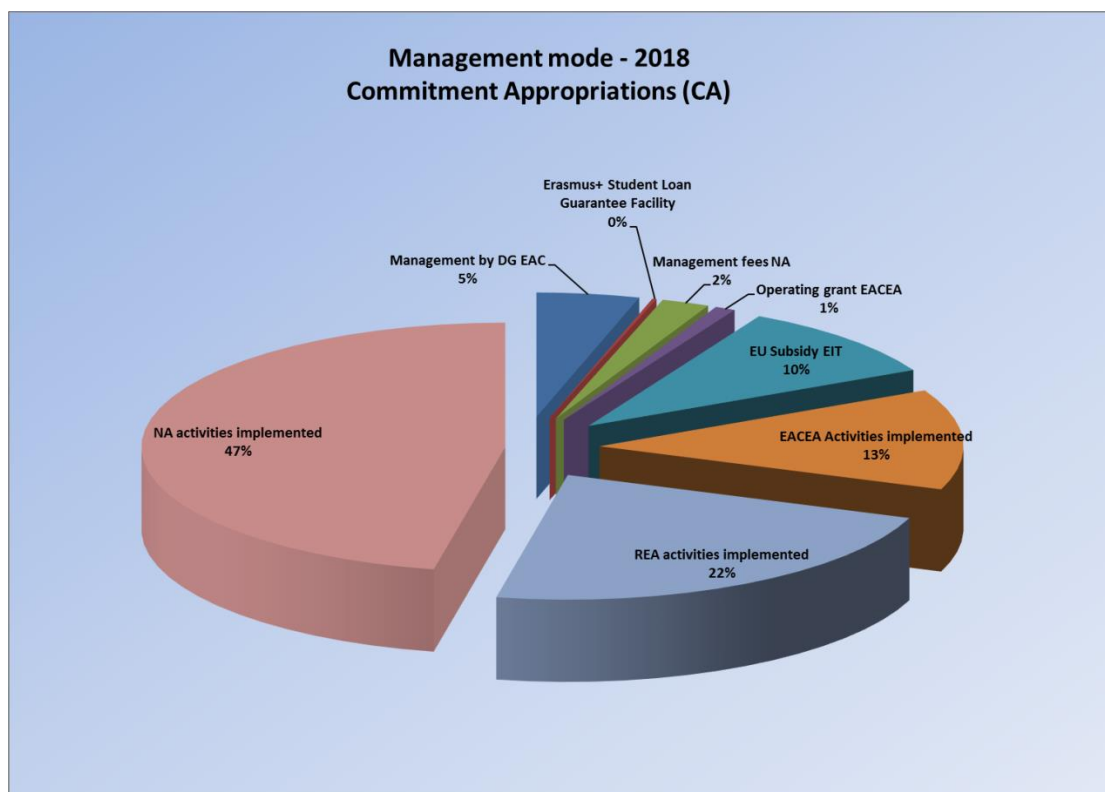


Figure 2: % expenditure by management mode and implementing body

In order to implement such numerous and varied activities, in the 2014-2020 generation of programmes, the European Commission uses **4 different implementation modes** for the education and culture domains, including 3 forms of externalisation:

Direct management through two EU Executive Agencies: the Education Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) and the Research Executive Agency (REA), mainly for those parts of programmes where projects are allocated across Europe based on

excellence⁹. DG EAC's responsibility is assumed through the Steering Committee of each Executive Agency. In compliance with the relevant Acts of Delegation, the actions implemented through the Executive Agencies contribute significantly to the objectives of the DG. They represent close to 35% of EAC's 2018 budget (13% by EACEA, 22% by REA). Their solid performance and efficiency indicators have resulted in incremental mandate extensions¹⁰. Since 2014, the implementation of parts of Erasmus+ and Creative Europe has been delegated to EACEA, while Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions are managed by REA. It is worth noting that the operational budget of the Executive Agencies are not funds that the DG has entrusted but are funds the Agencies have directly received from the Commission. Therefore, the Executive Director of the respective Executive Agency, as Authorising Officer by Delegation¹¹, is fully in charge and accountable for the operational budget, and he has the responsibility to provide assurance on the operational expenditure in his Annual Activity Report¹². Thus, DG EAC has principally a supervision responsibility over the Executive Agencies.

Indirect management through National Agencies (NAs) appointed and supervised by the National Authorities (NAUs) of the participating countries to the Erasmus+ programme. This implementation mode is mainly used for mass mobility actions, partnerships, and certain cooperation projects. The actions implemented through NAs represent nearly 47% of the 2018 budget. National Agencies are equipped to manage the large volume of actions of relatively low amounts that require proximity to the beneficiaries. DG EAC retains full responsibility for these parts of the programmes.

Indirect management through other bodies: The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and the European Investment Fund (EIF) for the Erasmus+ Student Loan Guarantee Facility manage a budget representing together 10% of the 2018 budget. They are both characterised by a focused number of actions with a long time scope:

- the new Framework Partnership Agreements signed in 2016 between the EIT and the KICs (Knowledge and Innovation Communities) foreseen a period of 7 years starting from 1st January 2016);
- the EU-guaranteed Master loans¹³ have a duration of minimum 5 years up to maximum 10 years, with repayment only starting 1 or 2 years after completion of the 1 or 2-years Master programme.

The remaining actions are implemented by **DG EAC under direct management**. This represents 5% of the commitment appropriations. These actions consist mainly of administrative expenditure (Library and e-Resources unit of the Commission, the Commission Blue Book traineeships programme, studies, external communication and dissemination of Programmes, IT systems, etc.), policy coordination and support actions, politically sensitive and new actions, pilot projects and preparatory actions.

⁹ Proposals are submitted by applicants to competition-based, bottom-up calls. They are then evaluated by external experts on the basis of pre-defined criteria and finally ranked and selected for funding according to their overall quality.

¹⁰ EACEA and REA are subject to regular cost-benefit analysis of the externalisation through Agencies which demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of this management mode.

¹¹ Art. 66(9) of the Financial Regulation (2012) applicable to the general budget of the European Union.

¹² As far as the operating budget granted by DG EAC to the Agency is concerned, DG EAC remains responsible as Parent DG. Those administrative expenditures are therefore covered by the assurance given in the AAR.

¹³ Erasmus+ Master Degree Loans enable potential Master's students to gain access to loans or to benefit from deferred payment for tuition and housing costs (provided by participating banks or universities and guaranteed by the EU, via its partner the European Investment Fund) to support their studies abroad over the lifetime of the Erasmus+ Programme. The EU budget allocation will leverage a multiple amount in financing from the banking sector or from higher education institutions for loans (or equivalent services) to mobile masters students.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Annual Activity Report is a management report of the Director-General of DG EAC to the College of Commissioners. Annual Activity Reports are the main instrument of management accountability within the Commission. They constitute the basis on which the College takes overall political responsibility for its decisions, as well as for the coordinating, executive and management functions it exercises, as laid down in the Treaties¹⁴.

a) Key results and progress towards the achievement of the general and specific objectives of the DG

In 2018, DG EAC has contributed to both the competitiveness and the social inclusion dimensions of the Commission's first political priority, "A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment", in line with the **2016-2020 Strategic Plan**.

At the beginning of the year, DG EAC organised the first **EU Education Summit**, bringing together 21 education ministers and state secretaries and around 600 experts and stakeholders – a mobilisation of the European educational world without precedent. Discussions covered a wide range of **educational challenges** such as investing in early childhood education and care, fostering inclusion and equity, enhancing citizenship education and supporting the teaching profession. Participants voiced strong support of the Gothenburg agenda (November 2017) and gave strong encouragement to deliver on the commitment to create the **European Education Area** by 2025. From its inception, this initiative was poised to be the vision guiding our efforts in the field of Education. Its aim is to create a Europe where learning mobility is the norm, where universities can work seamlessly across borders, where it is normal to speak two languages in addition to the mother tongue, where school and higher education diplomas are automatically recognised, and where everyone feels they belong, irrespective of their background. At the same time, DG EAC launched work on new actions, in particular the **European Student Card** with the launch of the first functionalities in December 2018 that are tested by higher education institutions and students before a progressive roll out as from 2021; as well as the **European Universities** Initiative with a first call for proposals published in October 2018 for the emergence of the first twelve European Universities.

It was in the midst of such momentum that the Commission tabled a set of proposals for Council recommendations on **key competences, common values and inclusive education, automatic mutual recognition of qualifications and learning periods abroad, language learning, and quality of early-childhood education and care**, in January and in May 2018.

On 22 May 2018, the Council adopted the Recommendation on **key competences for lifelong learning**, which sets out the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed by all for personal fulfilment and development, employability, social inclusion and active citizenship. On 27 November 2018, the Council unanimously adopted the Recommendation on **promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education and training qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods abroad** in record time. This was considered to be a key in breaking down barriers to learning mobility for school students. DG EAC helped make a significant first step towards the emergence of "**European degrees**" recognised throughout Europe when launching the first Erasmus+ pilot call for **European Universities** on 24 October 2018.

At the same time, DG EAC continued to significantly strengthen its **analysis and knowledge capacity** regarding education and training systems. A key output to support evidence-based education policies was the **7th Education and Training Monitor**,

¹⁴ Article 17(1) of the Treaty on European Union.

published on 16 October 2018, providing significant input to the **European Semester**.

The Commission also adopted a **dedicated action plan on digital education**, setting out 11 initiatives to support Member States with the implementation of digital technologies in education, as well as supporting the development of digital skills. As part of the action plan, we also launched a new online self-assessment tool (SELFIE) to help schools across Europe reflect on how they are using technologies for teaching and learning.

In addition, DG EAC continued to increase its global outreach and collaboration through the international dimension of its programmes and its international policy dialogues. In this context, we would like to highlight the organisation of the annual Western Balkan Education and Research ministerial event, as well as the new policy dialogue with Japan, which led to a jointly funded call for proposals for joint EU-Japan Master degrees. DG EAC policies and programmes featured highly on two major international policy initiatives: the new EU-Africa Alliance for Sustainable investments and Jobs, and the EU Strategy for the Western Balkans.

As for Youth, in 2018, DG EAC drove forward its agenda to deliver further on the **Investing in Europe's Youth Initiative**¹⁵, by prompting the adoption of the legal basis of the newly created **European Solidarity Corps**¹⁶. We also followed up on the Communication on **a renewed EU agenda for higher education**¹⁷, the **Communication on school development and excellent teaching for a great start in life**¹⁸, and the **Council Recommendation on graduate tracking**¹⁹. In addition, in May 2018, DG EAC proposed a **revised Youth strategy** endorsed by the Council²⁰, to take over the previous expiring strategy.

Last year, DG EAC also implemented **DiscoverEU**, a EUR 12 million pilot action by the European Parliament aiming to offer young people a first experience of European mobility, encouraging learning in a non-formal setting and engagement with Europe's diverse cultural heritage. DiscoverEU provided travel passes for which 18-year-olds could apply. Around 100,000 applications were received under the first round, organised in June, resulting in around 15,000 tickets awarded to 18-year-olds travelling over the summer.

In 2018, DG EAC also continued its work promoting participation in sport and physical activity, particularly through the implementation of the **EU Work Plan for Sport**, followed up with the **Tartu Call for a Healthy Lifestyle**. The fourth edition of the **European Week of Sport** encouraged European citizens to practice physical activity and follow a healthy lifestyle. Celebrated from 23 to 30 September 2018, this flagship initiative run by DG EAC included activities all across Europe, and was extended to the Eastern Partnership and Western Balkans countries and regions for the first time. It is estimated that this year's campaign may have reached almost 13 million participants, all following the motto **#BeActive**. Furthermore, DG EAC also tackled cross-border challenges that impact the integrity of sport such as **doping, match fixing and violence**, as well as all kinds of **intolerance and discrimination**, working to highlight the sector's contribution to Europe's economy in terms of job creation, growth and innovation.

2018 was also a great year for Culture, having been the **European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH)**. The many events that celebrated Europe's rich culture underlined the social and economic importance of cultural heritage and its contribution to economic growth and social cohesion. In the context of the EYCH, priority was given to actions

15 COM(2016) 940 final

16 COM(2017) 262 final

17 COM(2017) 247 final

18 COM(2017) 248 final

19 COM(2017) 249 final

20 Resolution (9008/09)

contributing to **raising awareness of the importance of Europe's cultural heritage**, including actions to support **skills development, social inclusion, critical thinking and youth engagement**. Through these actions, we promoted new participatory and intercultural approaches to heritage, as well as **educational initiatives** aimed at fostering **intercultural dialogue** involving teachers and pupils from an early age.

To capture and scale-up the achievements of the Year, a **European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage** was adopted on 5 December 2018. The Framework sets a common direction for heritage activities at EU level, primarily in EU policies and programmes. Last year the Commission also presented "**A new European Agenda for Culture**²¹".

In 2018, the **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)** continued to invest in the people behind research and innovation in Europe, strengthening their skills, training and career development, and fostering the transfer of knowledge and cooperation between research-performing organisations. We implemented the **MSCA calls in 2018**, benefiting 10 000 researchers. Efforts to ensure gender equality continued to bear fruit in 2018 with the share of women receiving an individual fellowship well above target at almost 45%: out of a total of 1 351 individual fellowships conferred in 2018, 606 went to female researchers. A wide range of communication and outreach activities were also carried out in 2018. With a special focus on cultural heritage, the **European Researchers' Night 2018** attracted 1.5 million visitors in over 370 cities across Europe, and stimulated interest in research and related careers, particularly among young people.

In 2018, under the supervision of DG EAC, the **European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) designated 2 new Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) for Added Value Manufacturing and Urban Mobility**. At the same time, we witnessed a huge collective effort to prepare the EIT's next **Strategic Innovation Agenda** – the political steer for 2021-2027 – and the EIT amended Regulation. The Commission is due to adopt the SIA and the new EIT Regulation by the end of the first semester of 2019.

Finally, in 2018, DG EAC prepared legislative proposals for, and entered into negotiations with the co-legislators on the new generation of programmes to be adopted for the **next Multi-annual financial framework**. These should create opportunities to reconnect with citizens and to rebuild adhesion for a stronger Europe, in the context of a relaunched **EU-level cooperation in the field of education and training with a 2025 perspective**, in the context of the new **European Education Area** and supporting the launch of "**the Sorbonne process**" for the promotion of recognition of diplomas.

In May 2018, DG EAC proposed a new design and legal base for the **future Erasmus programme**, including **DiscoverEU**, the **future European Solidarity Corps**, and the **future Creative Europe programme**. DG EAC also contributed to the design of the **future Framework Programme for Research and Innovation**, in relation to the **future Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions** and the **European Institute of Innovation and Technology** as part of the Commission proposal for **Horizon Europe** adopted on 7 June 2018.

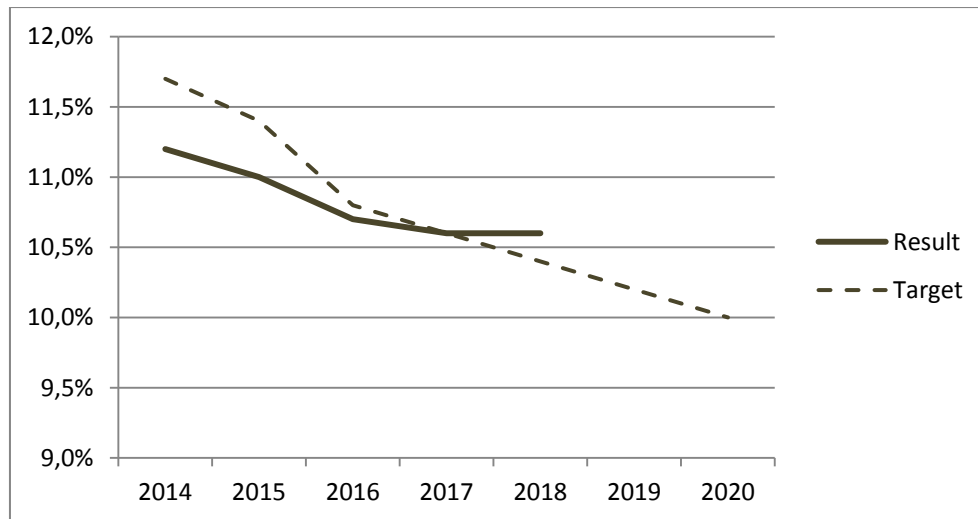
²¹ COM(2018) 267

b) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The selection of KPIs presented below demonstrates that DG EAC is on track to deliver on its 2020 target with regards to the Erasmus+ programme and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions. Detailed information for all programmes can be found in Annex 12, including for the Creative Europe programme and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology.

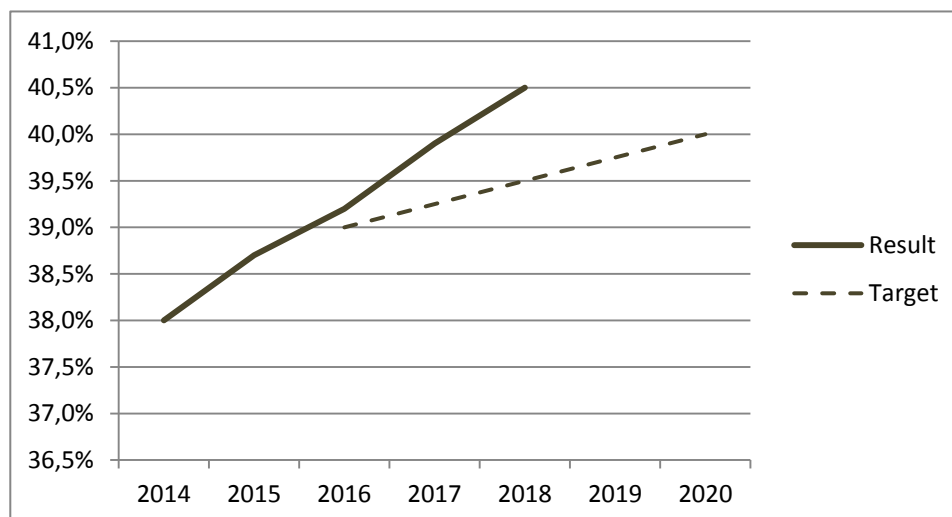
1- Share of early leavers from education and training

Europe 2020 headline target / Commission-level impact indicator 1
Erasmus+ Programme statement General Objective 1 – Indicator 1



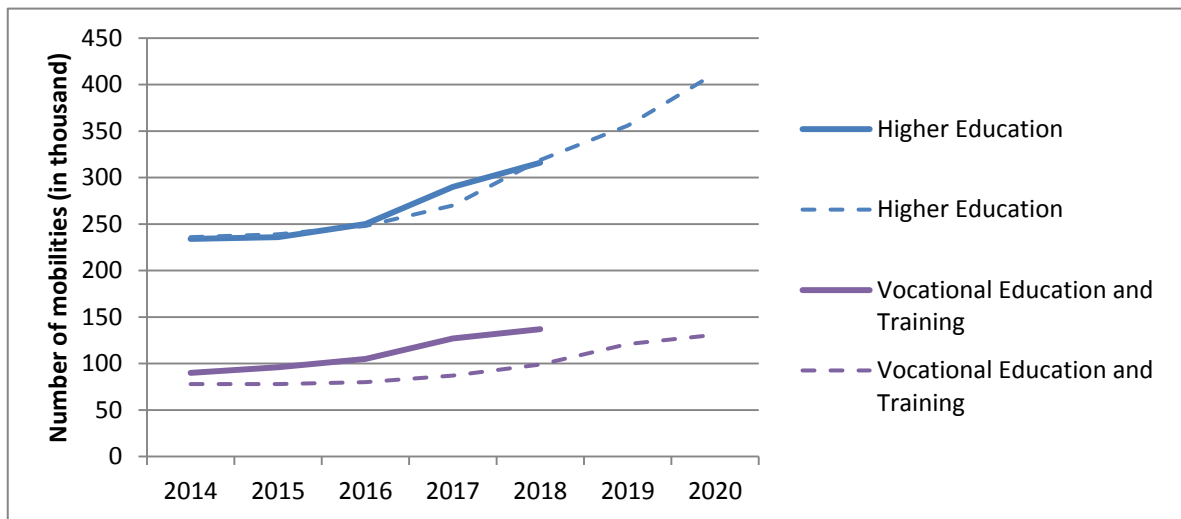
2- Tertiary educational attainment

Commission-level impact indicator 2
Erasmus+ Programme statement General Objective 1 – Indicator 2



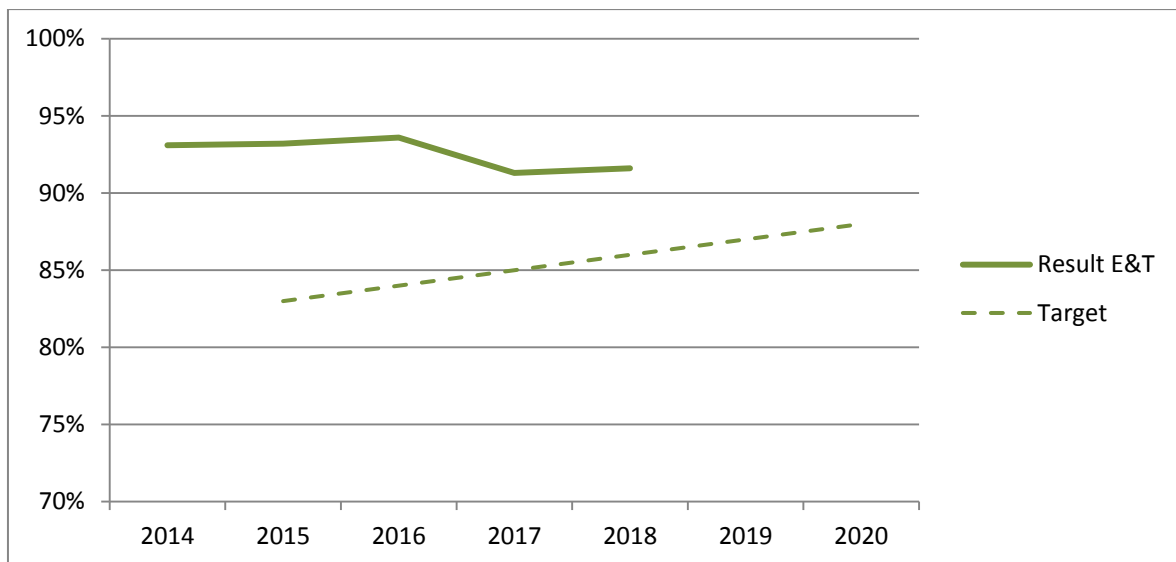
3- Learning mobility opportunities

Output indicator 14 / E+ Programme statement Specific Objective 1 - Indicator 2



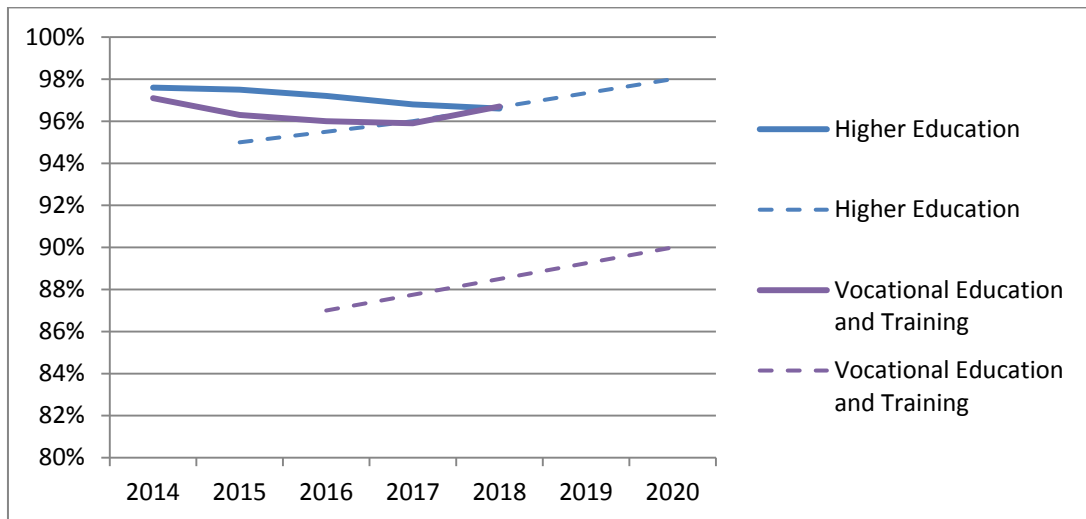
4 - Better skills for participants

Result indicator 15 / Erasmus+ Programme statement Specific Objective 1 - Indicator 1



5 - Language skills for participants

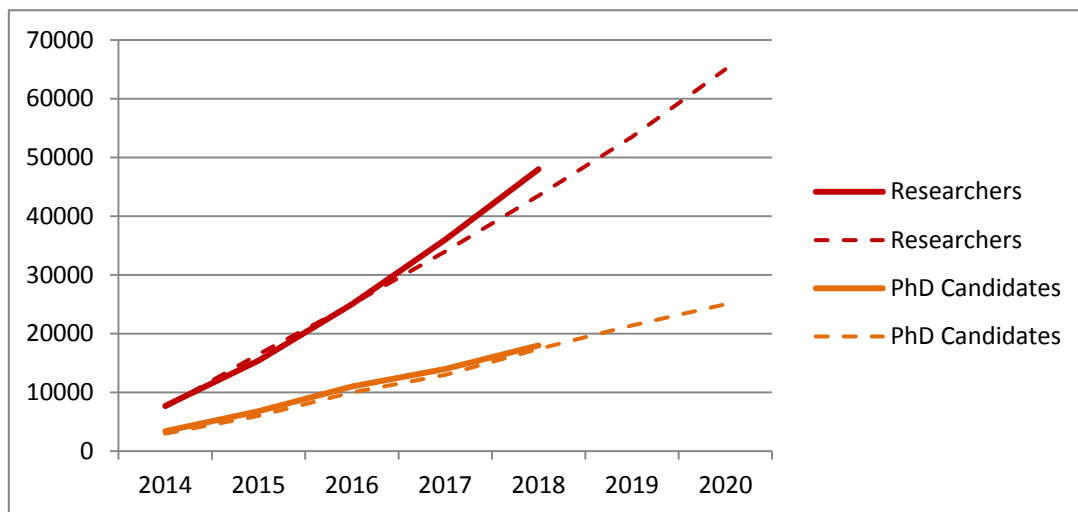
Result indicator 25 / Erasmus+ Programme statement Specific Objective 5 - Indicator 1



6 - Cross-sector and cross-country circulation of researchers

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

Output indicator 28 /H2020 Programme statement Specific Objective 3 – Indicator 1



7 – Multi-annual residual error rate

✓ Less than 2%

Stable and in line with previous years, the multi-annual residual error rate is below 2% in 2018 for any management mode.

c) Key conclusions on Financial Management and Internal control (executive summary of section 2.1)

In accordance with the governance arrangements of the European Commission, DG EAC conducts its operations in compliance with the applicable laws and regulations, working in an open and transparent manner and meeting the expected high level of professional and ethical standards.

The Commission has adopted a set of internal control principles, based on international good practice, aimed to ensure the achievement of policy and operational objectives. The financial regulation requires that the organisational structure and the internal control systems used for the implementation of the budget are set up in accordance with these principles. DG EAC has assessed the internal control systems during the reporting year and has concluded that the **internal control principles are implemented and function as intended**. In addition, on the principle 11, even though it is present and functioning overall, some improvements are needed in relation to documenting the IT governance and IT strategy and in the context of IT security. Further details are available in section 2.1.3.

In addition, DG EAC has **systematically examined the available control results and indicators**, including those aimed to supervise entities to which it has entrusted budget implementation tasks, as well as the observations and recommendations issued by internal auditors and the European Court of Auditors. These elements have been assessed to determine their impact on the management's assurance as regards the achievement of control objectives. DG EAC considers that its supervision responsibilities were fulfilled, and that it has assurance for 2018 for the National Agencies, EIF, EIT and REA.

As detailed in section 2.1, as in previous years DG EAC's **multi-annual residual error rate for all management modes is well below 2%**. The revised global DG EAC cost of control including an estimate of entrusted entity costs for 2018 is 8,2% of the budget managed, consequently the structures in place are considered to be cost-effective.

The voted appropriations (C1) of the year, show a **100% execution rate on every budgetary chapter for commitments** and 99.6% of available appropriations for payments, confirming once again the DG's capacity to implement the programmes managed even with an increased budget profile for the first time during 2018.

EACEA's **reservation** by the newly appointed director concerning internal control weaknesses based on the IAS audit conclusions on the 'phase 2' monitoring of grant management in Erasmus+ and Creative Europe is presented transparently and in a common manner by the parent DGs in the AAR 2018, but does not require a reservation at parent DG level.

Additionally, for the management of *operational* appropriations, EACEA has maintained a reservation on the LLP programme 2007-2013, Tempus programme 2007-13 and for the Culture programme 2007-2013 under its multi-annual calculation of the error rate, even though the amount concerned is a very low percentage (0,41%) of payments in 2018.

In conclusion, with the exception of the matters above, management has reasonable assurance that, overall, suitable controls are in place and working as intended; risks are being appropriately monitored and mitigated; and necessary improvements and reinforcements are being implemented. The Director General, in her capacity as Authorising Officer by Delegation has signed the Declaration of Assurance.

d) Provision of information to the Commissioner(s)

In the context of the regular meetings during the year between the DG and the Commissioner on management matters, the main elements of this report and assurance declaration, have been brought to the attention of Commissioner Navracsics, responsible for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport.

1. KEY RESULTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE DG

A. Policy aspects of the main outputs for 2018

At the informal lunch of the **EU Social Summit in Gothenburg on 17 November 2017** EU Leaders have discussed the new Commission vision to work towards a European Education Area by 2025, presented in its **Commission Communication on Strengthening European identity through education and Culture**²², where learning mobility would be the norm, where universities can cooperate seamlessly across borders, where it is normal to speak two languages in addition to the mother tongue, where higher education and school leaving diplomas are automatically and mutually recognised and where Europe would become a continent of excellence in education and research.

The **European Council of 14 December** expressed its willingness to do more in the areas of education and culture and called on Member States, the Council and the Commission to take forward different work strands and to present, where relevant, proposals for Council recommendations in spring 2018. In this context, the European Council called for a substantially **strengthened, inclusive and extended Erasmus+ programme**, establishing a **network of European Universities** and the creation of an **EU student card**.

The **first EU Education Summit**²³ was organised by DG EAC on 25 January 2018. Commissioner Navracsics hosted 21 education ministers and state secretaries and around 600 participants, experts and stakeholders from all over Europe to discuss "**Laying the foundations of the European Education Area: for an innovative, inclusive and values-based education**". The event showcased education as a vital force for economic growth and social cohesion and gave renewed focus to the modernisation of education policies.



During the **Education Council of 15 February**, Ministers pointed out that the **importance of education and culture**²⁴ was recognised at the highest political level, when chosen as the first theme on the so-called 'Leaders' agenda', and discussed ways how to step up efforts in these areas. Ministers noted that although education falls under the national competence of member states, the cooperation at Union level should

include exchanges of best practices which have proved very valuable. Ministers pointed out that skill gaps or mismatches linked to digitalisation should be addressed as well as the need for an inclusive, life-long learning-based and innovation-driven approach to education and training.

²² COM(2017) 673 final

²³ Image : ©European Union 2018

²⁴ Image : ©European Union 2018

January 2018 package

On **17 January 2018**, as a follow-up to the Council conclusions of 14 December 2017, and building on the Investing in Europe's Youth Initiative, the Commission adopted a **first** delivery package. It consists of three proposals:

The proposal for a Council Recommendation on Key Competences for lifelong learning²⁵ defines the key competences each European needs for personal fulfilment and development, employability and social inclusion. The Council formally adopted the Recommendation on May 22, thus agreeing on the need to support and reinforce the development of key competences from an early age and throughout life, for all individuals, making use of the revised Reference Framework.

As announced in the Communication on supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism²⁶, a proposal for a Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching²⁷ was adopted by the Council on 22 May 2018. The Recommendation aims to promote common values at all levels of education; foster more inclusive education; encourage a European dimension of teaching and support teachers and teaching. It seeks to create the conditions for a greater commitment of Member States and to help build education systems that are more inclusive and values-based.

The Digital Education Action Plan, also adopted on 18 January identifies three key priorities:

- Making better use of digital technology for teaching and learning
- Developing the relevant digital skills and competences of all citizens
- Improving education systems through better data analysis and foresight

The plan outlines how the Commission, will, through 11 initiatives, support Member States' work in ensuring that education systems make good use of digital technologies and are prepared for future change. It also sets out measures to support teachers and learners in developing the competences they need to live, work and thrive in the digital age. Actions include support for high capacity broadband in all schools, the SELFIE self-assessment tool to help schools with the integration of digital technologies for teaching and learning and creating a Europe-wide platform for digital higher education and enhanced cooperation. The new platform, supported by Erasmus+, will serve as a one-stop-shop offering: **online learning**, blended mobility, virtual campuses and exchange of best practice among higher education institutions at all levels (students, researchers, educators).

On 5 June, an info day on the *Action Plan* took place and gathered representatives from Member States and stakeholder organisations. In April 2018, a flagship conference 'Educate to Create. From Digital Consumers to Digital Creators' was held in Sofia in April 2018 under the Bulgarian Presidency. The conference placed particular focus on the development of digital skills and competences of learners and educators and the digital transformation of schools.

²⁵ COM(2018) 24 final

²⁶ COM(2016) 379 final

²⁷ COM(2018) 23 final

May 2018: a second package

On **22 May 2018**, the Commission adopted a **second delivery package** as follow-up to the Council conclusions of 14 December 2017.

A **Communication on Building a stronger Europe**²⁸ emphasised the role of youth, education and culture policies, including as well how work will be developed on European Universities and the European Student Card within the EU cooperation framework and the Erasmus+ programme.



DG EAC then launched the first pilot call for **European Universities**²⁹ on 24 October 2018; some EUR 30 million Erasmus+ funding was set aside to support 6 pilots of about EUR 5 million each in order to **test different models of cooperation**. Additional



EUR 30 million were allocated to this action, bringing the total budget for the 2019 call to 60 million and allowing the support of 12 alliances. European Universities made waves in the higher education world on 18 December 2018 when an information session on the pilot call welcomed more than 1000 participants. Participants offered **excellent feedback**, noting that the ambition of the initiative paired with the unprecedented

²⁸ Image : ©European Union 2018

²⁹ Image : ©European Union 2018

interest in the session showed the political significance of this new action. The session also revealed the high interest in the pilot call, with more than 100 different organisations indicating their intention to apply.

European Universities

The European Universities will help shape answers to today's challenges by acting as role models and spreading their best practices. Innovative teaching and learning for enhancing creative and digital skills, and the ability to work in cross-disciplinary teams across borders will be at the heart of these European Universities, to answer the vital needs for the new jobs of the digital age. They will bring together a new generation of young people from different parts of Europe, who are able to cooperate and work within different European and global cultures, in different languages, and across borders, sectors and academic disciplines. Through the first two Erasmus+ calls, the Commission is supporting the emergence of the first European Universities; with objective of seeing at least 20 of them by 2024 supported by a reinforced Erasmus programme in the next EU budget.

DG EAC launched the **European Student Card initiative** through Erasmus+ and Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) projects such as the **Erasmus Without Paper (EWP) Network**, the European Student Card and Enable smooth Mobility and Recognition of External qualifications (EMREX). Several meetings involving project coordinators and DG EAC and DG CNECT staff took place in order to prepare for the **roll-out of European Student Card services to all Erasmus+ students by 2021 and all EU students by 2025**. The Erasmus Without Paper network, which enables Higher Education Institutions to securely exchange students' academic data, was successfully launched in Gent University on 13 December 2018 with several hundreds of institutions present at the launching. The launch of the network **marks a major step in the delivery of the European Student Card initiative**.

European Student Card initiative

Creating and implementing the European Student Card initiative is a vital step in making mobility for all a reality by enabling higher education institutions to more efficiently and easily manage the processes to send and receive exchange students while enhancing quality in student mobility and making it as easy as possible for students to be mobile within the EU. The aim is to enable every student to easily and securely identify and register themselves at higher education institutions within the EU when moving abroad for studies, without the need to queue at international reception offices to complete on-site registration procedures and paper work. The card will also help establish a European Student identity to more easily access services (library, catering, transport, accommodation) and cultural activities immediately upon arrival at the institution abroad. By allowing for secure exchange of academic data between Higher Education Institutions (HEI), all steps to be undertaken by HEIs and students before, during and after a mobility will be digitised and streamlined, contributing to simplification and inclusion in student mobility.

The initiatives launched in 2018 included a proposal for a **Council Recommendation on promoting the automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary school education diplomas and the outcomes of learning periods abroad**³⁰. This represents a new approach, which, building on the tools already in place, will support Member States in ensuring that upper secondary and higher education qualification gained in a Member State are **automatically recognised**, for the purpose of granting access to further study, in the others. The Recommendation was unanimously adopted by the Council in record time, on 27 November 2018, as an important step in

³⁰ COM(2018) 270

breaking down barriers to learning mobility for both school pupils and students.

The Commission has had first discussions on the implementation of the Recommendation with the National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARICs) and with the Member States and stakeholders at the ET2020 Working Group on Higher Education; an action plan on its implementation, including timelines, is being developed.

Recognition

Going abroad to learn is vital in an increasingly globalised education landscape and, indeed, globalised job markets and lives. It is also vital to ensure that people who have gone abroad can be sure that what they have learned will be recognised in their home country and anywhere else across the EU. Despite more than 20 years of cooperation through the Bologna Process and 30 years of Erasmus programme, people told us that recognition was still a problem. At higher education level, we are building on what has been achieved already in the European Higher Education Area, but with the aim of being more ambitious. The European universities that we are creating will also play a significant role in furthering automatic recognition. In upper secondary education, progress has been much more limited so far. This is why we will start a specific cooperation process under the strategic framework Education and Training 2020. We will also explore how to promote permeability between education and training sectors, in particular between vocational education and training and higher education. At the same time, the future Erasmus programme will offer more mobility opportunities in secondary education and training. The Commission will support Member States in the implementation of the Recommendation, through exchange of good practice, funding and research into solutions, such as the potential of blockchain technology to facilitate automatic recognition.

Further proposals have been successfully tabled by DG EAC:

A proposal for a Council Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages³¹, which aims at increasing language competences of young people by addressing a) the need to invest in language learning and b) increasing language-awareness in compulsory education. To help young Europeans gain a good knowledge of two languages in addition to the language of schooling, language aware schools would embed language learning in a cross-curricula approach, based on the assessment of the language competences of their learners and helping them to improve language competence according to needs, circumstances, abilities and interest.

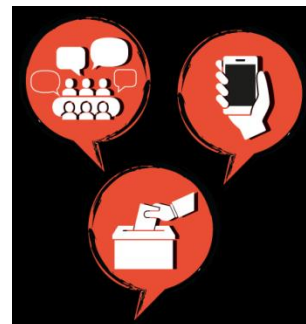
A proposal for a Council Recommendation on high quality early childhood education and care systems³², to support Member States in their efforts to improve access to and quality of their early childhood education and care systems and promote the use of the Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care, presented in the Annex to this Recommendation.

A Communication on the New European Agenda for Culture seeking to channel the full potential of culture to support social cohesion, innovation, creativity, jobs and growth. The New Agenda consolidates the experience accumulated since the 2007 Agenda for Culture in a single framework. It proposes stronger involvement of Member States in policy collaboration and implementation of policy results. It sets out over 25 actions across 5 dimensions (social, economic, external, cultural heritage, Digital4culture). Building on the implementation of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage, the New Agenda foresees an action plan for cultural heritage. Other actions include fostering the mobility of artists and promoting arts education, strengthening links between the cultural sector and industrial policy, and reinforcing cooperation with non-EU countries. The New Agenda underpins the **Council Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022** that was adopted by the Council on 22 November 2018.

³¹ COM(2018) 272

³² COM(2018) 271

2018 was the last year of the previous EU Youth Strategy. The **Commission proposed on 22nd May a new EU Youth Strategy** for the 2019-2027 period, which was adopted in November and will start to run as of 2019. The future cycle will benefit from relevant input gathered from young people and youth stakeholders through a number of outreach activities and tools. The new strategy will aim at enabling young people to be architects of their own lives, build their resilience and equip them with life skills to cope in a changing world; encouraging young people to become active citizens, agents of solidarity and positive change for communities across Europe, inspired by EU values and a European identity; helping prevent youth social exclusion; and improving the impact of policy decisions on young people through dialogue and addressing their needs across sectors. To this purpose, youth policy cooperation will undertake activities grouped around three areas of action: a) engage, with a view to fostering youth participation in democratic life; b) connect, aiming to bringing young people together across the EU and beyond to foster voluntary engagement, learning mobility, solidarity and intercultural understanding; c) empower, seeking to supporting youth empowerment through quality, innovation and recognition of youth work.



The overall goal of the **partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth** is to foster synergies between the activities of the two institutions in the youth field. In 2018, the cooperation focused **participation/citizenship, social inclusion and quality development of youth work**. A symposium, held in Tallinn, focussed on the subject of digitalisation and was at the same time a celebration of the 20th anniversary of the partnership.

Providing on-going support to policy making

Alongside ET 2020, the vehicle for promoting education at EU-level is the **Europe 2020 Strategy** with its annual policy coordination of the European Semester. DG EAC contributes to all its deliverables, including the Annual Growth Survey, Joint Employment Report, Country Reports and country-specific recommendations. As from the **2018 European Semester**, principles and rights of the European Pillar of Social Rights, proclaimed at the Gothenburg social summit on 17 November 2017, are also being monitored in the European Semester, with education, training and lifelong learning being principle 1.

In 2018, DG EAC continued to support cooperation and mutual learning among Member States under the current **ET2020 Strategic Framework for cooperation in education and training**. It has renewed the mandates of the ET2020 Working groups and has set up an additional working group on **Early Childhood Education and Care**, following increasing recognition of the importance of early acquisition of competences.

DG EAC has also carried out preparatory work on the successor of the EU strategic framework for cooperation in education and training (the current ET2020). This included: carrying out an assessment of ET2020 tools and deliverables; completing a Member States and a stakeholders Survey, whose outcomes will feed into the new Framework post 2020; and setting up a European Education and Training Expert Panel.

The **ET2020 Working Group** on schools 2016-18 presented guidance and European ideas for better learning on four thematic areas: quality assurance for school development, continuity and transitions in learner development, teachers and school leaders in schools as learning organisations, and networks for learning and development across school education. These were discussed with stakeholders at the conference "**Inspiring Change: the governance of school education across Europe**"³³ in Brussels on 17-18 May 2018.

³³ <http://www.inspiringchange.eu/>

The **renewed EU agenda for higher education**, adopted by the Commission in May 2017, identifies four key goals for European cooperation in higher education: tackling future skills mismatches and promoting excellence in skills development; building inclusive and connected higher education systems; ensuring higher education institutions contribute to innovation and supporting effective and efficient higher education systems. DG EAC launched initiatives in the area of STE(A)M³⁴ education, support the launch and further development of a self-assessment tool on digital capacity of schools (SELFIE), promote policy experimentation in teaching in diverse and multilingual classrooms and support further work on the development of high quality early childhood education and care.

To underpin these initiatives, DG EAC continued to strengthen its analysis and knowledge capacity regarding education and training systems, in line with Europe 2020 and ET2020, through studies, evaluations and impact assessments and the collection and use of data from relevant knowledge providers (Eurydice, OECD, Eurostat, Commission's Joint Research Centre, academic expert networks such as EENEE and NESET).

In this year's **European Semester**, the Commission adopted **draft country-specific recommendations (CSRs)** on skills, education and training on 23 May 2018 for a record number of 20 countries. This reflected the increase in focus on social issues across the board, in line with the proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights in November 2017, as well as the December 2017 European Council and the Education Summit.

A crucial part of the EU's agenda for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth is bolstering Europe's education and training. With its international comparison and country analysis, the Education and Training Monitor fuels the debate on priority themes for



"Our cooperation with Member States is bringing about real improvements. I am proud that the Education and Training Monitor has been driving progress, becoming the EU's flagship publication on the state of education across our Union."

education and training and informs national education reform debates. DG EAC published the **7th edition of the Education and Training Monitor**³⁵ on 16 October 2018. The Monitor presented progress against mainly, but not only the quantitative indicators on education and training adopted under ET 2020 ('EU benchmarks'). Citizenship education was the lead theme of the Monitor 2018 edition, reflecting a broad understanding of the purpose of education for the individuals and for society as a whole. The Monitor highlighted the major challenges that the EU's education systems face, first and foremost underachievement in basic skills as shown in the latest OECD PISA test of 2015 carried out among 15-year-old pupils every three years in three domains: reading, maths and science. One of the six ET 2020 benchmarks calls for reducing the percentage of underachievers in the PISA test to below 15%, which is understood as a proxy for how successfully schools equip pupils with basic skills necessary for normal functioning in society and on the labour market. The EU recorded improvements in the acquisition of basic skills in the PISA tests of 2009 and 2012 but suffered a setback in 2015. The PISA results have been an important policy pointer for the education sector. Similarly, there has been no or little progress in adult learning. At the same time, the EU has scored **important achievements** and has continued on course to meet the 2020 targets reducing the early school leavers, raising the participation rates in early childhood education and care, raising the percentage of people with tertiary degree as well as boosting the employability of recent graduates from both tertiary and secondary education.

³⁴ Science, Technology, Engineering, (Arts) and Mathematics

³⁵ Image : ©European Union 2018

Among its main findings, the 2018 Monitor showed that educational achievement correlates also to active participation in society, and that teaching practices can influence the degree of active participation in democratic life later in life. As to the state of art with main education indicators³⁶, the 2018 Monitor recorded important progress on participation in education, including enrolments in early childhood education and care; reduction of early school leaving; and tertiary educational attainment. On top of this, young graduates' employment rates are on the rise, and can be expected to meet the desired target by 2020. Progress is on the other hand slower on the rate of adult learning. A major challenge that Europe faces on the other hand is underachievement in basic skills, a proxy of educational poverty. In addition to EU-wide trends and patterns, the Monitor also identified country-specific developments and analysed policy measures in each EU Member State.

³⁶ Participation in early childhood education and care; underachievement in basic skills; early leaving from education and training; tertiary educational attainment; adult learning; employment rate of recent graduates

B. Delivering on the next EU long-term budget

During the first months of 2018, the cross-cutting priority for DG EAC was the design and preparation of the proposals for the **new generation of programmes** to be adopted in the context of the **next multi-annual financial framework**³⁷, designed to reflect Europe's ambition, while addressing the challenge of the Brexit. DG EAC prepared bold proposals in its concept papers and actively participated early 2018 in all discussions which contributed to shape the Commission proposal for the Future Multiannual Financial Framework beyond 2020 which was presented on 2 May 2018. DG EAC has also actively contributed to the design of the **"Investing in people, Social Cohesion and values"**



cluster of the next multi-annual financial framework 2021-2027, proposing more than doubling the size of the future Erasmus programme to EUR 30 billion, with the aim to reach out to three times more people from all social backgrounds; proposing a budget of EUR 1.26 billion for the future European Solidarity Corps to broaden the opportunities it offers aiming to involve at least 350 000 young

Europeans in volunteer work, and proposing a budget of EUR 1 85 billion for the new Creative Europe Programme (including MEDIA) to promote European culture and values that contribute to the identity of our Union.

New Erasmus programme 2021-2027

In May 2018, the European Commission made its proposal for a new Erasmus programme for the period 2021-27. It proposed a doubling of the budget to EUR 30 billion, making it possible to triple the number of participants.

This was underpinned by an impact assessment by DG EAC, which drew on the findings of the mid-term evaluation³⁸ of the current Erasmus+ programme and on a broad public consultation, as well as feedback received in the context of the 30 years of Erasmus events held throughout 2017.

Based on over a million responses, the key findings of the mid-term evaluation were that Erasmus+ has proved to be highly beneficial to the participants, not only in terms of supporting the transition to employment but also by creating a feeling of being an EU citizen, and that it will boost the learning mobility of 4 million learners, teachers and trainers by 2020 and internationalise the work of education, training, youth and sport organisations, within and beyond the EU. In addition, evidence showed that Erasmus+ is more coherent, relevant and partly more efficient and simpler than its predecessors. As regards the future of the programme, the evaluation made a clear case for a stronger investment in education and training with a new emphasis on the younger generations and the most vulnerable groups.

Negotiations with the co-legislators on the future programme are well under way. The Council agreed a partially general approach in November 2018, and negotiations with the European Parliament are progressing. The goal is for a European Parliament first reading position to be voted at the end of March 2019.

The future programme will maintain the current basic architecture as an integrated programme that is based on the principle of lifelong learning and whose beneficiaries include school pupils, higher education students, trainees, teachers, trainers, youth

³⁷ Image : ©European Union 2018

³⁸ Source: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents/evaluations_en

workers, sports coaches, and also learners in vocational education and training and adult learning staff.

The aim of the new programme is to be more inclusive and accessible to people from all social backgrounds. The mobility strand of the programme will in the future also include the mobility of school pupils. Through new formats and easier access for smaller and grassroots organisations, the new programme will make it easier for people from disadvantaged backgrounds to participate. It also aims to boost mobility and cooperation with third countries, through a combination of physical and virtual mobility. The strengthened programme will give more **attention to study fields** such as renewable **energy, climate change, environmental engineering, artificial intelligence and design**. And it will help to promote European identity: the **DiscoverEU initiative** will give young people opportunities to discover Europe's cultural heritage and diversity, while the successful **Jean Monnet actions will be extended beyond higher education**, mainly **secondary education**, making it possible to reach younger generations with European studies education.

In parallel, DG EAC has started in 2018 to reflect on the design of actions and means to guarantee the successful implementation of the new programme. It has commenced **internal reflections** and started work with Erasmus+ **National Agencies** with a view to being ready with all necessary documents in time for the launch of the first calls in the autumn of 2020.

Starting the Erasmus evolution in Higher Education: in the second half of the year, several working groups were set up in the field of higher education with main stakeholders such as national agencies, higher education institutions, and students' organisations to kick off discussions with the aim to **co-develop the modalities** of the future programme and ensure its successful implementation.

In **schools, vocational education and training, and adult education, consultation of stakeholders**, including the NAs, **will take place in 2019** through regular meetings to design the best implementation modalities for the new programme. These discussions will take into consideration the **transversal priorities** of the new programme and the specific needs and challenges of these sectors. A key issue will be broadening participation in the programme through promoting the mobility of schools pupils, of learners in vocational education and training, as well as of teachers, trainers and adult learning staff. Working groups will be established on National Support Services (NSS) level and **user sounding boards** will be held. The outcomes will shape the future programmes and platforms.

New European Solidarity Corps 2021-2027

For the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027, the Commission presented in June 2018 its proposal for a new programme for the European Solidarity Corps beyond 2020, with a budget of EUR 1.26 billion to broaden the opportunities it offers. The new programme will create at least **350 000 opportunities** for young people to **support communities in need** between 2021 and 2027 through **volunteering, traineeships and job placements**.

The proposal builds on the achievements of the Corps in **its first years** of existence and further consolidates efforts to have **one single entry point** for young people ready to engage in solidarity. In particular, the Corps will also include volunteering activities in support of **humanitarian aid operations in non-EU countries** where humanitarian aid activities and operations take place. This well-established EU scheme for humanitarian aid has so far operated under the name EU Aid Volunteers.

The European Solidarity Corps opportunities under the humanitarian aid strand will be similar to the ones offered under the current EU Aid Volunteers, and include tasks such as **communication activities** (events, social media, etc.) or **administration activities** (budgeting, financial management, project management, etc.). In addition, these activities take place in countries that have been deemed safe for deployment by the Commission, and are carried out in experienced humanitarian aid organisations.

From Horizon 2020 to Horizon Europe

With regard to the **European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT)** and the **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)** DG EAC actively participated in the Commission-internal preparations of Horizon Europe, the next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation 2021-2027, whereof the proposal was adopted on 7 June 2018 by the Commission. Building on the success of the programme over the past twenty years, **the MSCA**, with a total budget of EUR 6.8 billion, will support a new generation of outstanding, highly-trained researchers. The programme will retain its core values (excellence, investing in people, professional and career development for researchers, bottom-up approach, mobility across borders, sectors and disciplines and the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion) to deliver excellent value to the broader framework programme and to the European economy and society as a whole. The programme will further increase its openness and effectiveness by supporting, from 2021, training and mobility in the domain of **nuclear research** and reinforcing synergies, notably with other parts of Horizon Europe, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), to tackle regional, national and global Research and Innovation (R&I) challenges. An **Austrian Presidency conference** entitled "MSCA beyond 2020" took place in Vienna on 1st and 2nd October and attracted an audience of over 300 people. The conference focussed on preparing for the MSCA under Horizon Europe and provided important feedback from policy makers and stakeholders.

Within the Horizon Europe proposal adopted on 7 June 2018, the **European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)** is part of the **"Open Innovation" pillar**, together with the European Innovation Council. With a proposed budget of **EUR 3 billion**, the EIT will be placed at the core of the innovation strategy of Horizon Europe alongside the European Innovation Council (EIC). Beyond its continuous support to innovators and start-ups through innovation ecosystems and the launch of several new Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), the EIT will strengthen its activities on two crucial aspects of the **EU innovation strategy: education** and the **regional dimension**.

EIT will continue to operate primarily through its KICs. It will continue to target strengthening innovation ecosystems around them, by fostering the integration of the three sides of the knowledge triangle. Each KIC will keep its organizational structure, based on a number of "Co-location Centres" which are the geographical centres which bring together the actors of the Knowledge Triangle, thereby allowing a face-to-face contact and geographical proximity.

Creative Europe 2021-2027

On 30 May 2018, the Commission adopted its proposal for the new Creative Europe programme 2021-2027. The proposal includes a CULTURE strand (covering all cultural and creative sectors with the exception of the audio-visual), a MEDIA strand (for the audio-visual sector) as well as a cross-sectoral strand. The overall budget proposed by the Commission is EUR 1.85 billion for the period 2021-2027, with EUR 0.61 billion dedicated to CULTURE, EUR 1,08 billion to MEDIA and EUR 0.16 billion to the cross-sectoral strand.

In line with the mid-term evaluation of Creative Europe, but also the feedback from various stakeholders (European Film Forum, music stakeholder thematic meetings, findings of independent studies, recommendations made by experts from Member States in the context of the Open Method of Coordination on culture and audiovisual, and the structured dialogue with the sector over the period 2014-2018), the future programme will keep the same overarching objectives as the current one – namely the promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity/cultural heritage, and the reinforcement of the competitiveness of the cultural and creative sectors – as they remain broadly relevant. The programme will also help the cultural and creative sectors face today's challenges, i.e. fragmentation of the EU markets along national and linguistic lines, digitization coupled with globalisation, lack of access to funding and lack of data.

The CULTURE strand will keep supporting cultural cooperation, as well as European platforms for emerging talents and networking activities in all cultural and creative sectors. The main novelties are as follows:

- **Widening** the scope covered by the strand to include a specific sectorial support to areas such as **music, book and publishing**, as well as **architecture and cultural heritage**, where there is already an ongoing dialogue between EAC and relevant stakeholders and for which the mid-term evaluation has shown that the existing horizontal actions cannot entirely tackle the challenges the sectors are facing
- Including a new scheme for **cross-border cultural mobility which is currently only foreseen as part of a partnership project**;
- Reinforcing the external dimension of the programme in line with the 2016 Communication of the Commission and European External Action Service on International Cultural Relations;
- Adding a **social and societal component** (cultural participation, as well as societal resilience and social cohesion through culture) which the mid-term evaluation found to be not enough acknowledged in the current programme.

The CROSS SECTORAL strand will promote cross-cutting activities spanning across audiovisual and other cultural and creative sectors. It will promote the knowledge of the programme and support the transferability of results. It will also encourage innovative approaches to content creation, access, distribution and promotion across cultural and creative sectors. It will promote cross cutting activities covering several sectors aiming at adjusting to the structural changes faced by the media sector, in particular as regards the free and pluralistic nature of the media environment, quality journalism and media literacy. Finally, it will set up and support programme desks to provide information about, and promote, the Programme in their country and to stimulate cross-border cooperation within the cultural and creative sectors.

On the basis of **the 2018 mid-term evaluation of the Creative Europe programme**³⁹, issued in April 2018, adaptations to the current programme and preparation for the next generation of programmes were launched. The evaluation found that overall the Creative Europe programme met its objectives and generally responded to the needs of the Cultural and Creative Sectors and that the European added value derives primarily from the transnational character of its actions. It also showed that the existing schemes needed to be reinforced in order to reach the required objectives as the high demand for funding could regularly not be satisfied. It also showed that the added value of the programme lay in its cross-border dimension. For the culture sub-programme, it was clearly demonstrated that without support at the European level, co-operation and networking beyond national borders would not have been realised. At the same time, certain specific sectorial challenges could not be met and called for new actions and more focus in particular with a view to a fast changing ecocontext in the culture and creative sector.

Following the evaluation and the need to strengthen the monitoring framework of the programme, Commission services will propose supplementary indicators, to be adopted by a Delegated Act. An impact assessment and stakeholder consultations were carried out in 2018 to help gather evidence with a view to adopting a new EU funding scheme to support the cultural and creative sectors after 2020. The negotiations of the new programme and the work on the implementing tools, such as guidelines, will be a strong focus of DG EAC's work in 2019.

³⁹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2018%3A248%3AFIN>

Financial instruments

DG EAC contributed to the **new European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)** regulations and to the **new Structural Reform Fund (SRF)** for the 2021-2027 period. Adequate coverage of **DG EAC's policy areas in the new ESIF, including education and training, culture, sport and the knowledge triangle**, and their translation into policy and specific objectives have been ensured, as well as **making the new ESIF more flexible** and conditional to structural reforms, seeking more effective delivery mechanisms and increasing synergies with the future Erasmus programme and Horizon Europe. The new Reform Support Programme will provide financial support and technical assistance in Member States for priority reforms in the field of education and training identified in the European Semester.

DG EAC is also continuing to explore ways to harness financial instruments to leverage public and private investment in education and training projects, including for investments in **social infrastructure and student housing**, and for the **cultural and creative industries**. The proposal for the **InvestEU programme** for the next MFF period was adopted on 6 June 2018. This programme will aim at mobilising public and private investment within the EU by providing EU budgetary guarantee to financial products offered by financial intermediaries. This will increase investment opportunities in the area of education and culture. Under its new **"Social Investment and Skills" window**, new financial products could be developed to **expand student loan schemes** (also beyond the Master level), to **support the development of the European Universities**, to pilot social impact investments or developing loan schemes for the **mobility of artists** or creators. The cultural and creative industries should particularly benefit from the successor of the **CCSGF⁴⁰** under the **"Small and medium enterprises" (SME) window**, while the 'Research, innovation and digitisation' window will provide opportunities for the stakeholders of the Knowledge Triangle.

In preparation of InvestEU, while exploiting the potential of the new **EFSD⁴¹ 2.0**, DG EAC is renewing efforts to raise awareness of the available EU-level guarantees and financial instruments among **education and financial stakeholders**, notably at national level. It is also strengthening the cooperation with the European Investment Bank (EIB), in particular by emphasising the **'soft' elements in infrastructure-related** projects that contribute to create sound and inspiring learning environments.

The **Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility (CCS GF)** under Creative Europe is a facility under which the European Commission through the European Investment Fund (EIF) provides guarantees and counter-guarantees on debt financing to Financial Intermediaries in order to improve access to finance to SMEs from cultural and creative sectors. Thanks to the CCS GF, Financial intermediaries selected by the EIF are able to provide additional debt financing to SMEs in Participating Countries. In addition, the action provides expertise/capacity building to the financial institutions wishing to build dedicated portfolios of loans targeting cultural and creative SMEs. This may result in an increase in the number of financial institutions which are willing to work with cultural and creative SMEs as well as maximising the European geographical diversification of targeted financial products for the sector. With a total budgetary appropriation for CCS GF of EUR 121 million in the 2016-2020 period and a targeted leverage effect of 5,7 the financial instrument may leverage around EUR 690 million of additional funding or the cultural and creative industries. A top-up of EUR 60 million from EFSD was agreed in 2017 and, given the strong market demand, the European Fund for Strategic Investment is preparing a second top up of EUR 100 million.

⁴⁰ Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility

⁴¹ European Fund for Strategic Investments

C. Erasmus+, the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport

Erasmus+⁴² is the EU's flagship programme to support and strengthen education, training, youth and sport in Europe. For three decades, Erasmus+ and its predecessors have been offering opportunities to young people, students and adults to study, train, gain experience, and volunteer abroad, in Europe or beyond. At the same time the programme promotes the understanding of European values and awareness, in particular solidarity and tolerance.



DG EAC implemented the **2018 Annual Work Programme**⁴³ for Erasmus+ pursuing the objectives⁴⁴ and generate the benefits of Erasmus+ mentioned in its Strategic Plan⁴⁵. Since then, the total budget of the Erasmus+ programme increased year on year including additional budget voted by the budget authority, with a 8.9% increase in 2018, compared to 2017.

The programme is implemented under indirect management (approximately 78% through National Agencies) and direct management modes (19% through the Executive Agency for Education, Audiovisual and Culture and 3% mainly through DG EAC)⁴⁶.

The Erasmus+ Programme plays an important role in **supporting cooperation between schools** and **pupil mobility** as well as learning opportunities for future teachers and professional development for **teachers and school leaders**. In 2018, priority was given to strengthening the profiles of the teaching professions, promoting the acquisition of key competences e.g. by addressing underachievement in the basic skills of mathematics, science and literacy and supporting multilingual classrooms. This was in line with the discussions held in the Council on the actions necessary to establish an innovative and inclusive European Education Area. In line with the EU2020 headline target, the Commission has also been supporting schools to tackle early school leaving (ESL) and disadvantage and to offer quality education, enabling success for all pupils, including children with a migrant background. Special attention was given to efforts to increase access to **affordable and high quality early childhood education and care**.

In the field of **higher education**, in 2018, priority was given to enhancing the quality and relevance of students' knowledge and skills, better use of ICT, better links between higher education institutions and employers or social enterprises. More than 287 000 higher education student mobilities took place in 2017, therefore reaching over 1 million mobilities since 2014.

The positive trend continued in 2018 with more than 320 000 mobilities reached. Moreover, the first Erasmus+ pilot call to support the setting-up of **"European Universities"** was launched in autumn 2018 - as a result of a strong co-creation process with EU Members States, higher education institutions and student organisations. In

⁴² Image : ©European Union 2018

⁴³ <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus2/files/c-2018-774-en.pdf>

⁴⁴ The Erasmus+ Programme aims to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of: a) the Europe 2020 strategy, including the headline education target; b) the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), including the corresponding benchmarks; c) the sustainable development of Partner Countries in the field of higher education; d) the overall objectives of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010–2018); e) developing the European dimension in sport, in particular grassroots sport, in line with the EU Work Plan for Sport, and f) the promotion of European values in accordance with Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union.

⁴⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/strategic-plan-2016-2020-education-and-culture_en

⁴⁶ The indicative budget allocation is 55% for Key Action 1, 24% for Key Action 2, 4% for Key Action 3, 9% for International cooperation, 2% for Jean Monnet, and 2% for Sport, with around 5% allocated to NAs management fees (3%) and administrative expenditure (2%).

designing the call, DG EAC organised two stakeholders' consultative meetings in February and March 2018 respectively whereas the ad hoc expert group representing all Member States took place in April and May 2018.

The programme was used in 2018 to fund initiatives to address many of the policy goals set out in the Commission's Communication on a **Renewed EU Agenda for Higher Education**⁴⁷. This renewed agenda builds on the 2011 modernisation agenda and sets out the Commission's plans in four key areas. These are: ensuring graduates leave higher education with the skill sets they and the modern economy need; building inclusive higher education systems; making sure higher education institutions contribute to innovation in the rest of the economy; and supporting higher education institutions governments in making the best use of the human and financial resources available.

To develop the **European Higher Education Area** further, Ministers expressed the will to intensify **cross-disciplinary** and **cross-border cooperation** as well as develop **inclusive and innovative approaches to learning and teaching**.

Erasmus+ also developed actions aimed at **training academic staff** in innovative pedagogies and curriculum design. As a result, in 2018, higher education institutions started to substantially support their teaching staff by dedicating more than a third of their Erasmus+ funded staff training mobility to this purpose.

The **Paris Communiqué**, signed by the 48 ministers of the inter-governmental Bologna process in May 2018, introduced a peer support approach to help all participating countries to implement their commitments, and calls to develop the **synergies between education and research**. These commitments have the objective to create the trust necessary for successful learning mobility, cross-border academic cooperation and for automatic recognition of study periods and diplomas, also encouraging higher education institutions to work towards European Universities. Importantly, the Paris Communiqué explicitly encourages the use of the Erasmus+ programme for increasing cooperation, beyond mobility, and achieving progress on the key commitments.

A dedicated Erasmus+ Key Action 3 call for proposals was launched end of August, to support countries in implementation, which is still uneven. Erasmus+ Key Action 3 also provides co-funding for the Bologna Secretariat, hosted by Italy in 2018-2020.

DG EAC worked on developing Erasmus+ actions aimed at training academic staff in **innovative pedagogies and curriculum design**. As a result, in 2018, higher education institutions started to substantially support their teaching staff by dedicating more than a third of their Erasmus+ funded staff training mobility to this purpose.

DG EAC also supported traineeships in **digital skills** for students from all disciplines and all levels of higher education. The latter were developed in close cooperation with DG CNECT via the Digital Opportunity Traineeship. As a result, already more than 1000 Erasmus+ students improved their digital skills through Erasmus+ traineeships.

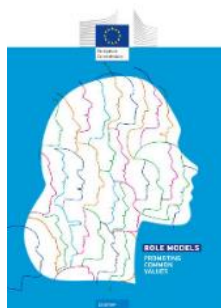
The **Erasmus+ Mobile App** continued to serve as a digital one-stop-shop for students and other young people, providing them with information, tips, notifications and other services to help make organising their periods of mobility easier. The app was downloaded and installed almost 30 000 times during 2018, bringing the total number of downloads since its launch in mid-2017 to more than 55 000. Discussions also began on how to improve and broaden the range of online services for students undertaking a period of cross-border learning mobility, including potentially enhancing the app as part of a larger online single-point-of-entry for services for mobile students.

In 2017, the Council adopted the **Recommendation on a coordinated EU approach to tertiary graduate tracking**, including graduates who have followed vocational education and training.

⁴⁷ COM(2017) 247 final

In the field of **adult education**, priority was given to improving and extending the supply of high quality learning opportunities tailored to the needs of individual low-skilled or low-qualified adults so they acquire literacy, numeracy or digital skills, including through the validation of skills acquired through informal and non-formal learning.

As in previous years, while maintaining a high level of continuity, in 2018, the Programme demonstrated its flexibility in addressing specific policy priorities through different actions. In particular, similar to previous years, greater emphasis was put, across all actions of the Programme, on activities that **support social inclusion and equity in education, training, youth and sport** - in line with the March 2015 **Paris Declaration** on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education, and with the Action Plan on integration of third country nationals adopted by the Commission in June 2016.



The **Role models initiative⁴⁸ promoting common values⁴⁹**, a network of positive role models on supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism, is further rolled out by the participating Erasmus+ National Agencies. With the first piloting activities started in 2017, the initiative is taking a broader dimension in the course of 2018 (e.g. the successful launch event of the role models initiative in Italy in March 2018). In addition to this initiative carried out by the Erasmus+ National Agencies, the Commission is promoting the role models approach through Erasmus+ social inclusion call.

With regard to the **international dimension**, Erasmus+ continued to provide mobility opportunities for higher education staff, students, young people and youth workers between Europe and the rest of the world. In addition Erasmus+ offers capacity building support to universities around the world seeking to modernise and internationalise, in cooperation with European partners, and excellence grants for Masters students with the Erasmus Mundus programme. Erasmus+ also offers capacity-building opportunities for youth organisations worldwide seeking to enhance their organisation governance, innovation capacity and internationalisation.

The **European Day of Languages** in September 2018 communicated the relevance of languages as part of Europe's cultural heritage and both the need and successful approaches to invest in language learning and improve language awareness in education and training.

On 2 October 2018, the **Regulation for the European Solidarity Corps** was adopted. More information about this key milestone is available in the section Youth of this chapter.

DG EAC also implemented **DiscoverEU**, a EUR 12 million pilot action by the European Parliament aiming to offer an opportunity to young people to explore Europe through a personal journey by providing travel passes to youngsters aged 18 can apply for.

In 2018, the **sport** chapter of the programme has continued to support initiatives to tackle cross-border threats to the integrity of sport, such as doping, match fixing and violence, as well as all kinds of intolerance and discrimination. It has promoted good governance in sport and dual careers of athletes and voluntary activities in sport, together with social inclusion, including refugees and migrants. Projects were selected after responding to the "**Promotion of European values through sport initiatives at the municipal level**" EAC/S14/2018 call.

⁴⁸ Image : ©European Union 2018

⁴⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/document-library/role-models-promoting-common-values_en

Relevant general objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment			
DG EAC Specific objective 2.0: To ensure an efficient and effective implementation of the programme		Related to spending programme Erasmus+ Education and Training	
Main outputs in 2018:			
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes			
Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved
Revision of the Erasmus+ Work Programme 2018 (WP)	Timely adoption	Q1 2018	15/02/18
Erasmus+ 2019 WP	Timely adoption	Q3 2018	11/11/2018
National Agencies guidance documents	Validation and sending of the 2018 guidelines	Q1 2018	Q1 2018
Effective WP management	N° of Delegation Agreements signed	57	57
	Timely signature of Delegation Agreements	April 2018	May 2018
	N° of operational grants signed on time (within Delegation Agreements)	57	53 by May 2018 ⁵⁰
	N° of NAs meetings	2	2 (June and November 2018)
	Number of evaluation conclusion letters on the NA Yearly Reports sent to NAU's/NA's (deadline 90 calendar days after reception of complete IAB opinion)	57 by Q3 2018	57
	Number of follow-up/feedback letters to the NAU October reports sent to NAU's/NA's	57 by January 2018	57
	Budget execution	100%	100%
Other important outputs			
Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved
Interim evaluation of Erasmus+	Commission adoption	Q1 2018	31/01/18

⁵⁰ The 4 remaining NAs (FR, TR, FYROM, DK) had individual issues, such as entry ticket payments to make, preventing us from sending them the Delegation Agreement before May.

Education and Training

School Education

The Erasmus+ Programme plays an important role in **supporting cooperation between schools** and **pupil mobility** as well as learning opportunities for future teachers and professional development for **teachers and school leaders**.

In 2018, priority was given to strengthening the profiles of the teaching professions, promoting the acquisition of key competences e.g. by addressing underachievement in the basic skills of mathematics, science and literacy and supporting multilingual classrooms. In line with the EU2020 headline target, the Commission has also been supporting schools through the Erasmus+ Programme and specific actions such as the European Toolkit for Schools to tackle early school leaving (ESL) and disadvantage and to offer quality education, enabling success for all pupils, including children with a migrant background. Special attention was given to efforts to increase access to **affordable and high quality early childhood education and care**.

Access for schools to the Erasmus+ programme was facilitated through introducing a new form of school exchange partnerships into the programme in 2018; as a result, the number of awarded projects in the sector increased by 40%. This new opportunity, named "**School Exchange Partnerships**" aims at boosting pupil mobility activities. The long term mobility for VET learners has also been boosted with the focus put on **ErasmusPro** (mobility longer than 3 months).

The 2018 Erasmus+ Call for Proposals indicated **teaching in diverse and multilingual classrooms** as one of the priorities for forthcoming experimentation projects supported by the programme. The evaluation of proposals is ongoing; the work of future projects will be closely related to the ambition of the proposal for a Council recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages.

- The **ET2020 Working Group on schools 2016-18** presented its results in the form of guidance and European ideas for better learning on four thematic areas: quality assurance for school development, continuity and transitions in learner development, teachers and school leaders in schools as learning organisations, and networks for learning and development across school education. A substantial output package was published, comprising guiding principles for policy reform together with numerous examples of policy development from across Europe.
- To support national systems and European stakeholder organisations in taking this work forward, DG EAC organised the **conference "Inspiring Change: the governance of school education across Europe"** in Brussels on 17-18 May 2018, which was complemented by the Austrian Presidency conference on the "Implementation of Education Reforms – Governance and Leadership in Change Processes", held in Vienna on 13-14 December.
- The work on school governance, focusing on **quality assurance** and **teaching careers**, as well as on the effectiveness and efficiency of **expenditure in school education** has been extended in the mandate of the ET2020 Working Group Schools (2018-20).
- A new ET2020 **Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care** (ECEC) was launched in November 2018 focusing on qualification of staff and measures to increase social inclusion in early childhood education and care.
- Following a call for proposals, DG EAC concluded a Framework Partnership Agreement to support a **European policy network on teachers and school leaders**, which under its first annual work programme will focus on the careers and professional development of staff in school education.
- **EU STE(A)M⁵¹ coalition**: the key ambition is to bring together stakeholders from the school and higher education sectors and key Commission services to

⁵¹ Science, Technology, Engineering, (Arts), and Mathematics

develop and share good practices in STE(A)M curricula and agree on key specific priorities. Following discussions with key stakeholders, a first expert seminar as well as a workshop on STE(A)M education will be organised in 2019. In 2018 Erasmus+ Key Action 2 (Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices) and Key Action 3 (Support policy reform) calls already supported the implementation of these priorities, covering both higher education and school education.

Supported by an Advisory Board of 24 countries and 4 stakeholder groups, DG EAC also launched in January 2018 the pilot **European graduate survey** among 8 pilot countries. The survey will provide new comparable data to facilitate cross-country analysis, comparison and benchmarking. The results will feed into the work of the **new Expert Group on Graduate Tracking the Commission launched in October 2018**. The group will meet 6 times over the course of the next 2 years to work on improving and further developing national graduate tracking systems as well as on making EU-level data on graduates more available and comparable with a view to implementing the Council Recommendation on tracking graduates.



In line with the Europe 2020 headline target, DG EAC continued to support schools to **tackle early school leaving (ESL) and disadvantage**, and to offer **quality education**, enabling success for all pupils, including children with a migrant background who might face specific (e.g. linguistic) challenges. This included especially the **"Toolkit for Schools"**⁵²⁵³ and its further development as a key resource for presenting good practices in inclusive education.



eTwinning⁵⁴ offers a platform for teachers and school staff across Europe to communicate, collaborate and develop projects. The platform aims to encourage European schools and teachers to collaborate by providing the necessary infrastructure and support services in 42 countries.

The eTwinning community continues to grow with 103 107 new users in 2018, close to 640 000 users registered, in more than 218 000 schools since its launch in 2005 and further expansion into the EU Southern Neighbourhood. Lebanon and Algeria joined eTwinning in 2018.

Over 14 000 new projects were launched in 2018. Nearly 17 000 teachers took part to online international professional development events and over 1 000 to onsite ones. The community life was also animated with over 30 000 users taking part to online events, such as promotional activities, project presentations, partner finding events. Over 600 participants took part to the annual Conference in Warsaw, "Learning from the past, designing our future" dedicated to the annual theme, the European Year of Cultural Heritage. In addition to the annual eTwinning European prize, a special prize rewarded outstanding eTwinning projects promoting cultural heritage, and awarded at its closing conference in Vienna (see project "Monumental Europe" in the box below).

⁵² Image : ©School Education Gateway 2016

⁵³ <https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/resources/toolkitsforschools.htm>

⁵⁴ Image : ©European Union 2018

The project "Monumental Europe", carried out by 8 classes from Spain, Germany, Greece, Italy, France, won the eTwinning award for Cultural Heritage in age category 6-12. Teachers and students spent time in the "Twinspace" together to learn about Europe through its monuments, landscapes, traditions and cultures. They explored various European cultural identities, and exchanged about history, values and the sense of European identity. By being involved in activities such as "Monumental Europe Quizzes" or "European Monument Contest", students also improved their communicative and ICT skills. Throughout the project activities, students also developed their creativity, motivation, social and critical thinking.

A new "eTwinning School" label was developed and awarded for the first time in 2018, to 1 211 schools. This honorary title is granted for 2 years on the basis of a set of objective and measurable criteria. It is expected to help involve more Head Teachers in eTwinning and encourage the forming of eTwinning teams of teachers and school leaders within the same school, and inspire other schools to do so.

Through the cooperation with Ministries of Education, progress are made towards more **recognition and embedding** of eTwinning into their national education systems. Results are promising such as:

- In Hungary, where the National eTwinning competition is now included into the official list of school competitions set out in the school year regulation.
- In Denmark, where eTwinning is increasingly contributing best practice examples to central priority areas in education set by the Danish government and Ministry of Education.
- In Ireland, where eTwinning was mentioned in the Digital Strategy for Schools Action Plan.

An important number of eTwinning projects initiated by teachers and their schools continued also promoting fundamental values, democracy and citizenship and digital learning ((see project "Winsketches: notre monde en scène/s" in the box below).

Winsketches: notre monde en scène/s : 7 partners from Greece, Spain and Germany, ran this interdisciplinary project of collaborative writing and interpretation of comic scenes, inspired by classical plays of French theater. The project aimed to foster 21st century skills among students and to promote the values of inclusion through an interdisciplinary and intercultural approach. The idea was to give the opportunity to these teenagers to develop and express their own vision of society, to exercise their critical mind and develop active citizenship. Their work took the format of research, analysis, evaluation. They took part in active, interactive and fun activities and group organization according to the principles of differentiated pedagogy. Students were encouraged to group discussion, role play, writing, dramatization, video creation, which all enable their creativity, problem solving abilities, critical thinking, team work. Moreover they gained intercultural, social and digital competencies.

The **School Education Gateway**⁵⁵, with more 60 000 registered users, is the European online platform for teachers, school leaders, policy makers, experts and other professionals in the school education field. It has continued to establish itself as Europe's main online platform for school education. Successful services introduced in previous years, such as the Teacher Academy and the European Toolkit for Schools, continue to be enriched with more attractive, multifaceted and useful content for school education stakeholders.



⁵⁵ Image : ©School Education Gateway 2016



In evaluation, 96% of online course participants report that courses are of a high quality and 94% report a change in their teaching practice after a course. This is evidence that the platform is helping to empower an increasing number of teachers in dealing with today's more diverse classrooms and challenges, such as promoting inclusion and fundamental values, and developing a broad range of competences in learners for their lives beyond school. In 2018 a new course for beginning teachers was offered to

support this particular group of stakeholders and building on the success of the EP-funded pilot project on online support to beginning teachers⁵⁶ and their mentors, which was supervised by DG EAC and concluded in the first half of 2018.

A new series of 12 webinars was run in 2018, showcasing the work of dozens of education experts and projects leaders and attracting hundreds of participants from across the EU and beyond. The School Education Gateway also dedicated three themed months to the European Year of Cultural Heritage and continues to be a popular tool for supporting Erasmus+ project leaders (a peak of 83 000 visitors to the site in January 2018 when the new call opened).

Vocational Education and Training (VET)

As regards **vocational education and training (VET)**, priority was given to developing VET business partnerships aimed at promoting work-based learning in all its forms, with special attention to apprenticeship training, by involving social partners, companies and VET providers and with a specific focus on the local and regional dimension in order to produce concrete results on the ground. In particular, the programme focused on priorities set within the context of the so-called Copenhagen process (as set in the Bruges Communique and the Riga conclusions). In 2018, it has played a key role in developing VET business partnerships aimed at promoting work-based learning in all its forms, with special attention to apprenticeship training, by involving social partners, companies and VET providers. Long term mobility (i.e. 3-12 months duration) of VET learners has been promoted through introducing the ErasmusPro activity into the Erasmus+ programme as of 2018. Consequently, such mobility increased by more than 60% (average of 8 000 per year in the period 2014-2017, and almost 13 000 in 2018).

Higher education

In the field of **higher education**⁵⁷, in 2018 priority was given to the training of academic staff in innovative pedagogies and curriculum design, as well as to traineeships in digital skills for students from all disciplines and all levels of higher education. In addition, enhancing the quality and relevance of students' knowledge and skills, better use of ICT, better links between higher education institutions and employers or social enterprises, as well as opening up traineeships opportunities beyond Europe will continue directly contributing to the Jobs and Growth strategy.



A strong knowledge base is key for our businesses. That is why promoting education in leading scientific fields is crucial in building a competitive, resilient Europe.

Commissioner Tibor Navracsics

#EUindustry



⁵⁶ Image : © School Education Gateway 2016

⁵⁷ Image : ©European Union 2018

- **Resources review:** This initiative, launched in June 2018 in collaboration with the OECD, **supports the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of higher education systems** by looking at the funding, incentive and reward structures in higher education. By the end of 2019, the project will produce an analytical framework for addressing the complex issue in order to be able to subsequently offer comprehensive reviews to individual countries and help them determine the best ways to target and balance investment to achieve results.
- **Creativity and critical thinking in higher education:** This initiative launched at the beginning of 2018, aims at prototyping and internationally testing a formative assessment tool to help faculty develop and assess the creative and critical thinking skills of their students. Through Erasmus+ the Commission is financing the first phase of this project, which consist in involving higher education staff in operationalising creativity and critical thinking and collecting examples of pedagogical tasks and student work to exemplify how students can demonstrate these skills in different settings.
- **Consolidate the Knowledge Hub on higher education to** optimise and create synergies between EU tools for evidence-building: the European Tertiary Education Register (ETER), U-Multirank and the pilot European graduate survey. During 2018, first deliverables were made available, such as a report on transnational partnerships in higher education and the first assessment of comparability of data in the different tools.
- **Electronic student identification: In 2018, the Commission** has launched the European Student Card initiative through Erasmus+ and Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) projects such as the Erasmus Without Paper (EWP) Network, the European Student Card and EMREX (electronic data exchange).
- A **peer learning activity** on the **funding of higher education institutions** was held in Zagreb with the participation of 9 countries to explore potentials of funding as one of the strongest levers for quality improvements in higher education. Countries exchanged views on how education authorities can develop effective performance-based funding allocation mechanisms to higher education institutions, by sharing experiences of recent/ongoing reforms in EU countries.
- The Commission organised in partnership with the OECD the event "**HEInnovate: Make Innovation Work in Higher Education**" in Brussels on 27-28 February 2018. A new series of HEInnovate country reviews have started in Austria, Croatia, Italy and Romania. In parallel, a major revision of the HEInnovate tool has been undertaken to include a dimension on "Digital transformation and capability".
- **University Business Fora** are held every two years in Brussels and bring together universities and businesses to foster further ways to cooperate to bridge skills gaps and find innovative solutions for teaching and the world of work. One of the offshoots of this has been the **Knowledge Alliances of Erasmus+** that aims to bring about innovation through the cooperation of business, university and research. In 2018, 31 such projects are being funded.
- **Starting the Erasmus evolution in Higher Education:** In the second half of the year, DG EAC set up several working groups with main stakeholders such as national agencies, higher education institutions, and students' organisations to kick off discussions with the aim to co-develop the modalities of the future programme and ensure its successful implementation.

Adult Education

Furthermore, in the field of **adult education**, in 2018, priority was given to improving and extending the supply of high quality learning opportunities tailored to the needs of individual low-skilled or low-qualified adults so that they acquire literacy, numeracy or digital skills, including through the validation of skills acquired through informal and non-formal learning. Extending and developing educators' competences is also stressed as a priority for this sector.



The **Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALe)**⁵⁸, with more than 47 000 registered users (+38% within one year), is a multilingual, open membership community of adult learning professionals, including adult educators and trainers, guidance and support staff, researchers and academics, and policy makers. It is part of the European Union's strategy to promote more and better learning opportunities for all adults.

In April 2018 EPALe celebrated its third anniversary. Thanks to the hard work of the 36 National Support Services the mission to assist the adult learning community has been still going strong. At the year's end, EPALe had more than 47 000 members and more than 65 000 adult learning professionals visiting the platform every month to find support or inspiration.

EPALe Conference 2018: Growing together: fostering an inspiring adult learning community

EPALe held its first conference on 15-16 October 2018 in Budapest. It constituted past year's flagship event for adult learning professionals. Some 240 stakeholders gave their views on what they want from EPALe but also from future EU policies and programmes in the field of adult learning more broadly. EPALe is definitively on its way to become a really big and vibrant community, driven by its members and with lively interactions amongst them. It was felt that EPALe had great potential to support adult learning and that creativity and content should be supported by technical improvements to improve usability. The conference was judged a success with over 90% of participants rating the event as good or excellent. The main added value of the conference for participants was the opportunity to network, and exchange best practice and ideas. The conference was also an example for linking the virtual with the real world.

In the period under review, a "Study on the impact of EPALe" was completed with a very positive overall outcome. Findings showed that EPALe had already contributed considerably to creating a virtual space for sharing of information and best practices, as well as building partnerships and collaborations in the adult learning sector. EPALe's set of key strengths consists of its unique multilingual, transnational and multi-purpose online features offering a 'one-stop-shop' solution to everyone interested in adult learning. The study confirmed that no other similar initiatives or platforms exist at EU level and the few national platforms that exist and have similar objectives to EPALe only overlap with EPALe to a marginal extent. One of the main advantages of EPALe is that the platform is multi-lingual and offers users content in all EU languages. The National Support Service (NSS) are considered to be crucial for the success of EPALe. Their proactivity is important in engaging users to utilise the platform.

⁵⁸ Image : ©European Union 2018

International cooperation

In terms of **international strategy**, the Erasmus+ programme continued to support President Juncker's priority "A stronger global Europe" by focusing on the stabilisation and further development of the European Neighbourhood region (Western Balkans, Eastern Partnership and Southern Mediterranean) in political, economic, and security related terms.

Cooperation with the European Neighbourhood and Africa, some examples

- The **participation of Kosovo and Serbia in Erasmus+** was upgraded in 2018: Kosovo now has access to the different networks and platforms while Serbia successfully passed the ex-ante compliance assessment process in order to become a fully-fledged Programme Country as of 2019.
- **In the school education field, Jordan, Lebanon and Algeria joined the eTwinning Action** in the course of 2018. Teachers and schools in these countries can now take part in projects, meet colleagues from other countries both in Europe and beyond and enrol in various continuing professional development opportunities.
- **The Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs** was launched in September 2018 and with the EUR 17.6 million in additional funding made available to support additional mobility with Africa for the 2019 Erasmus+ call. President Juncker announced the first results of the Africa–Europe Alliance at the 18 December High-Level Forum Africa-Europe in Vienna and for the **key area of 'Investment in Education and Matching Skills and Jobs'** show that the EU is well on track to deliver its 2020 target of benefitting 35 000 African students and academics.
- Interest from African universities in Erasmus+ continues to grow. The additional EUR 4 million for international credit **mobility for 12 West African countries from the EU/Africa Trust Fund** was promoted widely and absorbed completely in the 2018 call. The supplement allowed DG EAC to double the number of mobilities in countries considered as priority for the EU in relation to irregular migration. This was a visible deliverable for EAC both within the Commission and the EEAS and vis à vis the Member States.

DG EAC also worked with Programme countries to raise the worldwide visibility and attractiveness of Europe as a study destination, through web and social media activities, study fairs and webinars under the Study in Europe banner.

The international actions of Erasmus+⁵⁹ continue to be implemented to serve both internal and external policy objectives. The 2018 selection exercise resulted in **150 new capacity building projects in higher education, 42 new Erasmus Mundus joint masters, around 46 000 new short term, academic credit mobilities** (with traineeships introduced for the first time this year), in addition to new international youth mobility and capacity building projects. Erasmus+ puts into practice the main topics of EAC's international dialogues: tools to facilitate international cooperation and remove barriers to mobility, university partnerships to increase the relevance and quality of education, support to civil society, active citizenship and youth exchanges. Factsheets⁴⁴ on the Erasmus+ website outline the extent of individual countries' involvement in these international projects – both outside and inside Europe.

⁵⁹ Image : ©European Union 2018

Cooperation with Asia and the America, some examples

- The first EU-Japan Ministerial and Policy Dialogue took place in Budapest in July 2018, and follow up actions include a **co-funded Erasmus+ call with Japan to finance additional EU-Japan Erasmus Mundus Joint Degrees**. The latter will allow excellent students from Europe and Japan to gain a joint degree from top European and Japanese universities
- In October 2018 the **5th meeting of the EU-China Higher Education Platform for Cooperation and Exchange** was hosted in Beijing by Renmin University of China. The event focused on life-long learning, teaching, quality education and internationalisation.
- **Close cooperation with the United States continued through the bilateral exchange programme "Fulbright-Schuman"** (the 27th annual call for scholarships was launched in September 2018) and several events were co-organised.

The **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) were set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, as part of the United Nations General Assembly's Resolution on the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". With its vision for a **European Education Area**, the European Commission has committed to an ambitious agenda aligned with the Sustainable Development Goal 4 - "Quality education": to invest in high quality, inclusive education and training and to unleash people's potential through future oriented, sustainable education and skills policies⁶⁰.

DG EAC has also supported the Goal "Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning", not only via Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 funding but also by building on the Commission's 2017 Communication on a "renewed impetus of the Africa EU Partnership" which puts youth, knowledge and jobs at the heart of the **EU's cooperation with Africa**.

Social inclusion



In 2018, DG EAC cooperated with the Council of Europe on human rights and democracy in action and on promoting inclusive education for Roma children through the **"INSCHOOL" programme**⁶¹, which started in May 2017 and will run for 20 months.

PISA results and early school leaving data show that **students with migrant backgrounds** face significant challenges, both in terms of educational attainment and sense of well-being. Education thus continues to play a key role in their integration into societies. The European Commission is supporting Member States in the development of policies to improve integration through education via a variety of instruments and actions. The **Sirius 2.0 policy network on migrant education** (co-funded under Erasmus+) supports co-operation, policy development and implementation at different levels of governance, complementing DG EAC's activities in this area. In 2018, the network organised national and regional round tables, peer learning activities and produced research to support countries' integration efforts. In the framework of the ET 2020 Working Groups, DG EAC organised and co-organised three Peer Learning Activities on integration, which addressed the topics of intercultural dialogue; linguistic and cultural diversity; and challenges and practices related to integration policies. In addition, DG EAC continued to offer peer counselling support to Member States in 2018 and received expressions of interest in the area of integration.

Over the years, Erasmus+ has registered a continuous and steady rise in the overall

⁶⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/factsheets_en#worldwide

⁶¹ Image : ©European Union 2018

number and quality of applications for almost all actions. However, the very high numbers of eligible submissions significantly exceeds the financial resources of the programme: there is need and demand to invest even more in **further enhancing the inclusiveness and accessibility of the programme**. Doing so will benefit the programme's reputation, will raise the interest of stakeholders in European cooperation, and will strengthen Europe's innovation capacity and expertise in order to support its ambition to be the world leader in scientific fields such as the environment, artificial intelligence and STE(A)M⁶².

Furthermore, two special Erasmus+ calls were launched to support transnational cooperation projects in the field of **social inclusion, values and fundamental rights**. One aims at the upscaling of good practices and builds on the success of previous years; while the other is a policy experimentation call which includes the priority theme "promoting social inclusion and shared EU values through formal and non-formal learning".

Digital Education

The **Digital Education Action Plan**, adopted on 18 January 2018, covers the areas of formal education with specific actions for school, VET and higher education. The Plan identifies three priorities⁶³ to ensure that digital technologies are used purposefully to innovate and improve teaching and learning. The 11 actions of the Plan include support for high capacity broadband in all schools, creating a Europe-wide platform for digital higher education and enhanced cooperation, training schemes on digital and entrepreneurial skills, awareness-raising on online safety.

During the course of 2018 all of the actions were implemented with different degrees of maturity.

As part of the Digital Education Action Plan and with the support of the **ET2020 Working Group on digital education, a self-assessment tool on the digital capacity of schools (SELFIE)** has been developed and tested in 14 countries. The free online tool helps school leaders, teachers and students reflect on how they use digital technologies for teaching and learning. As part of the Digital Education Action Plan the self-assessment tool was launched in 24 languages on 25 October 2018. The launch event took place at the IX secondary school in Warsaw with Commissioner Navracsics and the Polish Minister for Education, Anna Zalewska. In the first six weeks the tool was used by over 150,000 teachers, schools leaders and students across Europe.

⁶² Science, Technology, Engineering, (Arts) and Mathematics

⁶³ Namely: Making better use of digital technology for teaching and learning; Developing digital competences and skills; Improving education through better data analysis and foresight.

Jean Monnet



Jean Monnet activities ⁶⁴aim to increase interest in understanding and participating in the European Union leading to a more active citizenship and continue to reflect the political priorities of the Commission, as done so far focusing themes such as migration, justice and fundamental rights, and EU as a stronger global actor. In 2018, the Jean Monnet activities supported modules⁶⁵, university chairs, networks, projects, centres of excellence and associations taking place in 30 European Programme Countries and 69 countries inside and outside Europe.

Under the **Jean Monnet Action**, the European University Institute continued the work for the establishment of the Florence School of European and Transnational Governance. for which a detailed business plan and progress report have been submitted in May. In 2018, 235 Jean Monnet grants were awarded in the order of EUR 15.5 million to 189 beneficiaries from 49 different countries. The success rate of applications was 19%. Out of the 1255, 767 applications (61% of the total) were submitted by beneficiaries based outside the EU. Out of the 235 grants 120 went to non-EU beneficiaries

Interest in Jean Monnet continues to rise, submission numbers growing from 1 177 in 2017 to 1 255 insofar 2018, with increasing popularity of certain types of action such as "Projects and Networks".

The introduction of EU studies in disciplines not traditionally associated with the topic of European integration leads to the **Europeanisation of a wider range of curricula**. In this context, Jean Monnet projects also address many topics of current political interest such as migration and the refugee crisis, immigration, the economic crisis and austerity, misinformation and the rise of populism, the role of citizens and their current disengagement from the EU construction process and the importance of communicating Europe effectively.

⁶⁴ Image : ©European Union 2018

⁶⁵ A Jean Monnet Module is a short teaching programme (or course) in the field of European Union studies at a higher education institution. The aim of the modules is to promote research and teaching experience among young researchers, scholars and practitioners in EU issues, foster the publication and dissemination of academic research, create interest in the EU, foster the introduction of an EU angle mainly into non EU related studies and deliver tailor-made courses on specific EU issues relevant for graduates in their professional life.

Relevant general objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment				
Specific objective 2.1: To improve the level of key competences and skills, in particular through increased opportunities for learning mobility and strengthened cooperation with the world of work in education and training with particular regard to the relevance of these key competences and skills for the labour market and their contribution to a cohesive society			Related to spending programme	
			Erasmus+ Education and Training	
Main outputs in 2018:				
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes				
Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved	
			EU28	Total
Effective implementation of the Erasmus+ 2018 Annual Work programme	N° of individual Mobility of Staff (HE - VET - Schools - Adult)	97 876	127 430	140 002
	N° of students Mobility HE	280 781	313 333	347 429
	N° of Learners Mobility VET	99 328	136 835	150 335
	N° of Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters	4 600	3 183 ⁶⁶	
	N° of Masters Student loan guarantee facility	19 426	3 000 ⁶⁷	
	N° of operating grants for National Agencies (NAs)	55 ⁶⁸	58	

Relevant general objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment				
Specific objective 2.2: To foster quality improvements, innovation excellence and internationalisation, in particular through enhanced transnational cooperation at the level of institutions/organisations between education and training providers and other stakeholders			Related to spending programme	
			Erasmus+ Education and Training	
Main outputs in 2018:				
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes				
Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved	
			EU28	Total
Effective implementation of the Erasmus+ Annual Work programme	N° of Strategic partnerships ⁶⁹	3 545	3 034	3 333
	Knowledge Alliances/Sector Skills Alliances	48	48	
	N° of Web platforms	4	4	

⁶⁶ The number of 3 183 students and mobile staff is a direct function of the Heading 1 and Heading 4 (international) funds available for the action, which have been implemented completely.

⁶⁷ Based on a close monitoring of the Student Loan Guarantee Facility uptake, the budget and targets are adapted along the year. The target of 19 000 loans relates to a commitment of EUR 50 million at the start of the 2018 budgetary exercise. This amount was subsequently downsized to EUR 18 million as part of the Erasmus+ Work Programme 2018 (estimated target of 7 081 loans). In practice, EUR 8 million have been committed, corresponding to approximately 3 000 loans). For 2019, a commitment of EUR 3 million (corresponding to around 1 125 loans) is envisaged.

⁶⁸ 2018 target have been updated to reflect those in the Creative Europe Programme Statement.

⁶⁹ The number of strategic partnerships is lower than foreseen because the average grant size is higher than foreseen. Measures are being taken to reduce the average grant size in coming years.

Communication actions	N° of registered users of online platforms (mainly teachers and school education staff, adult educators)	700 000 (a)	740 000
University-Business Forum	Organisation of a UB Forum in Sofia in cooperation with the Bulgarian Presidency	22-23 February 2018	Event took place on 22-23 February 2018

(a) This number sums up the registered users of eTwinning, the School Education Gateway (SEG) and the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE)

Relevant general objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment			
Specific objective 2.3: To promote at policy level, in particular through enhanced policy cooperation, the dissemination of good practices and better use of Union transparency⁷⁰ and recognition tools in education and training; the emergence of a European area of skills and qualifications, policy reforms at national level for the modernisation of education and training systems in a lifelong perspective, and digital learning			Related to spending programme Erasmus+ Education and Training
Main outputs in 2018:			
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes			
Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved
Policy Framework on promoting social inclusion and common EU values through formal and non-formal learning	Finalisation of Policy Framework	Finalisation of the policy framework	Yes
Online compendium of good practices	Number of good practices on-line	100	120
ET 2020 group meetings	Number of meetings	10	20
ET 2020 peer learning activities (PLAs) and reports	Number of PLAs/reports	10	15

Relevant general objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment				
Specific objective 2.4: To support the Union's external action, including its development objectives, through targeted capacity-building in partner countries, cooperation between Union and partner-country institutions or other stakeholders and the promotion of mobility, and to enhance the international dimension of activities in education and training by increasing the attractiveness of European higher education institutions			Related to spending programme Erasmus+ Education and Training	
Main outputs in 2018:				
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes				
Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved	
			EU28	Total
Effective implementation of the Erasmus+ 2018 Annual Work programme	N° of international Student and Staff Mobility	30 000	46 016	
	N° of international students in master degree	228	400	
	N° of international HE and Youth Capacity Building projects	136	150	

⁷⁰ The Union transparency aspect is under DG EMPL responsibility.

Relevant general objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment			
Specific objective 2.5: To improve the teaching and learning of languages and promote the Union's broad linguistic diversity and intercultural awareness		Related to spending programme Erasmus+ Education and Training	
Main outputs in 2018:			
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes			
Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved
Individual participant report	Percentage of Erasmus+ participants in long-term mobility declaring that they have increased their language skills	HE: 96% VET: 87%	HE: 97% VET: 96%
Cooperation with the Council of Europe ⁷¹	Implementation of the cooperation	Q3-Q4 2018	31/12/2018

Relevant general objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment			
Specific objective 2.6: To promote excellence in teaching and research activities in European integration through the Jean Monnet activities worldwide		Related to spending programme Erasmus+ Education and Training	
Main outputs in 2018:			
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes			
Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved
Effective implementation of the Erasmus+ 2018 Annual Work programme	N° of students receiving training through Jean Monnet activities	310 000	246 354
On-line reporting for the Jean Monnet activities	N° of countries where Jean Monnet activities have been performed successfully	88	88

⁷¹ In particular on teaching practices in multilingual classrooms, assessment methods and linking pedagogies to the Common European Framework of Reference for language competences (RELANG project)

Youth

DG EAC proposed in May 2018 a **revised Youth strategy** taking over from the one whose cycle expired end of the year. This strategy has been endorsed by the Council⁷² in its Resolution adopted on 26th November.

In accordance with the **European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2016-2018**, activities in the domain of youth focused on the contribution of youth work as well as non-formal and informal learning to responding to the opportunities and challenges raised by the increasing numbers of young migrants and refugees in the European Union.

In 2018, DG EAC concluded its final year of the **EU Structured Dialogue** with young people. The aim of the 6th cycle of the "**EU Youth Dialogue - Youth in Europe: What's next?**", was to collect voices of young people all over Europe and contribute to the new EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027. As a result, over 50.000 young people all over Europe contributed to this cycle and contributed to the development of eleven European Youth Goals: young people's vision for youth policy in Europe. The EU Youth Strategy (based on the 2018 Council resolution on the European Union Youth Strategy 2019-27, EU OJ C456 of 18.12.2018) endorses the 11 Youth Goals and calls for the mobilisation of youth policy instruments to achieve these goals.

The expert group on **youth work for young migrants and refugees** concluded its work in December 2018. It produced a **practical toolbox** for youth workers and policy recommendations for policy makers at all levels. This toolbox will soon be publically available.

In 2018, preparations started for the ninth edition of the **European Youth Week**, which will take place across Europe from 29 April to 5 May 2019, both in Brussels and locally. A big number of events will be organised, including workshops, information stands, round tables, bike tours, hikes, concerts, festivals and other activities involving thousands of young people. As the next edition will be back to back to the European elections, its theme will be "**Democracy and me**" with a view to stimulating discussions about how young generations relate to elections and other forms of democratic participation. The European Youth Week 2019 will showcase easy-to-grasp examples from Erasmus+, the European Solidarity Corps and beyond to inform and inspire young people about what democracy means and how one can participate, while also emphasising the role of EU programmes and initiatives in engaging with youngsters, in particular the unaffiliated ones and those with fewer opportunities.

The "**European Youth Together**"⁷³ call was also published, with the aim of providing more opportunities to bring together European youth from across Europe. The 14 selected projects will seek to promote young people's participation in European public life as well as cross-border exchanges, by creating networks promoting regional partnerships and in close cooperation with young people from across Europe. The networks will organise exchanges, promote training, - as for instance for youth leaders- and allow young people themselves to set up joint projects.



Additionally, the portal added the entry point to the **Erasmus+ Virtual Exchanges (EVE)**⁷⁴ via the Erasmus+ Virtual Exchanges hub. Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange is a ground-



⁷² Resolution (9008/09)

⁷³ Image : ©European Union 2018/©Shutterstock.com

⁷⁴ Image : ©European Union 2018

breaking project enabling youth in Europe and the Southern Mediterranean to engage in meaningful intercultural experiences online, as part of their formal or non-formal education. The hub on the Youth Portal centralises all information related to the EVE initiative in one place. And in doing so, further strengthen people-to-people contacts and intercultural dialogue between Erasmus+ Programme countries in Europe and EU neighbours in the south.

European Solidarity Corps



**EUROPEAN
SOLIDARITY
CORPS**

2018 contributed to put the European Solidarity Corps⁷⁵ on a firm footing, with a budget of EUR 375 6 million for the years 2018-2020. The European Solidarity Corps offers young people between the ages of 18 and 30 the

opportunity to take part in a wide range of solidarity activities across the EU, with the aim of having 100 000 young people taking part by the end of 2020

Since December 2016, until the adoption of its Regulation, the **European Solidarity Corps**⁷⁶ was implemented through eight different programmes, including the Erasmus+ Volunteering action. This period focused on the design and development of the European Solidarity Corps, as well as promotion and outreach, which helped reached over **80 000 young people registered in the Portal**. This high number of registered young people represents a high demand that will help fill all the opportunities offered during the first call of the European Solidarity Corps (main deadline on 16 October 2018).



Several key milestones were reached by the end of 2018. These include:

- Regulation adopted: on 2 October 2018, the Regulation for the European Solidarity Corps was adopted. This provided the Corps with its own legal basis, facilitating the implementation of the programme and providing it with a self-standing budget.
- First call: launched with a deadline of 16 October 2018 (for decentralised actions), the first call of the Corps was a success. National Agencies received over **1 400 submissions**, including 255 submissions for solidarity projects to be implemented directly by the young people themselves. In total, the proposed activities did offer up to **13 000 opportunities for young people**.
- Participants: over **8 000 young people had already started** their activities by the end of the year, and the number of registered young people in the Portal had reached 80 000.

Its first call for proposals, published in 2018, focuses on **European cultural heritage; integration of third-country nationals; and, response to environmental challenges**.

⁷⁵ Image : ©European Union 2018

⁷⁶ Image : ©European Union 2018

On 11th June 2018, the Commission tabled its proposal for the European Solidarity Corps, for the period 2021-2027. The Corps will support volunteering, traineeships and job placements in a wide range of sectors engaged in solidarity and will provide young



Themis Christophidou @ChristophidouEU · 9 Oct 2018

One week left to apply for #EUSolidarityCorps!

Highly recommended to the young people up for a challenge and wanting to #MakeADifference by helping others. Is this you?

Apply here: europa.eu/youth/SOLIDARI...

#EUandME #volunteering @EUErasmusPlus @europeanYouthEU

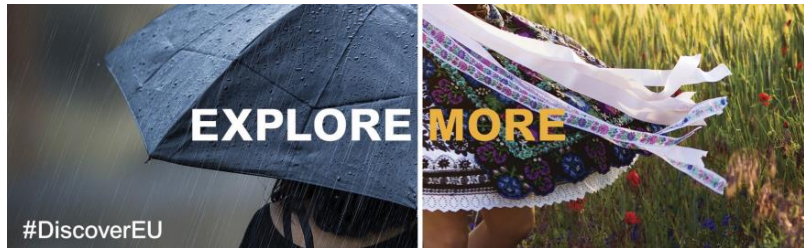


people with opportunities to set up their own solidarity projects or volunteer as a group. All these actions aim to give young people across Europe new opportunities to engage in solidarity activities addressing societal challenges and strengthening communities. At the same time, they will help improve the skills and competences young people need for their own personal and professional development at the beginning of their careers.

In parallel, DG EAC has been actively involved in the negotiations and practical implementation for a European Solidarity Corps scheme running between 2018 and 2020, which was adopted on 2nd October 2018. Since the launch of the pilot phase, more than 100 000 people have registered and more than 10 000 have started their placement.

DiscoverEU

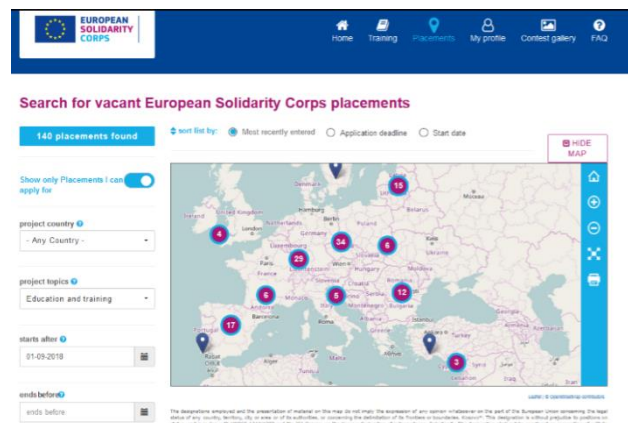
In 2018, DG EAC implemented **DiscoverEU**⁷⁷, a EUR 12 million pilot action by the European Parliament aiming to offer an opportunity to young people to explore Europe through a personal journey by



providing travel passes youngsters aged 18 can apply for. Around 100 000 applications were received under the first round organised in June, which resulted in around 15 000 travel tickets awarded to 18-year olds travelling over summer. The second round, launched in November 2018, resulted in almost 80 000 applications for about 15 000 tickets distributed to 18 year-olds who will travel between April and October 2019.

European Youth Portal

The **European Youth Portal** provides a single, easily accessible entry point for young people to the European Solidarity Corps, DiscoverEU and other services such as the Erasmus+ Virtual Exchanges. For the **European Solidarity Corps**⁷⁸, many improvements were implemented in 2018 for the registrants' profile and the organisation portal, e.g. new dashboards for young people and organisations that better match young people's preferences with opportunities offered by organisations. Most of these functionalities were also made available via the European Solidarity Corps mobile app.



With **DiscoverEU**, another new high-profile action for young people was implemented via the European Youth Portal, enabling 18-year-old EU citizens to apply for free travel passes.

The European Youth Portal is equally a key tool for the implementation of both the European Solidarity Corps and DiscoverEU by **supporting the transparent selection of young people for opportunities**. DG EAC continued to expand and develop tools to help create a community of people around the European Solidarity Corps and DiscoverEU, e.g. in the form of photo competitions. This is expected to further contribute to relevant policy aspects.

⁷⁷ Image : ©European Union 2018

⁷⁸ Image : ©European Union 2018

Relevant general objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment

Specific objective 2.7: To improve the level of key competences and skills, in particular through increased opportunities for learning mobility and strengthened cooperation with the world of work in the field of youth including for young people with fewer opportunities, those active in youth work or youth organisations and youth leaders with particular regard to participation in democratic life in Europe and the labour market, active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, social inclusion and solidarity

Related to spending programme

Erasmus+ Youth

Main outputs in 2018:

Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes

Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved	
			EU28	Total
Horizontal coordination with NAs and organisation of thematic cooperation (trainings, etc.)	N° of participants in Youth Exchanges	80 900	96 556	109 611
Horizontal coordination with NAs and organisation of thematic cooperation (trainings, etc.)	N° of participants in Erasmus+ volunteering activities	4 500 (9 000 if transitional measures)	8 504	9 654
Horizontal coordination with NAs and organisation of thematic cooperation (trainings, etc.)	N° of youth workers participating	23 800	32 910	37 359
Platform on the European Solidarity Corps on the EU Youth Portal	Finalising the 1st phase: matching tool communication campaign web app. Launch of the 2nd phase: roll-out of the European Solidarity Corps.	60 000	99 648	
	N° of young people registered in the European Solidarity Corps database N° of young people deployed in the European Solidarity Corps in 2018	18 500	10 767 ⁷⁹	
Expert group on youth work for young migrants and refugees	Final results: Compilation of a practical toolbox for youth workers and youth organisations, offering useful tips and guidance useable in different Member States; Policy recommendations as input to possible Council conclusions.	December 2018	Done	

⁷⁹ Due to a delay in the adoption of the European Solidarity Corps Regulation in 2018, the initial estimated target in terms of number of deployments could not be met. Improved take-up is expected in 2019, which will be the first full year of implementation of the European Solidarity Corps programme.

Relevant general objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment						
Specific objective 2.8: To foster quality improvements, innovation excellence and internationalisation, in particular through enhanced transnational cooperation at the level of institutions/organisations between organisations in the youth field and other stakeholders						Related to spending programme Erasmus+ Youth
Main outputs in 2018:						
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes						
Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved			
			EU28	Total		
Horizontal coordination with NAs and organisation of thematic cooperation (trainings, etc.)	Number of strategic partnerships	2 280	2 019	2 292		

Relevant general objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment						
Specific objective 2.9: To promote at policy level, in particular through enhanced policy cooperation, the dissemination of good practices and better use of Union transparency and recognition tools in the field of youth: evidence-based youth policy, as well as the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, with a view to complementing policy reforms at local, regional and national level						Related to spending programme Erasmus+ Youth
Main outputs in 2018:						
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes						
Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved			
Horizontal coordination with NAs and organisation of thematic cooperation (trainings, etc.)	N° of structured Dialogue projects	163	300			
Effective implementation of the Erasmus+ 2018 Annual Work programme	N° of operating grants to European Youth NGOs	72	90			
6 th cycle of Structured Dialogue with young people	Completion of the cycle	Q4 2018	Done			
Adoption of the WP	N° of support to Eurodesk	35	35			
Organisation of the Forum	Development of the European Youth Forum	1	1			

Relevant general objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment

Specific objective 2.10: To support the Union's external action, including its development objectives, through targeted capacity-building in partner countries, cooperation between Union and partner-country institutions or other stakeholders and the promotion of mobility, and to enhance the international dimension of activities in the field of youth in particular as regards the role of youth workers and support structures for young people.

Related to spending programme

Erasmus+ Youth

Main outputs in 2018:

Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes

Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved
Effective implementation of the Erasmus+ 2018 Annual WP	N° of capacity building projects (international dimension)	70 ⁸⁰	93
Partnership between the European Union and the Council of Europe in the field of youth – particular focus on cooperation with EU neighbourhood	Contribution to a Conference on countering violent radicalisation, supporting development of youth knowledge networks in neighbour countries	Throughout 2018	Done

⁸⁰ 2018 target have been updated to reflect those in the Creative Europe Programme Statement.

Sport

The objectives of the Treaty in the area of sport were equally pursued in 2018, including through the implementation of the Sport Chapter of Erasmus+ 2014-2020.

Compared to the early years of the Erasmus+ program, since 2016, the **Sport** chapter has shifted focus towards grassroots sport with the creation of small collaborative partnerships, and in general on all sport projects aimed at increasing the level of participation in sport and physical activity. The sport chapter has continued to support initiatives to tackle cross-border threats to the integrity of sport, such as doping, match fixing and violence, as well as all kinds of intolerance and discrimination. It has promoted good governance in sport and dual careers of athletes and voluntary activities in sport, together with social inclusion, including refugees and migrants. In addition to the regular activities, the programme contributed to cooperation with the Council of Europe, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Health Organisation and the National Football Information Points (NFIP) network

The ability of sport to break down barriers is increasingly being used as a powerful tool to bring together people from all kinds of backgrounds, and in particular from **disadvantaged groups and the promotion of European values**. Across the European Union, at Member States' level or within European Union programmes, a wide range of initiatives have been taken and innovative projects are already being implemented. Through 3 specific calls a total of 35 local sport projects were supported: 24 projects devoted to the integration of refugees and 4 projects related to the promotion of European values through sport initiatives at the municipal level and 7 proposals on exchanges and mobility in sport. Exchanges of people, ideas and good practices can be beneficial for the individuals, for their organisations and for sport and society as a whole. In addition a mapping on access to sport of people with disability was published on 20 December.

In 2018, DG EAC continued to implement the **EU Work Plan for Sport** by tackling cross-border challenges that impact the integrity of sport such as anti-doping, match-fixing, and violence in sport, notably through the Erasmus+ programme. The **expert group on integrity** was launched in Varna in April and hold a second meeting in Palermo in October. **The expert group on the skills and workforce development in sport** was launched in Bath in February and hold 2 more meetings, one in Split in June and third meeting in Salzburg in November. Two cluster meeting took place in Brussels one on the economic dimension on 11 April and another on sport integrity on 4 and 5 December.

The Commission continued the work in priority areas, such as good governance in sport through the pledge board, the promotion of grassroots sport and healthy life style through the implementation of the **Tartu Call** and the promotion of social inclusion through sport including through the Erasmus+ chapter sport. A revised version of the **Country factsheets on Health-enhancing physical activity**⁸¹ (HEPA) was published in September 2018, one of the commitment of the Tartu call.

⁸¹ https://ec.europa.eu/sport/news/2015/country-factsheets-health-enhancing-physical-activity-published_en

After a very successful edition in Malta in 2017, the 2018 **EU Sport Forum**⁸² took place on 22 and 23 March in Sofia, Bulgaria. DG EAC continued to use the EU Sport Forum as a unique opportunity for sport organisations to meet and discuss key topics in the field of sport with policy makers and representatives of the EU institutions and the Member States. The role of sport in international relations was at the core of the discussion, together with regional development, innovation and concrete sessions on the transfer of players or the consequences of the International Skating Union (ISU) case⁸³. The latest policy developments from the EU Work Plan for Sport to the Tartu call for a healthy lifestyle were also widely discussed. Different sessions and workshops addressed other key questions such as the impact of the Olympic games on the environment, the role of sport in fighting climate change and the Paris agreement, the role of sport in promoting European values and promoting gender equality in sport.



The **European Week of Sport** celebrated its 4th anniversary in 2018. Commissioner Tibor Navracsics officially declared it open on Saturday 22 September. The event took place in Vienna, in parallel with the Austrian national day of Sport. The initiative was further enhanced and strengthened as an important tool for promoting sport and physical activity amongst citizens and for raising awareness about their importance and benefits, as well as for developing cooperation with various European and international partners and sport organisations. In 2018, it was extended to the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership countries. In total around 13 million people participated in more than 50 000 events across Europe. One of the main novelties was the **#BeActive⁸⁴ night**. It was organised on 29 September in all participating countries and regions.



The 2018 **#Beactive Awards** recognises inspiring contributions to promoting active lifestyles in Europe. Sofia - 2018 European Capital of Sport - hosted the Awards Gala on 17 October.



The second ceremony of the **#BeInclusive⁸⁵ EU sport** award took place on 27 November 2018. The #BeInclusive EU Sport Awards recognise sport organisations working with ethnic minorities, refugees, people with disabilities, youth groups at-risk, or any other group that faces challenging social circumstances. The three winners were awarded with a EUR 10 000 prize and the 6 finalists received a EUR 2 500 prize each.

⁸² Image : ©European Union 2018

⁸³ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-5184_en.htm

⁸⁴ Image : ©European Union 2018

⁸⁵ Image : ©European Union 2018



Judo club for people with disabilities Fuji (Croatia)

'We believe that the best way to achieve inclusion is through new friendships. That is why we are encouraging very young judokas without disability to join our group because it helps both groups, both with and without disabilities, to grow up and become better members of society' Ms Marina Drašković, President and head coach of Judo club for people with disabilities Fuji (Croatia)- 2018 #BeInclusive EU sport awards winner

Judo club for people with disabilities "Fuji" was founded in August of 2012 and is the first of its kind in Croatia. The club gathers around 35 children and young people whose diagnoses include, but are not limited to cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, intellectual disabilities (special needs), motor impairments and autistic spectre disorders. The primary goal of this project is to include children with different kinds of disabilities into a sporting activity that will enable them to develop their motor skills to the highest possible level, but also to integrate into a sporting environment where they can reach self-actualisation in spite of the limitations they face in their day-to-day life.

DG EAC continued to support evidence based policy in the field of sport. A New Eurobarometer⁸⁶ on sport and physical activity published on 22 March shows that levels of participation in sport and physical activities have not changed substantially since the previous Eurobarometer survey in 2014. In fact, the proportion of those who say they never exercise or play sport has slightly increased from 42% to 46% Europe-wide, and this is a continuation of a gradual trend since 2009.



An expert review of good practice projects in **sport diplomacy** and a report on developments of the **transfer in the football market** since 2013⁸⁷ were published in January and March 2018. A study on **Workplace physical activity programmes** is part of the European Commission's follow-up to the Tartu Call for a Healthy Lifestyle;

Finally, the **cooperation with other international organisations** active in the field of sport was further strengthened. In particular, the Commission developed partnerships with three international organisations through Erasmus+: the Council of Europe, the UNODC⁸⁸, and the World Health Organization. The European Commission supported and cooperated with the World Health Organization in the preparation and issuing of new country factsheets on physical activity.

⁸⁶ Image : ©European Union 2018

⁸⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/sport/news/2018/publication-report-developments-transfer-market-2013_en

⁸⁸ United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime.

A new Arrangement for Cooperation between the European Commission and the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) to consolidate and strengthen cooperation was signed on 19 February and covers the period up to the end of 2020. The cooperation mainly takes the form of joint campaigns and exchanges at expert level, such as tackling racism and discrimination, and promoting social inclusion of disadvantaged groups through sport. Specific fields of cooperation also address specific challenges sport faces today, including violence, match-fixing, fair taxation, doping and racism.

In 2018, 4 projects were selected after responding to the "**Promotion of European values through sport initiatives at the municipal level**" EAC/S14/2018 call. The total budget for this call for proposals for the Erasmus+ Sport actions was EUR 1 million. 24 projects were selected after responding to the "**Sport as a tool for integration and social inclusion of refugees**" (EAC/S16/2018) call for proposals. The total budget for this call for proposals was EUR 1.4 million. 7 projects were selected after responding to the "**Exchanges and mobility in sport**" EAC/S15/2018 call. The total budget for this call for proposals for the Erasmus+ Sport actions was EUR 1.2 million.

Relevant general objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment			
Specific objective 2.11: To support good governance in sport and dual careers of athletes			Related to spending programme Erasmus+ Sport
Main outputs in 2018:			
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes			
Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved
Effective implementation of the Erasmus+ 2018 Annual WP	N° of cross-border projects to improve good governance and dual careers	40	Number of grants awarded for good governance and dual careers: 65
EU Sport Forum	Organisation of the Forum	March 2018	22-23 March 2018

Relevant general objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment			
Specific objective 2.12: To tackle cross-border threats to the integrity of sport, such as doping, match-fixing and violence, as well as all kinds of intolerance and discrimination			Related to spending programme Erasmus+ Sport
Main outputs in 2018:			
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes			
Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved
Effective implementation of the Erasmus+ 2018 Annual WP	N° of cross-border projects to combat threats to sport	42	Number of grants awarded for the fight against doping, match-fixing, violence: 12 ⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Priority given to projects promoting health enhancing physical activity in line with commitment n. 1 of the [Tartu Call for a Healthy Lifestyle](#) (

Relevant general objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment

Specific objective 2.13: To promote voluntary activities in sport, together with social inclusion, equal opportunities and health-enhancing physical activity through increased participation in, and equal access to sport.

Related to spending programme
**Erasmus+
Sport**

Main outputs in 2018:

Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes

Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved
Effective implementation of the Erasmus+ 2018 Annual Work programme, pilot projects and preparatory actions	N° of cross-border projects to promote voluntary activities enhance social inclusion,	175	177
3 rd European Week of Sport	Organisation of the event	Q3 2018	22-30 September 2018
2018 #BeInclusive EU sport awards	Organisation and attribution of the award	Q4 2018	27 November 2018
Pilot project: Sport as a tool for integration and social inclusion of the refugees.	Selection of the projects among the applications received via the call for proposals and contracts	Q3 2018	Done
Preparatory actions: Sportue: the promotion of European values through sport initiatives, and Exchanges and mobility in sport.	Selection of the projects among the applications received via the call for proposals and contracts	Q3 2018	Done

D. Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation

Investing in research and innovation is increasingly crucial for shaping a better European future in a rapidly globalising world, where success depends ever more on the production and conversion of knowledge into innovation. Research and innovation (R&I) are cornerstones of EU policies to boost jobs, growth and investment and the White Paper on the Future of Europe explicitly refers to its importance for the future of the Union. Innovation plays a key role in modern economies and there is a clear need and potential to further improve Europe's overall innovation 'ecosystem' in order to be able to respond to the challenges our society will face in the coming years and to build the needed resilience.

Within Horizon 2020, DG EAC manages 2 essential strands of Horizon 2020⁹⁰: the **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)** and the **European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)**.



The MSCA contribute to these political priorities by **strengthening Europe's human capital base in R&I**. The MSCA are a key part of the Excellence-pillar of Horizon 2020. As an entirely "bottom-up" programme, they allow researchers to choose their research fields freely. They are therefore open to all domains from basic research up to market take-up and innovation services.

The programme equips researchers with the right international and intersectoral knowledge, skills, and exposure. They develop their resilience in order to adapt to the changing global environment and to seize new opportunities. They are thus empowered to fill the top research positions of tomorrow, to address global societal challenges, and to co-operate with international partners.

The MSCA over the past 20 years have supported the careers of more than 100 000 excellent scientists, and have set new standards in terms of training and working conditions for researchers in Europe.

The EIT, as a part of Horizon 2020, has a distinctive role in fostering innovation and entrepreneurship across Europe by bringing together actors of the Knowledge Triangle (Research, Business and Education) but also public authorities and civil society. The EIT contributes to the development of a European ecosystem through an improved talent base and better opportunities for innovators and entrepreneurs.

The DNA of the EIT is to focus more on the innovator than on the innovation: educating and empowering innovators across Europe to turn their best ideas into products and services for the market. These innovations provide solutions to challenges faced by our societies thus increasing our resilience and Europe's entrepreneurs benefit from a unique access to Europe's largest open innovation network.

⁹⁰ Image : ©European Union 2018

Relevant general objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment			
DG EAC Specific objective 3.0 MSCA: To ensure an efficient and effective implementation of the programme		Related to spending programme H2020	
Main outputs in 2018:			
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes			
Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved
Effective WP management	Budget execution	100%	Yes
	N° of calls published	6	6
Austrian Presidency Conference on 'MSCA beyond 2020'	Organisation of the event	Q3-Q4 2018	Yes
Other important outputs			
Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved
Revision of the MSCA Work Programme 2018-20	Adoption of the revised Work Programme 2018-20	Q3 2018	Yes
Proposal for a legal base for the post-2020 R&I Framework Programme (MSCA contribution)	Adoption of the proposal by the Commission	Q2/Q3 2018	Yes
Set-up of online introductory training modules for MSCA fellows	Finalisation of the online training modules	Q3 2018	Yes, partly*

* Technical problems meant that finalisation of the modules was delayed to early 2019.

Relevant general objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment			
DG EAC Specific objective 3.0 EIT: To ensure an efficient and effective implementation of the programme		Related to spending programme H2020	
Main outputs in 2018:			
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes			
Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved
2019-2021 EIT Single Programming Document (SPD)	Adoption of the opinion	Q3	Yes, Q4
Effective WP management	N° of grant agreements signed	6	6
	SME participation in KIC partnerships	40%	34%
	N° of communication and outreach activities	10 newsletters published and at least 3 stakeholder events held	Yes
	Budget execution	100%	Yes
Other important outputs			
Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved
Opinion on EIT mid-term evaluation	Adoption of the report	Q1 2018	Yes
Revision of the legal basis	Drafting of the proposal and submission to co-legislators	Q1 2018	Tabled Q2 2019
2017 discharge process	Acceptance of the discharge	Q4 2018	Tabled Q1 2019

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, contributing to economic growth through excellence in science



The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)⁹¹ invest in the people behind research and innovation in Europe, strengthening their skills, training and career development and fostering the transfer of knowledge and cooperation between research-performing organisations. They continue to focus on excellence and have a pronounced structuring impact on European Research Area (ERA) by setting standards for quality training, attractive employment conditions and open recruitment for all EU researchers. The MSCA strongly contribute to Europe's overarching goal to promote smart economic growth and significantly contribute to major societal challenges as defined in the Europe 2020 Strategy.

The MSCA support leading researchers from across the world providing them with high-quality training and experience across borders, sectors and disciplines. Under Horizon 2020 to date, the MSCA have funded 48 000 researchers and are in line to meet the target of 65 000 by the end of the programme.

MSCA calls in 2018 were implemented as planned and around 10 000 researchers will benefit from fellowships and exchanges across borders, sectors and disciplines plus attractive working conditions. Efforts to ensure gender equality continue to bear fruit with the share of women receiving an individual fellowship well above target at 43%. DG EAC continued to promote the participation of third-country researchers and organisations in the MSCA with a view to **creating worldwide networks and reinforcing research capacities and collaboration across the globe**. Evidence shows that the MSCA are open to the world with the programme accounting for over 50% of all international cooperation under Horizon 2020 and one in four fellows coming from outside Europe.

As in previous years, the MSCA were highly oversubscribed, in particular for Innovative Training Networks (ITN) and Individual Fellowships⁹² (IF), and the available budget

"I am really proud to be an MSCA fellow. The fellowship enables me to develop my professional knowledge and to decrease the gap between society and research through dissemination actions which are seldom included in the vast majority of projects."



Klaus Pellicer Alborch
Spain

Klaus optimises the industrial production of lactic acid bacteria, which are used as starter cultures in the food industry, such as yoghurt, cheese and probiotics production. The biggest problem of bioprocesses' scale up is the limitation in mass transport, which affects biomass quality and quantity. Klaus aims to minimise this by developing new process analytical tools.

Biorapid – Rapid Bioprocess Development



FOOD SECURITY,
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE,
FORESTRY AND MARITIME
RESEARCH

⁹¹ Image : ©European Union 2018

⁹² Image : ©European Union 2018

remains insufficient with respect to the level of demand. In this regard, an MSCA Seal of Excellence was awarded in 2018 to more than 2 000 Individual Fellowship applicants whose excellent projects (scoring 85% or above) could not be supported due to insufficient EU funding. To date, national funding schemes for Seal of Excellence recipients have been set up in eight Member States with three countries making use of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF).

A new three-year **Net4MobilityPlus project** started in March 2018 with a budget of EUR 1.8 million. The objective of this project is to facilitate the trans-national cooperation between MSCA national contact points with a view to identifying and sharing good practices and raising the general standard of support to applicants.



A wide range of communication and outreach activities were carried out in 2018. The **European Researchers' Night 2018**⁹³ took place on 28th September and attracted 1.5 million visitors in over 370 cities across Europe and stimulated interest in research and related careers, particularly among young people. The 40% rise in attendance figures reflects the increase in budget which now stands at EUR 6 million per year. Research projects, many of them involving MSCA fellows, showcased the value of publicly funded research to the general public and sought to inspire in particular young people to pursue a research career. To mark the European Year of Cultural Heritage, around 20 projects focused on this theme including Valletta and Plovdiv, the 2018 and 2019 European Capitals of Culture. To kick-start the Researchers' Night, the **Science is Wonder-ful! event** was held in Brussels over two days in September, allowing scientists and citizens to interact and learn from each other. Around 5 000 people visited the 30 stands, 2 000 of which were students,

in the presence of Marie and Pierre Curie.

The second edition of the **MSCA Falling Walls Lab** took place at the Natural Science Museum in Brussels on 25th September. This science contest showcases the most promising scientific projects and gave the opportunity to 30 on-going EU-funded researchers, selected from an open call, to present a three-minute pitch of their research to a distinguished jury representing science and business organisations. First prize was won by Giuseppe Schiavone with his "Breaking the Wall of Animal experimentation".

⁹³ Image : ©European Union 2018

Several MSCA researchers were rewarded prominent prizes in 2018:

- The Institute of Animal Reproduction and Food Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Olsztyn, Poland, was awarded the prestigious Saint James's Prize for the organisation of the European Researchers' Night.
- An MSCA Innovative Training Network (ITN-DCH) received the first UNESCO Chair on Digital Cultural Heritage.
- UNESCO invited the Cyprus University of Technology to join its universities network to establish the UNESCO Chair in Digital Cultural Heritage / Cultural Informatics. The main scope of this unique Chair is to extend the successful work of the Digital Heritage Research Lab, in which the MSCA project takes part.
- MSCA fellow Maria Giovanna Dainotti received the Chrétien International Research Grant from the American Astronomical Society for her research project on innovative development techniques in the field of energy astrophysics phenomena.



2018 was an excellent year for the **Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA)**⁹⁴: Membership increased to 12 000 and preparations for much faster increase in 2019 were made. The newly elected Board is very actively engaged with the annual work plans, independent income generation and management of an organisation that is more engaged with activities in global scale every year in which members act as ambassadors of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie brand name. There are at present 11 working groups, 23 thematic groups, 18 general interest groups, and 28 national and regional chapters. The MCAA contributed and participated in several events, such as EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF) 2018, as well as in EC work, such as the discussion and preparations of Horizon Europe with its own position paper. The consortium tasked with the administrative IT support of the MCAA has been performing well enough to have had its contract renewed for a year in October 2018. Overall the positive effect of cumulative experience - for all parties involved (Board, memberships, Contractor and EC) - is visible in the functioning of the organisation.

The **MSCA Work Programme 2018-2020** was updated on 24 July 2018. This included updating the budgetary figures for 2018 and 2019 and some fine-tuning for the new **MSCA Special Needs Allowance** which will cover the additional costs that researchers/staff members with disabilities face due to the increased costs of their mobility. This allowance will be operational in **2019 in the form of a lump sum up to EUR 60 000 per fellow**. In addition, a new coordination and support action was introduced to address the issue of very low participation in MSCA by researchers at risk. With a budget of EUR 1.5 million, the call was launched in 2018 to facilitate trans-national co-operation between European and national initiatives and programmes in support of researchers at risk, with a view to identifying and sharing good practices and raising the general standard of support to applicants. Proposals will be evaluated and a contract awarded in early 2019.

⁹⁴ Image : ©European Union 2018/©Marie Curie Alumni Association 2018

Commission proposal for MSCA in Horizon Europe

The findings from the H2020 mid-term evaluation of the MSCA and associated action plan contributed to shaping the MSCA part of the Commission proposal for Horizon Europe, the post-2020 Research and Innovation Framework Programme, adopted by the Commission on 7 June 2018.

Under Horizon Europe, the MSCA will address five specific intervention areas:

1. Nurturing excellence through mobility of researchers across borders, sectors and disciplines;
2. Fostering new skills through excellent training of researchers;
3. Strengthening human capital and skills development across the European Research Area;
4. Improving and facilitating synergies; and
5. Promoting public outreach.

By doing so, a new generation of outstanding early-career researchers will be supported to follow their ideas and build their careers, be this inside or outside academia. The MSCA will continue to apply its core values to the broader framework programme and to the European economy and society. This includes excellence, investing in people, professional and career development for researchers, a bottom-up approach, mobility across borders, sectors and disciplines and the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion. The MSCA will further simplify its implementation rules and streamline its effective and successful funding schemes by supporting (i) networks for doctoral candidates, (ii) post-doctoral fellowships, (iii) staff exchanges, (iv) programmes creating synergies at regional, national and international level, and (v) science festivals across Europe.

The programme will further increase its openness and effectiveness by supporting from 2021 on also training and mobility in the domain of nuclear research and reinforcing synergies, notably with other parts of Horizon Europe, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), to tackle regional, national and global Research and Innovation (R&I) challenges.

Relevant general objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment

Specific objective 3.1: Excellent science – Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions – To ensure optimum development and dynamic use of Europe’s intellectual capital of researchers in order to generate new skills and innovation and, thus, to realise its full potential across all sectors and regions

Related to spending programme

H2020

Main outputs in 2018:

Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes

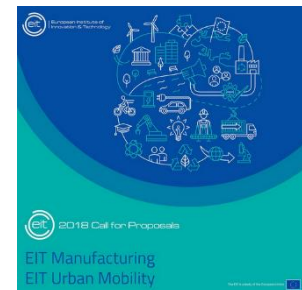
Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved
Implementing projects	N° of grants awarded	1 750	1 700
Effective implementation of the MSCA 2018-20 Annual Work programme	N° of Researchers, including PhD candidates, funded through the MSCA	10 000	10 000
European Researchers' Night	Organisation of the NIGHT	Q4 2017 50 projects with a wide geographical spread	Yes

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology, promoting synergies and complementarities via the knowledge triangle

The **European Institute of Innovation and Technology's** (EIT) overall mission is to contribute to sustainable European economic growth and competitiveness by reinforcing the innovation capacity of the Member States and the Union. As part of Horizon 2020, the EIT's specific objective is to integrate the knowledge triangle of higher education, research and innovation and thus to reinforce the Union's innovation capacity and address societal challenges. The EIT is designed to achieve these goals primarily through its Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), which operate in specific societal challenges.

The European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) is an independent body of the European Union set up in 2008 to boost innovation and entrepreneurship across Europe. The first six Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) aim to mitigate and adapt to climate change (EIT Climate), to accelerate the digital transformation (EIT Digital), to create sustainable sources of energy and increase the supply (EIT InnoEnergy), to support healthy living and active aging (EIT Health), and to manage our planet's raw materials in an efficient, secure and sustainable way (EIT RawMaterials), to improve nutrition and make the food system more resource-efficient, secure, transparent and trusted (EIT Food).

In 2018, the EIT continued to extend the **Knowledge and Innovation Communities model** (KICs) to contribute to the delivery of the Europe 2020 agenda, helping further to enhance the knowledge base and strengthen Europe's innovation capacity. The Call for the designation of the 2 new KICs⁹⁵ in the fields of "**Added-value Manufacturing**" and "**Urban mobility**" was launched on 12 January 2018 and closed on 12 July 2018. The Call has been successful and the EIT Governing Board designated a new partnership in each field on 5 December 2018.



These two additional KICs will contribute to address the pressing challenges of making Europe a competitive global actor in the manufacturing sector and building smarter transport systems across the continent.

⁹⁵ Image : ©European Union 2018

The EIT's success in nurturing the most promising innovation talent has been recognised by the Forbes 30 under 30 lists⁹⁶ with 9 members of the EIT Community included. This brings the total to 32 in the last 3 years.



EIT Community entrepreneurs in the spotlight in Forbes 30 under 30

Amongst the successful companies supported by the EIT is Climeworks, which commercialises CO2 removal technology. After having graduated from the EIT Climate-KIC Accelerator business incubator programme in 2013, they went from strength to strength and raised EUR 27 million in equity funding in 2018.

Areas of interventions are:

- **Sustainable innovation ecosystem across Europe:** Reinforcing the effectiveness of the existing KICs and setting up new ones in a limited number of thematic areas, as well as accelerating regions towards excellence in countries that are modest or moderate innovators.
- **Entrepreneurial and innovation skills** in a lifelong learning perspective and the entrepreneurial transformation of EU universities.
- **New solutions to the market:** support to the development of new products and services where Knowledge Triangle actors will collaborate to make solutions market-ready as well as provision of high-level services and support to innovative businesses.
- **Synergies and value added within Horizon Europe and beyond**, with extended cooperation with the European Innovation Council (EIC) in streamlining support to innovative ventures, collaboration with Member States at both national and regional levels, and exploitation of synergies with the other EU programmes supporting human capital development and innovation (e.g. European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Erasmus).

⁹⁶ Image : ©European Union 2018

An **Impact Assessment** has been run during 2018 to support the elaboration of the coming EIT legislative package, which includes the revision of the Regulation establishing the EIT and the next Strategic Innovation Agenda of the EIT, which will outline its main strategic directions, intervention logic and possible new themes for KICs for the period 2021-2027. The report will be finalized in 2019. DG EAC participated in numerous coordination meetings to ensure that the next Strategic Innovation Agenda (SIC) is aligned with the EU priorities for the next MFF.



Themis Christophidou @ChristophidouEU · 14 Nov 2018

If research & innovation are your subjects, you have a lot in common with the [#EITCommunity](#) !

We are gathering the views of stakeholders and citizens on the challenges in the research and innovation landscape of [#EU](#).
[#innovation](#) [#research](#) [#technology](#)

ec.europa.eu/info/law/bette...



DG EAC is the EIT's parent DG and has a supervision and support role. As in previous years, the EIT has submitted to the Commission its **Draft Single Programming Document** which lays down the financing decision for 2019. DG EAC assessed the document and produced the Commission's opinion which has been adopted by the College on 14 December 2018. 3 new members of the **Governing Board** have been appointed and the EIT has launched a call for expression of interest for the appointment of 2 additional ones.

In January 2018, **full financial autonomy** was granted to the EIT. Following this, work commenced on a new **Memorandum of Understanding** that was prepared during 2018 and was signed at the start of January 2019 by the EIT and DG EAC.

Relevant general objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment**Specific objective 3.2: The European Institute of Innovation and Technology – To integrate the knowledge triangle of research, innovation and higher education and thus to reinforce the Union's innovation capacity and address societal challenges**

Related to spending programme

H2020**Main outputs in 2018:****Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes**

Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved
Single Grant Agreements with 6 KICs	Signature of single grant agreements with 6 KICs	Q1 2018	Yes
Designation of 2 new KICs	Designation of 2 new KICs	Q4 2018	Yes
Proposal for a new Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021 – 2027	Inter-service consultation and proposal tabled to co-legislators	End 2018	Planned 1 st semester 2019
Meeting of the EIT Advisory Group (between Commission services and the EIT and the KICs)	Organisation of the meeting	1st half 2018	Yes
Revision of EIT Regulation	Inter-service consultation and proposal tabled to co-legislators	Q1 2018	Planned 1 st semester 2019

E. Creative Europe, the EU framework programme for support to the culture and audiovisual sectors



The Creative Europe⁹⁷ programme contributes to the political priorities of the Commission, in particular relating to jobs, growth and investment and the European Digital Single Market. By allowing participation of non-EU cultural and creative operators, the programme also contributes to making the EU a stronger global actor. At the same time, the programme helps address current political and societal challenges through the power of culture to reach the hearts and minds of citizens and boost

confidence in our shared European values.

Policy – New agenda

A major contribution to cultural cooperation at EU level, and a key achievement in 2018, has been the adoption on 22 May of a **New European Agenda for Culture**. The New Agenda aims to respond to the social and economic challenges the EU is facing by harnessing the full potential of culture to build a fairer, more inclusive Union supporting innovation, creativity and sustainable jobs and growth. The New Agenda sets out over **25 actions across five dimensions** (social, economic, external, cultural heritage, digital4culture) and proposes a stronger involvement of Member States in policy collaboration and implementation of policy results through joint projects, including with international cultural organisations and national cultural institutes in third countries.

In 2018, DG EAC also worked on assessing the implementation and relevance of the **Work Plan for Culture 2015-2018**, notably in the field of social inclusion, cultural and creative industries, cultural heritage, the EU's nascent strategy for international cultural relations, and the integration of refugees through arts and culture. This involved a series of consultations at different levels, including within the relevant Council Working Group with a view to the next Work Plan that was agreed within the Council in November 2018.

As regards cultural diversity and the fair remuneration of creativity, DG EAC continued to devote attention to follow-up on the **Digital Single Market (DSM) initiative**⁹⁸ and notably the negotiations of a second package of proposals for a **revision of the copyright rules**. The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission reached a political agreement on the Directive on copyright in the Digital Simple Market on 13 February 2019. The new Directive is expected to be adopted by the end of the legislative term. It includes provisions on the fair remuneration of creators, which require sector-specific implementation through stakeholders' dialogues in the Member States.

An **amendment to the Work Programme adopted in April 2018** allowed to fund more small cooperation projects, reinforcing the European Union Prizes for Cultural Heritage and for Literature, increasing capacity-building action for future European Capitals of Culture, awarding three grants to UNESCO, International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the Council of Europe to implement specific objectives of the European Year of Cultural Heritage, and launching a new experimental mobility scheme for artists and creative people.

On the basis of the **2018 mid-term evaluation of the Creative Europe programme**, adaptations to the current programme and preparation for the next generation of programmes were launched. An impact assessment and stakeholder consultations were

⁹⁷ Image : ©European Union 2018/©Shutterstock

⁹⁸ COM/2015/0192

carried out in 2018 to help gather evidence with a view to adopting a new EU funding scheme to support the cultural and creative sectors after 2020. The negotiations of the new programme and the work on the implementing tools, such as guidelines, will be a strong focus of DG EAC's work in 2019.

Cultural and Creative Sectors' Guarantee Facility

In 2018 a total of 748 applications were submitted under the **Culture Sub-programme**, of which 234 were selected for funding. Under the **European cooperation project** scheme support resulted in 132 projects, out of them 29 in the frame of a special call to select initiatives in the field of cultural heritage as a contribution to the European Year of Cultural Heritage. These projects stress Europe's cultural diversity, and bring about economic benefits to SMEs and microbusinesses active in cultural sectors like music, publishing and design. The emphasis on audience development, capacity building and support for start-ups has allowed the implementation of several innovative projects of high artistic quality and economic value.

The **Cultural and Creative Sectors' Guarantee Facility (CCS GF)** is an innovative market led instrument that addresses the financing gap for SMEs in these sectors, aiming to generate over EUR 1 billion in loans for cultural and creative sectors by end 2024. The new instrument has been well received by the market and by the end of quarter 3 in year 2018 the Cultural and Creative Sectors' Guarantee Facility had signed 10 guarantee agreements with 9 financial intermediaries from Spain, France, Romania, Czech Republic, Belgium, Italy and Poland. Two additional agreements are already approved and will be signed in Q1 2019. Overall over 630 loans were made under the scheme to final beneficiaries, of which 60% from the audiovisual sector and 40% from other cultural sectors. These results are very encouraging as they indicate that the traditional gap between the financial sector and the cultural and creative sectors can be addressed in a concrete way. Given the strong market demand, the European Fund for Strategic Investment has been mobilized to top-up the CCS GF by EUR 60 million, equivalent to 50% of the first budget. The second top-up of additional EUR 70 million is being prepared. In addition, the Capacity Building Scheme which offers a technical assistance to financial intermediaries is operational as from mid-2018.

Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions

As a follow up to the proposition of the EP end of October 2017, DG EAC has implemented the 2018 Preparatory Action **"Music Moves Europe⁹⁹: Boosting European music diversity and talent"** (EUR 1.5 million) which aims at exploring ways



to better support the music sector within a future programme. Four calls were launched in the spring: two calls for proposals (training of young musical talents; music online and offline distribution) and two calls for tenders (music export; music observatory and music market analysis). The studies kicked off in the autumn and results will become available a year after. The Parliament voted an extension of this Preparatory Action, doubling the budget

(EUR 3 million for 2019). DG EAC used the momentum to increasingly promote Music Moves Europe as the EU framework for support to the music sector along four pillars (funding, policy, dialogue, EU prize – new Music Moves Europe Talent Awards).

Among the actions showcasing the richness and diversity of cultures in Europe as well as the common features they share, the **European Capitals of Culture (ECOCs)** have a significant leverage effect on long-term cultural, social and economic benefits to the cities which have held the title. This cost-efficient leverage action (EUR 1.5 million in the form

⁹⁹ Image : ©European Union 2018

of the Melina Mercouri Prize) stimulates huge culture-led investments by national, regional and local public authorities: as an example, in 2017, the two ECOCs invested approximately EUR 61.9 million in Aarhus and EUR 8.5 million in Pafos. One euro of public money invested in an ECOC project can generate up to 6 euros in return for the local economy (as was for example the case in Mons, ECOC 2015) and overnight visitors increase on average by 12%. In Aarhus, the number of hotel bed-nights increased by 10.9% in 2017 compared to 2016.

The **"European Creative Hubs Network"** project, funded as a grant under Creative Europe's cross sectoral strand, has been implemented by DG EAC between Feb. 2016 - Feb. 2018). The aim of the project was to reinforce networks of creative hubs at EU level and enhance exchanges of experience and capacity-building to creative hub managers and cultural and creative professionals and entrepreneurs. A platform and a peer-to-peer mobility scheme have been developed, as well as publications and policy papers. Through empowering players to work cross-sectorally and tackle digitisation, these have a direct local impact at the city-level and contribute to wider societal challenges. The project also organised different peer-to-peer exchange schemes. For example, in 2016-2017, it supported the development and networking of 129 creative hubs across Europe and beyond as innovative models to support the creative economy and created a community. The European Creative Hubs Network has succeeded to become an independent network and continues with different activities.

The policy project **"Cultural and Creative Spaces and Cities"** (Creative Europe Cross-sectoral strand) started in November 2018 and will be implemented by DG EAC until March 2021. The project intends to provide support to cultural and creative spaces as well as other actors in particular at the local level. Also the wider context of creative hubs, cultural centres and the local context will be explored for a better use of public spaces for social regeneration through culture, better connecting urban development, social inclusion, job creation, skills development as well as innovation policies, creating a space for policy experimentation and support of new approaches and to test ideas on culture and the creative economy in the context of the collaborative economy. Cities and regional authorities will be actively involved in the project and a series of urban labs are going to be organised.

The **Module on Masters of Arts and Sciences**, funded under Creative Europe's cross-sectoral strand, addresses the significant skills gap which creative industries are experiencing at the inter-section of creativity and technology. To respond to this gap at European level, an interdisciplinary approach will be promoted in masters and university courses fostering cross-sectorial curricula combining technology with the arts to produce knowledgeable and creative workforces. Following a call for proposals, 4 projects have been selected and implementation started in mid-2018.

International cooperation

Through the participation of **third countries** in Creative Europe, DG EAC has strengthened EU cultural cooperation with the Western Balkans as well as the South and East Neighbourhood, contributing to foster cultural diversity at international level, and to support cultural and creative industries. Other parts of the world such as Asia (Japan, Korea, China) are also participating. Cooperation and communication with the EU Delegations is growing.

Two agreements have been signed for the participation of Armenia and Kosovo in Creative Europe, bringing the number of third countries joining the programme to thirteen. The participation of all six Western Balkans in Creative Europe allows for a strengthening of the EU-Western Balkans Strategy. The opening of a window for the Western Balkans in the Creative Europe programme has been identified as a deliverable of the Strategy itself. A Creative Europe Forum was organized in Belgrade in June with the Bulgarian Presidency and EU National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) Global to discuss new perspectives in EU-Western Balkans cultural relations.

European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018



DG EAC was in charge of the organisation of the **European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018**¹⁰⁰, the only European Year under the Juncker Commission. Its overall objective was to encourage the sharing and appreciation of Europe's cultural heritage, to raise awareness of common history and values, and to reinforce a sense of belonging to a common European space. The European year was an opportunity to underline the social and educational value of heritage, its economic significance, and its role in raising the profile of the EU in the world, as also highlighted in the December 2017 European Council Conclusions.

The **European Year of Cultural Heritage** was a wide-ranging and inclusive initiative involving all EU institutions¹⁰¹, all EU Member States¹⁰², nine partner countries¹⁰³ as well as a broad array of cultural stakeholders¹⁰⁴ and international organisations, the Council of Europe and UNESCO. There was a dedicated pan-European communication campaign. More than 13 000¹⁰⁵ events were held across Europe, and over 10 000 initiatives received the official label of the European Year of Cultural Heritage¹⁰⁶. It involved large and diverse audiences: dedicated activities had reached over 7.5 million people by the end of the third quarter of 2018. In addition, the 2018 European Heritage Days engaged up to 30 million people in over 60 000 events across Europe, raising their awareness of the European dimension of cultural heritage.

The European Commission made substantial funding available for cultural heritage projects across different EU funding programmes, encouraging people-centred, inclusive, and sustainable approaches. Promoting synergies with other sectorial EU policies was also a key feature of the European Year, and DG EAC coordinated the in-put of 12 other DGs.

In addition, DG EAC implemented 10 European initiatives aiming at investing in long-term actions to the benefit of cultural heritage. All of them produced policy documents. For example, Initiative 2 and Initiative 3 which focused on "**Heritage at school**" and on "**Youth for heritage**" led to the production of a report was produced in collaboration with the Erasmus+ programme, on ways in which cultural heritage can be integrated in educational curricula and exchanges. In addition, an **eTwinning book** was released, as well as a **toolkit for teachers** and an **educational game on cultural heritage**. The Year was also represented at the **European Youth Event 2018** in Strasbourg, which resulted in the report "**Speak up for Europe! 100 Ideas for a better future**"

¹⁰⁰ Image : ©European Union 2018

¹⁰¹ The European Parliament, The Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee mobilised their respective resources to contribute to the European Year of Cultural Heritage.

¹⁰² The European Year of Cultural Heritage was a decentralized initiative. In EU Member States it was implemented by National Coordinators designated by the relevant Ministries. Associated countries also appointed National Coordinators for this purpose.

¹⁰³ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Georgia, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland.

¹⁰⁴ <http://europeanheritagealliance.eu/>

¹⁰⁵ Figures from 2018 Q1, Q2 and Q3.

¹⁰⁶ The European Year of Cultural Heritage label (comprising a logo, a slogan and a hashtag) was available for activities, events and projects contributing to achieving one or more of the objectives of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage, as stated in Article 2 of Decision (EU) 2017/864.

In support of Initiative 4 on "**Heritage in transition**", the **Leeuwarden Declaration** on the adaptive re-use of built heritage was adopted, whereas the **Barcelona Declaration** on tourism and cultural heritage was released as part of Initiative 5, "Tourism and heritage". This Initiative also yielded a set of **recommendations for sustainable cultural tourism**, and a report on the connections between heritage and the **Natura 2000 network**.

Initiative 6 on "Cherishing heritage" resulted in a report on European quality principles for cultural heritage interventions. Initiative 7 on "Heritage at risk" produced a toolkit in cooperation with UNESCO for European judiciary and law enforcement officials on fighting the illicit trafficking of cultural property, a study on **safeguarding cultural heritage from man-made disasters**, and an overview of the European Union's **research and innovation strategies for a more resilient cultural heritage**.

Two Open Method of Coordination groups also produced reports as part of the Year's activities. One of these discussed **skills, training and knowledge transfer** in cultural heritage professions, and was part of Initiative 8 on "Heritage-related skills". The second report dealt with **participatory governance of cultural heritage**, and contributed to Initiative 9 on "Heritage for all". Finally, a report on **innovation in cultural heritage research** was published as part of Initiative 10 on "Science for heritage".

As a contribution to the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage substantial funding was made available for cultural heritage projects through **a specific call** under Creative Europe but also across different EU funding programmes, encouraging people-centred, inclusive, and sustainable approaches. The supported projects cover a wide range of topics, for example contemporary theatre and performing arts creation but also textile, culinary or crafting traditions or archaeology, tangible and intangible topics such as storytelling and journeys to our European roots, with an high awareness and identity building aspect.

Finally, on 05 December 2018, a **European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage** was published. It captures the Year's legacy by setting a common direction for heritage related activities at European level, primarily in EU policies and programmes. It contains over 60 actions which will be implemented in 2019 and 2020 by the Commission.

Relevant general objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment			
DG EAC Specific objective 4.0: To ensure an efficient and effective implementation of the programme		Related to spending programme Creative Europe	
Main outputs in 2018:			
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes			
Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved
Creative Europe 2019 WP	Adoption	Q3 2018	Q3 2018
Effective WP management	N° of grant agreements signed	2070 (total Creative Europe)(a) 190 (Culture Sub-programme) 45 (cross sectoral)	1902 (total Creative Europe ¹⁰⁷) (a) 195 (Culture Sub-programme) 45 (cross sectoral)
	N° of procurements signed	38 (total Creative Europe) (b) 25 (Culture sub-programme) 9 (Cross sectoral)	37 (total Creative Europe) (b) 19 (Culture sub-programme) 7 (Cross sectoral)
	Budget execution	100% (c)	100% (c)
Other important outputs			
Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved
Interim evaluation of Creative Europe	Adoption of the report	Q1 2018	Report adopted on 30/04/2018
Ex-post evaluation of the 2017 ECOC	Adoption of the report	Q4 2018	Ex-post external evaluation report finalized and published in December. Commission's Report adopted in April. ¹⁰⁸

(a) (b) Partly executed by DG CNECT (MEDIA sub-programme), reduced number of grants at MEDIA (c) EU28

Relevant general objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment			
Specific objective 4.1: To support the capacity of the European cultural and creative sectors to operate transnationally and internationally		Related to spending programme Creative Europe	
Main outputs in 2018:			
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes			
Output	Indicator (CULTURE Sub-Programme)	Target for 2018 ¹⁰⁹	Achieved
Development of training, education, skills, competences	N° of cooperation measures	35	31 ¹¹⁰
Providing capacity building (new business models,	N° of cooperation measures and networks	20	39

¹⁰⁷ The total number includes the results of the Sub-programmes MEDIA and Culture and of the Cross sectoral.

¹⁰⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1525096559278&uri=COM:2018:248:FIN>

¹⁰⁹ 2018 target have been updated to reflect those in the Creative Europe Programme Statement

¹¹⁰ In budgetary terms the objectives of the cooperation project scheme were attained: 100% of the budget was committed. The target expressed in number of projects can only be an estimate and the final result in might not match the target as no quotas are established per priority; beneficiaries are free to choose amongst the different main priorities and this year their preference favoured an increase of project aiming at capacity building and promotion measures to reach new audiences.

digitisation)			
Development of a structure for international professional development	N° of European platforms	7	15
Effective implementation of the Creative Europe 2018 Annual Work programme	N° of special actions launched, such as Prizes, ECOCs (European Heritage label) (In the special action output, the Melina Mercouri Prize (1,5 EUR Million) will be awarded each year to the European Capitals of Culture- ECOC)	15	4 ¹¹¹
2018 European year of Cultural Heritage	N° of cooperation measures (number of projects contracted)	20	29

Relevant general objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment

Specific objective 4.2: To support transnational policy cooperation in order to foster policy development, innovation, creativity, audience building and new business models

Related to spending programme
Creative Europe

Main outputs in 2018:

Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes

Output	Indicator	Target for 2018 ¹¹²	Achieved
Transnational policy cooperation and support	N° of Network of Creative Europe desks	28	39
Appointment of the experts	N° of studies, evaluations and policy analysis (includes also the subsidy for the European Audiovisual Observatory)	7	6
Events dedicated to policy development and EU Presidencies	Organisation of Conferences, seminars and policy dialogue	5	6
Staff Working Document on the evaluation of the European Agenda for Culture (2007-2017)	Adoption of the SWD	Q4 2018	Replaced by stakeholder and an online consultations (EU survey) in Q1 2018
Report on the implementation and relevance of the Work Plan for Culture 2015-2018	Adoption of the Report	Q2/Q3 2018	Commission report presented to Council Cultural Affairs Committee - June 2018

¹¹¹ The indicator has been adapted to reflect the emerging reality of the scheme. This figure now takes into account only the four prizes. The ECOC actions are now recorded in the Specific objective 4.4, under the indicator "Communication actions dedicated to Special actions".

¹¹² 2018 target has been updated to reflect those in the Creative Europe Programme Statement

Relevant general objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment

Specific objective 4.3: To strengthen the financial capacity of small and medium-sized enterprises and organisations in the cultural and creative sectors in a sustainable and balanced way across countries and sectors

Related to spending programme

Creative Europe

Main outputs in 2018:

Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes

Output	Indicator	Target for 2018	Achieved
Development of a Cultural and Creative Sectors Facility	Loans provided by banks to operators	1 198	630 ¹¹³

Relevant general objective 1: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment

Specific objective 4.4: To promote the transnational circulation of cultural and creative works and operators and reach new audiences in Europe and beyond, with a particular focus on children, young people, people with disabilities and under-represented groups

Related to spending programme

Creative Europe

Main outputs in 2018:

Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes

Output	Indicator (CULTURE Sub-Programme)	Target for 2018¹¹⁴	Achieved
Support to international touring	N° of cooperation measures	46	53 ¹¹⁵
Promotion measures to reach new audiences	N° of measures, such as those promoting audience building including networks	10	37
Effective implementation of the Creative Europe 2018 Annual WP	N° of European platforms, such as those fostering international careers	8	15
Effective implementation of the Creative Europe 2018 Annual WP	N° of literary translations and promotional support	60	61
Communication actions dedicated to Special actions	N° of Special actions, such as Prizes, ECOC, European Heritage label	14	3 ¹¹⁶

¹¹³ The development of the scheme depends on the establishment of national financial intermediaries. Limited CCS knowledge and capacity to deliver on guarantee requirements in financial intermediaries hinder market uptake, together with lack of political pressure and other available funding sources in some MS. Introduction of the capacity building services will contribute to a further ramp up of the implementation of the facility.

¹¹⁴ 2018 target have been updated to reflect those in the Creative Europe Programme Statement

¹¹⁵ In budgetary terms the objectives of the cooperation project scheme were attained: 100% of the budget was committed. The target expressed in number of projects can only be an estimate and the final result in might not match the target as no quotas are established per priority; beneficiaries are free to choose amongst the different main priorities and this year their preference favoured an increase of project aiming at capacity building and promotion measures to reach new audiences.

¹¹⁶ The legal base did not foresee a selection of European Heritage Label in 2018

F. Corporate activities

On behalf of the Commission, DG EAC manages **2 corporate activities** for the benefit of Commission services and other EU institutions or bodies: the **Library and e-Resources unit** and the **Traineeships office**.

Library and e-Resources unit

The **Library and e-Resources unit** aims to develop and deliver high-quality and innovative information services to support Commission staff in their evidence-based policy development and decision-making processes. In 2018, the Library consolidated its key position in the field of corporate information management, continued its modernisation process, and increased its internal efficiency. The unit met its objective effectively by making relevant collections and information services available to Commission staff (and external users). Library users have remained (very) satisfied with the services provided in 2018.

Throughout the year, and in addition to its traditional activities, the Commission Library and e-Resources unit has focused mainly on the implementation of its Action Plan for the period 2017 – 2020. The main actions foreseen for 2018 have been delivered according to schedule:

- 2018 has been the first operational year of the new, **cloud-based “Integrated Library Management System”**. The new system, which was purchased under the ‘Software as a Service’ model, offers a cost-efficient solution and has met the expectations, despite obvious limitations as to the extent to which the system can be adapted to the specific needs. The user-interface has been completely upgraded during the second half of the year;
- Thanks to the introduction – end November 2017 – of an electronic platform with more than 35 000 e-books **user-driven acquisition** has significantly improved in 2018. The subjects covered by the e-Platform include economics, law, health, natural and social sciences, environmental studies and technology. Users can also find **5 000 titles on languages and linguistics**, which were selected with the help of the EC Translation Service. Between January and December the e-books collection was **used more than 130 000 times** (number of successful section requests);
- After an extensive tender procedure, a new inter-institutional Framework Contract for the provision of serials was signed. It entered into force in December 2018;
- In order to keep its print collection ‘fit’ and relevant, the Library continued the weeding of its printed resource collection, both in Brussels and Luxembourg. In total, more than 40 000 items have been withdrawn from the Library Management System in 2018.

It was decided to put the development of a corporate App for Library Services on hold, as the Library would first like to pursue its efforts to further improve the access to its electronic resources (on-site and outside of the EC premises). The slight decrease in the number of searches in the search and discovery tool Find-eR (194 000 in 2018 against 210 000 in 2017) is linked to the fact that Library users go directly to the e-Books platform or download e-journals directly without going via Find-eR.

In 2018, the Library celebrated its 60th anniversary¹¹⁷: an internal information campaign



was launched to promote the Library' services, with a particular focus on online information sources and the new online tool 'e-Books on demand'. Activities included

lunchtime conferences of general interest for EC staff, conferences for specialised librarian audiences, hands on trainings, (book) presentations, articles on MyIntraComm and a photo competition to engage with staff. With the support of DG COMM, a video with user testimonials was produced and the first edition has been shared on EC MyIntraComm. In cooperation with OIB the Brussels Reading room was modernised, including a new presentation area

¹¹⁷ Image : ©European Union 2018

EC Traineeship Programme



The **EC Traineeship Programme**¹¹⁸ aims to attract the best and brightest from a variety of educational, social and geographical backgrounds to offer them a relevant learning experience on the EU, its policies and work methods.

To the purpose of **selecting trainees**, it:

- Shares information via web, social media and presentations
- Defines the rules and procedures for selection of trainees
- Organises and coordinates evaluations and checks of documents with the support of +/- 400 EC evaluators

To the purpose of **managing traineeships**, it:

- Provides IT-based file management of all trainees, including registration of data, payment and insurance
- Coordinates, informs and support local trainee coordinators in all DGs and services
- Organises events, training sessions and visits for trainees
- Coordinates and supports trainees in their activities

It also manages the budget and financial contracts for the programme on and has 14 Service Level Agreements with other agencies and services to organise traineeships on their behalf.

As from 2016, the Office is undertaking a **reform** introducing new activities together with other services to enhance its performance, making selections more smooth, increasing the learning and events on offer and to develop a new activity, namely for trainees as ambassadors after their traineeship. In parallel, DG EAC is revamping the existing **IT systems** to optimize the daily management of trainees' files. The migration to more effective IT systems is currently in its first phase. The Commission IT Board endorsed in September EAC's project charter for a migration to new IT tools for the second and third phase (for the registration and selection of candidates).

¹¹⁸ Image : ©European Union 2018

LIBRARY AND E-RESOURCES UNIT OF THE COMMISSION:

Relevant general objective 11: To provide university graduates with working experience within the European Public Administration and to prepare them for possible future cooperation with the European institutions, inside or outside the EU, through the traineeship programme

Specific objective 5.2: To develop and deliver high quality and innovative information services to support Commission staff in evidence-based policy development and decision making process

Main outputs in 2018:

- *Smooth functioning of the newly implemented Integrated Library Management System*
- *Upgrade of the user-interface*
- *Smooth functioning of the electronic platform allowing Demand Driven Acquisition (DDA)*

Other important outputs

Output	Indicator	Target	Achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation of the Library's search tool Find-eR. • Downloads from the Library's electronic collections. 	Number of searches run in Find-eR. Number of downloads from the Library's electronic collections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of searches in Find-eR: $\geq 220\ 000$. • Downloads from electronic collections: $\geq 210\ 000$. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of searches in Find-eR in 2018: 194 415. • Downloads from electronic collections in 2018: Number of full-text articles downloaded from e-journals: 315 098 Number of successful section requests from e-books: 139 946
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library collections, mostly composed of electronic periodicals, e-books and on-line versions of daily press. 	Percentage of acquisition budget spent on electronic information sources	Target (July 2020): 70% of all acquisitions are e-resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakdown 2018 budget: 75% e-resources, 25% print resources • Breakdown 2017 budget: 54% e-resources, 46% print resources.

TRAINEESHIPS OFFICE

Relevant general objective 11: To help achieve the overall political objectives, the Commission will effectively and efficiently manage and safeguard assets and resources, and attract and develop the best talents

Specific objective 5.1: To develop and deliver high quality and innovative information services to support Commission staff in evidence-based policy development and decision making processes

Main outputs in 2018:

- *Adoption of a new legal base*
- *Revising selection process (pilot phase)*
- *Launch of alumni activities*

Other important outputs

Output	Indicator	Target	Achievement
Organisation of pre-selections for the traineeship (information, online module, organisation/supporting EC evaluators, communication with candidates, VBB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>number of evaluations</i> • <i>number of appeals</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>40.000 evaluations per year</i> • <i>Less than 100 appeals</i> 	<p>50 232 evaluations were finalised in 2018.</p> <p>No formal appeals were filed. An estimated 30 applicants requested (and obtained) more detailed background elements on their rejection.</p>
Events and trainings for trainees Guidance and support to trainees, advisors and coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>satisfaction of trainees</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>at least 90% of trainees satisfied</i> 	<p>98.49 % of the trainees who responded to survey reported they would recommend the traineeship to a friend.</p>



2. ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROL

This section explains how the DG delivered the achievements described in the previous section. It is divided into two subsections.

The first subsection reports the control results and all other relevant information that support management's assurance on the achievement of the financial management and internal control objectives¹⁰. It includes any additional information necessary to establish that the available evidence is reliable, complete and comprehensive; appropriately covering all activities, programmes and management modes relevant to the DG.

The second subsection deals with the other components of organisational management: human resources, better regulation principles, information management and external communication.

2.1 Financial management and internal control

Assurance is an objective examination of evidence for the purpose of providing an assessment of the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.

This examination is carried out by management, who monitors the functioning of the internal control systems on a continuous basis, and by internal and external auditors. Its results are explicitly documented and reported to the Director-General.

The reports produced are:

- the reports by AOSDs;
- the reports on exceptions and non-compliance events;
- the reports from Authorising Officers in other DGs managing budget appropriations in cross-delegation;
- the reports on control results from entrusted entities in indirect management as well as the result of the Commission supervisory controls on the activities of these bodies;
- the contribution of the Director in charge of risk management and internal control, including the results of internal control monitoring at the DG level;
- the reports of the ex-post supervision or audit;
- the limited conclusion of the internal auditor on the state of control, and the observations and recommendations reported by the Internal Audit Service (IAS);
- the observations and the recommendations reported by the European Court of Auditors (ECA);
- the report issued by DG BUDG on the validation of local systems in DG Education and Culture.

These reports result from a **systematic analysis of the evidence** available. This approach provides sufficient guarantees as to the completeness and reliability of the information reported and results in a complete coverage of the budget delegated to the Director-General of DG EAC.

Because of the nature of the targeted final beneficiaries who are mostly individuals, the implementation of the DG EAC programmes requires a specific combination of accurate implementation with user friendliness and simplicity.

The **management and control systems** have been designed taking into account the inherent characteristics of DG EAC programmes, including the need for large scale externalisation. In order to counter the potential risks, DG EAC has strengthened the management and control structures of the programmes by the introduction of an integrated control framework, where DG EAC controls build upon controls performed by DG EAC partners in the implementation of the programmes.

In terms of **governance within DG EAC**, the Director-General retains overall responsibility for the management and actions of the DG; key decisions are taken after consulting the Director's Board (DB), composed of the Director General, the Deputy Director General and the Directors of DG EAC and EACEA. As the main senior management discussion body, it ensures coherence and promotes a collegial approach. The DB is supported in the decision making on budget, finance, assurance, internal control, IT and HR matters by a Directors Steering Committee (DSC), composed of the Directors of DG EAC and EACEA, and chaired by the Director of Resources. Key management indicators are reported to senior management in a consolidated manner in a monthly Dashboard. This enables management to monitor where the achievement of management objectives is at risk.

The majority of financial transactions under the Commission's direct management in the EAC "domain" are delegated directly by the Commission to the Executive Agencies. The DG has **a centralised financial circuit** (except for the Central Library), including in relation to the management costs of the National Agencies. Financial initiation and verification tasks have been centralised in a single financial cell in order to concentrate financial expertise and to benefit from economies of scale.

The assurance methodology retains the approach of the previous AAR and the <u>results obtained are consistent with those achieved in prior years.</u>

This section reports the control results and other relevant elements that support management's assurance. It is structured into:

- a) Control results,
- b) Audit observations and recommendations,
- c) Effectiveness of the internal control system, and resulting in
- d) Conclusions on the impact as regards assurance.

2.1.1 Control results

This section reports and assesses the elements identified by management that support the assurance on the achievement of the internal control objectives¹¹⁹. The DG's assurance building and materiality criteria are outlined in the AAR Annex 4. Annex 5 outlines the main risks together with the control processes aimed to mitigate them and the indicators used to measure the performance of the relevant control systems.

See below for an overview of the **various kinds of payment appropriations** executed by DG EAC¹²⁰:

Indicative only

Payments 2018	Direct	Entrusted	Proportion
EACEA	-	45.946.026	1,73%
EIT	-	345.176.976	13,02%
Erasmus+ handled by National Agencies	-	2.138.196.680	80,68%
European Solidarity Corps handled by National Agencies	-	38.677.252	1,46%
LLP (2007-13) handled by National Agencies	-	-	0,00%
Youth in Action (2007-13) handled by National Agencies	-	-	0,00%
Creative Europe	9.820.019	-	0,37%
Former Culture and Media programmes (2007-13)	-	-	0,00%
Traineeships	7.802.734	-	0,29%
Library	2.496.306	-	0,09%
MSCA and H2020 & FP7	3.351.375	4.900.000,00	0,31%
Erasmus+ direct	38.701.195	-	1,46%
European Solidarity Corps direct	290.153	-	0,01%
LLP and YiA (2007-13) direct	0	-	0,00%
Pilot projects	9.303.568	-	0,35%
House of European History managed by European Parliament	-	3.000.000	0,11%
Other	2.535.274	-	0,10%
Total (includes EFTA, R0, etc.)	74.300.624	2.575.896.934	2.650.197.558
	3%	97%	100,00%

The objectives, indicators and assessments in this section cover all significant expenditure and revenue, financial instruments or other significant¹²¹ non-expenditure items¹²², and the overall conclusion (table below) demonstrates the completeness of the coverage by presenting the available main indicators per distinct control system.

¹¹⁹ Effectiveness, efficiency and economy of operations; reliability of reporting; safeguarding of assets and information; prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities; and adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, taking into account the multiannual character of programmes as well as the nature of the payments (FR Art 32).

¹²⁰ Appropriations under direct management for Erasmus+ and Creative Europe implemented by EACEA and REA are delegated directly by the College to the Directors of these Executive Agencies

¹²¹ i.e. having a value of more than 10% compared to the total annual expenditure as per the AAR Annex 3 Table 2.

¹²² These include revenue operations (e.g. assigned revenue, fines, interest); assets (e.g. (in)tangible or financial assets, inventories, accounts receivable, treasury) and liabilities (e.g. guarantees offered, sickness and pensions schemes). These are covered in the AAR Annex 3 Tables 4, 5-bis, 7.

Control objective	Result
Control effectiveness as regards legality and regularity	Controls are effective as regards legality and regularity; supervisory controls are effective as regards entrusted bodies; Multiannual residual error rate for the implementation through NAs of 1% or less for the 2014-20 Erasmus+ programme;
Other control objectives: - safeguarding of assets and information, reliability of reporting	- Entrusted funds appropriately safeguarded; - Accounting and reporting is reliable; - Budget execution in line with targets and close to 100%.
- Fraud prevention and detection	Suspected irregularities or fraud and ongoing investigations of OLAF had no impact on the assurance over the reporting period;
Efficiency and Cost-effectiveness	Overall, the DG EAC (including entrusted bodies) cost of control under the revised approach specified by central services is estimated to be approximately 8,2%. Costs of control are proportional and cost effective;

2.1.1.1 Effectiveness

2.1.1.1.1 Legality and regularity of the transactions

DG EAC has set up internal control processes aimed to ensure the adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, taking into account the multiannual character of programmes as well as the nature of the payments concerned.

Regarding the **legality and regularity** of the underlying transactions, the **key control objective** is to ensure that the multi-annual¹²³ residual error rate does not exceed 2% in any management mode¹²⁴.

In order to protect the financial interests of the Union, DG EAC has also set up a **robust and proportionate legal framework throughout the expenditure cycle**, including the prevention, detection and investigation of irregularities, the recovery of funds lost, wrongly paid or incorrectly used and, where appropriate, penalties.

¹²³ DG EAC assesses legality and regularity over each financial perspective, 2014-20 previously 2007-13 (now complete and therefore not presented).

¹²⁴ The residual risk of error is estimated by the residual error rate obtained from an examination of a representative sample of transactions less any corrections made resulting from the supervisory and control systems in place. DG Education, Culture, Youth and Sports aims to recover amounts due as a result of ex-post audits within 12 months from the completion of the audit, although these amounts are not normally material in the context of the budget as a whole.

A. Supervision of Erasmus+ handled by National Agencies

DG EAC's main spending activity is the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme 2014-20 (see section "DG in brief") and the legacy of the predecessor programmes Lifelong Learning Programme and Youth in Action through the National Agencies. Appropriations managed account for 81% of executed payments in 2018. Contribution to NA management costs by the Commission totalled € 93 million in 2018.

Governance

As a consequence of the multi-annual character of the projects and programmes, the underlying transactions treated by each control stage and reflected in the multi-annual residual error rates cover **the entire period of the current programme 2014-20 to date**. The supervisory and control framework and annual declarations pertain to the new programme, whereas some *ex post* concrete transaction testing relates also to the prior period 2007-13.

Transactions covered by financial audits in particular have to follow a consecutive cycle whereby multi-annual transactions must be closed before the stages of random selection, contracting of audits, audit fieldwork and finalisation of audit results can be completed and included in a given year AAR.

This means the building blocks used to provide assurance derive from different periods, with the assessment of the systems relating to Erasmus+ while the financial audits and reported multi-annual residual error rates mainly relate to the predecessor programmes.

As the inherent risk of error in each programme is relatively stable, this approach does not put into question the relevance of these results for the assurance given in the AAR.

Under Erasmus+, DG EAC operates an integrated **control system for management through 57 National Agencies (NAs)**, under the supervision of the National Authorities (NAUs) of the participating countries¹²⁵, as well as Independent Audit Bodies¹²⁶.

The primary level of controls on beneficiaries is executed by the National Agencies, who also carry out more in depth *ex post* and on-the-spot controls. The secondary level of controls is carried out by Independent Audit Bodies (IABs) as well as National Authorities (NAUs). Independent Audit Bodies provide an opinion on the control systems of the NAs.

DG EAC's supervisory controls aim (a) to obtain quantifiable error reporting through externalised financial audits and (b) to review the national control systems (primary and secondary controls)¹²⁷. In addition, DG EAC received *ex ante* formal assurance from the National Authorities on the proper functioning of the control system of the National Agencies.

The structures in place to enable reporting under the Erasmus+ legal base are covered in Annex 5.

¹²⁵ See annex 5 for more details on this management mode (also including details of the approach for the 2014-20 programme) and annex 6 for the list of National Agencies and corresponding amounts of appropriations managed.

¹²⁶ In line with the structure of indirect management in the Financial Regulation additional assurance is provided by an audit body functionally independent from the entrusted entity.

¹²⁷ See Annex 5 for a detailed description of this management mode.

Building blocks

All individual management opinions for National Agencies are summarised yearly in overall management opinions by programme¹²⁸. The information was deemed reliable after additional information and clarifications were obtained in the context of the annual reports by National Authorities, received in the last quarter of the year.

The 2017 **NA Management Declarations and NA reports** confirmed in 2018 a **satisfactory level of quality and relevance**. 100% of all NA Declarations and Reports were received by 7 March 2018. This is a slight improvement compared to the previous reporting period 2017 where the last report was received by 25 March 2017.

47 out of 57 NAs (82%) had submitted their yearly report by the legal deadline of 15 February 2018 (whereas 38 out of 58 NAs (66%) in the previous year).

In line with last year, **Independent Audit Opinions** have generally been **adequate** to support the assurance given, using the template provided by the Commission for the audit opinion, with no exceptions. DG EAC's supervision focused on ensuring transparent information was given on sampling coverage and the nature of the work carried out.

As regards supervisory controls, DG EAC has conducted a number of **financial ex-post audits and supervisory visits**¹²⁹.

As a result of the above, DG EAC considers it has a sufficiently complete knowledge of the way in which its programmes are implemented by NAs. The management information reported by the NAUs and NAs for the year 2017, which was received in 2018, is sufficient to draw full assurance conclusions, with some minor exceptions (see below).

Key control results for assurance on National Agencies

The key supervision and control results for assurance in 2018 are:

- **the primary controls by National Agencies,**
- **secondary controls by National Authorities and IAB (for Erasmus+),**
- **the "ADEC" financial audits performed by external auditors,**
- **supervisory visits carried out by DG EAC.**

A. Primary and secondary control results

Due to the reporting cycle of NAs, the error which can be reported in a given year's AAR is composed of data drawn from reports received during the reference year which cover control results relating to the year before. Therefore for AAR 2018, **control results obtained in 2014-2018 and reported in up to 2019 are used to calculate the error rate**.

For Erasmus+, data on primary checks is reported by NAs within the Epluslink reporting tool. On the basis of 7.843 closed random checks, 1.043 resulted in modification of the grant amount, with an overall error rate indicated of less than 1%.

DG EAC performs a yearly data quality review of the primary checks, to ensure NAs properly review and encode the checks in the context of their Yearly Management Declarations. The errors recorded indicate that **the inherent and control risks for**

¹²⁸The IT tool NA Lifecard facilitates follow-up all recommendations from the Management declarations and audit opinions.

¹²⁹In 2018, **11 supervisory visits** were carried out in **9 countries** (BE-nl EDU, BE-nl Youth, EL EDU, HR all fields, NL Youth, RO all fields, SI Youth, LI all fields, RS all fields, FR Youth), at both National Authority and National Agency level. 3 National Agencies covered all fields, another 3 covered only the Education and Training fields and 5 covered only the youth field.

Erasmus+ are low, resulting in a corresponding overall low error rate in the context of the extensive use of lump sums, flat rates, and scales of unit costs.

B. Supervisory control results (review of annual reporting and supervisory visits)

As regards the **supervisory review** of the submissions made to DG EAC by the National Agencies and National Authorities, the indicator set on the number of National Authorities and National Agencies with at least one outstanding **critical or very important recommendation** showed overall comparable results with regard to the previous reporting (end 2017).

Compared to the situation of end 2017, at the end of 2018 there has been a very slight increase in the number of concerned NAUs/NAAs (from 17 to 19) in the key control areas affected (decreasing from 5 to 4, being IAB related issues, monitoring and supervision activities by National Authorities, checks of grant beneficiaries and management supervision).

The slight increase of open 'very important' recommendations is first of all the case in the field of monitoring and supervision activities by National Authorities (3 National Authorities). This can be explained by the fact that the National Authorities in general do not sufficiently review whether the IAB audit report meets the minimum content requirements.

Secondly, the slight increase of open 'very important' observations is in the field of NA related various issues, mainly checks of grant beneficiaries (11 National Agencies), due to a limited number of various weaknesses.

A risk-based supervisory visit was made in 2018 to an NA competent in the field of Youth for following up several critical and very important observations addressed to the National Agency. The issues were not yet solved at year end but the NA made progress. There was only partial assurance for this NA at year end.

An opinion of full assurance could not be given in 2018 for the Youth agency in France (partial assurance representing 0.41% of multi-annual entrusted amounts). The Commission in cooperation with the NAU ensure continued **reinforced monitoring on this Agency** to ensure appropriate measures are taken to achieve full assurance.

All 56 remaining agencies are considered to have given reasonable assurance. **DG EAC methodology for defining the materiality criteria**¹³⁰, foresees the application of the following error rates for the different groups of NAs, which were identified in particular on the basis of the reporting by Authorising Officers by sub-delegation on the use of resources¹³¹.

Management costs of the National Agencies have been reviewed by the IABs and no issues of legality and regularity were detected.

Assurance level	Number of NAs/NAU concerned	%Error attributed by methodology
NAs/NAUs with no assurance:	0	20%
NAs/NAUs with partial assurance:	1	5%

¹³⁰See Annex 4 on materiality criteria.

¹³¹For the multi-annual approach, NAs that were considered lacking reasonable assurance in the past are only included in the calculation of this year's error rate if the observed past weaknesses have not been corrected yet.

NAs/NAUs with reasonable assurance: combined multi-annual residual error rate detected in financial audits and primary controls by NAs	56	0,747%
--	----	--------

In terms of the contribution to the residual error rate, 0,0205% relates to the multiannual effect of NAs with partial or no assurance.

C. ADEC audits by external auditors

The results of the **supervisory controls** by DG EAC, which consist of "ADEC" financial audits carried out at EU level as mentioned above showed a low level of error at the level of the National Agencies. Approached from a multi-annual perspective¹³² and taking into account the impact of recoveries, the results show a modest 2014-2018 detected error rate of 0.18%.

The coverage of the residual error rates observed by the financial (so-called ADEC) audits of NAs and by the NAs' primary controls is complementary and there is little overlap between the two. While NA primary controls are designed to detect errors from beneficiaries that were not detected by the *ex ante* control system in the NA, financial audits focus on errors made by the NA (both *ex ante* and *ex post*)¹³³. It has therefore been decided to add both error rates when calculating the residual error rate under indirect management through NAs. The resulting **combined multi-annual residual error rate**¹³⁴ observed from controls and audits is 0,76% (0,79% in AAR 2017)¹³⁵.

The Director responsible for the implementation of the Erasmus+ programmes has issued an opinion that National Authorities and National Agencies have put in place appropriate management and control systems and that they **function effectively** so as to give **reasonable assurance on the legality and regularity of the underlying operations, with partial assurance for one agency (Youth, France)**.

In October 2018 the new **European Solidarity Corps** programme was launched. It is implemented by Youth NAs. The funds available for grant support for 2018 for Youth NAs amounted € 53.615.828. These funds are excluded for the calculation of the aggregate error because they have not yet been subject to any audit in 2018 (no spending in 2018).

Management's factual conclusion on the control results:

- The aggregate 2014-2018 residual error rate for the implementation through NAs is estimated to be 0,76% (0,79% over 2011-2017).
- As this is below the 2% threshold, there is **no need to make a reservation for this management mode**.

¹³² 84 audits over 2013-18 have covered all but 2 of the currently functioning NAs (which have nevertheless been subject to supervisory visits in 2017-18)

¹³³ While NA primary controls may also detect errors made by the NA (which would constitute an overlap with ADEC audits) this is not their primary objective and the number of cases can be assumed to be limited.

¹³⁴ Error rate combining the errors for the programme as a whole since its beginning, reduced by the amounts of recoveries enabled by the audit process.

¹³⁵ Although recoveries are made following audits of NAs, there is no material effect on the error rate on a multiannual basis so the residual and gross error rate are effectively the same. The error rate combining the results of financial audits and primary *ex post* controls is calculated combining the relative weights of the Youth budget versus the other parts of Erasmus+, due to the different risk profiles.

Benefits of control (NAs)

Quantified benefits include: errors detected *ex ante*, cost claimed but not accepted, financial corrections and recoveries made based on outcome of *ex post* controls, Court cases (with damages claims) won. Examples of unquantified benefits are reduced risk of fraud, deterrent effect of controls, prevention of conflict of interests, favourable auditor's opinion on reporting/accounting, unqualified discharge and avoiding reputational damage.

As regards benefits of controls, at present, a quantitative estimation of the total volume of errors detected and prevented is available, and is estimated to be as follows for each year of Delegation or the NAs:

EP034 Final report checks (<i>ex ante</i>)		
Year	Rate	Number of checks = population
2014	-0,36%	19.701
2015	-0,44%	20.625
2016	-0,29%	17.629

An average of 0,37% or €9,8m were corrected via *ex ante* controls carried out in the period 2014-18. The amounts recovered as a result of *ex post* controls are further quantifiable benefits (€0,04m in 2018, €0.4m in 2017). For further quantifiable benefits, this could be estimated using the hypothetical "no control" scenario, which would involve estimating the error which would result if all controls were taken away. A very prudent estimation, based on published research, is that an error rate in excess of 15% would be the minimum if the Commission or its intermediaries performed no controls at any stage. This in a general way shows that the control framework in place does not cost more than it "saves" in total.

Quantifiable benefits alone do not present the true situation with regard to the cost-effectiveness of controls. Non-quantifiable benefits resulting from deterrent effects of controls, the implementation of a sound management and control system, the positive reputational effect in the context of a substantial increase in the budget granted to DG EAC with the 2014-2020 Multi-annual Financial Framework, have to be taken into account to reach an informed conclusion as to the relative cost-effectiveness of the controls. Lastly, DG EAC makes extensive use of the management information provided by its systems to demonstrate the outputs of its programmes with respect to the different target groups, which is a highly important intangible benefit for the feedback to policy improvements and adjustments to the programmes.

Regarding the possibility foreseen in Financial Regulation art 66.2 to differentiate the frequency and/or the intensity of the DG's controls in view of the different risk-profiles among its current and future transactions: The current control framework is based on a single audit approach. The controls of entrusted bodies incorporate appropriate adaptation of in proportion to the associated risks while enabling an overall representative assessment of assurance on an annual basis. In addition, DG EAC has taken steps to rebalance controls in the 2019-20 period to ensure a greater emphasis on risky areas, given that a substantial sample has now been randomly sampled to support the overall estimation of inherent risk in the population.

B. Supervision of the Education Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)

DG EAC is the main parent DG of EACEA and has entrusted the Agency with the management of parts of Erasmus+, European Solidarity Corps and Creative Europe. As a

consequence, DG EAC chairs of the Steering Committee of the agency with the other parent DGs and has a supervision role over the agency.

This supervisory role is defined in several legal documents and guidance (the Commission Delegation Act to EACEA, the Memorandum of Understanding between the DGs and the agency, the Commission Guidelines on Executive Agencies, etc.). In addition all the executive agencies participate in horizontal governance processes, such as the peer review of critical risks.

The parent DGs' supervision of the work of the Executive Agencies shall not blur the respective responsibilities and, in particular, it shall not result in duplication or overlap with the tasks of the agency.¹³⁶

DG EAC took part in a community of practice in 2018 following the IAS audit on the grant management systems in EACEA in 2017, led by the central services on supervision of EA ("*Supervision of executive agencies by parent DGs - identifying lessons learned and improvements to current practice*"). In addition, DG EAC has been carrying out a reinforced supervision plan as outlined below.

Extensive actions have been taken by DG EAC as parent DG throughout 2018 and early 2019 to ensure reinforced supervision and that the weaknesses are effectively rectified by the Agency:

- **Attendance as observer at every weekly management meeting of EACEA;**
- **Requiring EACEA to provide reinforced reporting to the parent DGs and Steering Committee on implementation and internal control matters, with a monthly report covering:**
 - Calls carried out with examples of consolidated assessments and award decisions available (e.g. via intranet);
 - Contracts signed, exceptions or other issues identified;
 - Monitoring visits carried out, issues identified;
 - Project finalisation, deliverables and performance;
 - Audits carried out, typology of key findings;
 - Resource and organisational issues;
- **Participation in meetings between the IAS and EACEA;**
- **Examination of best practice in other Executive Agencies, participation in the two "communities of practice" coordinated by DG BUDG;**
- **Reinforced participation of parent DGs as members of the selection committees of the Agency.**

This has ensured a **close follow-up of the critical issues and close supervision** has been maintained throughout the current implementation of EACEA's action plan agreed with IAS. **EACEA has been effective in implementing the actions** according to the agreed timetable.

The IAS performed two audits¹³⁷ in 2017 and 2018 on the Agency's grant management. The audits concluded that there were weaknesses in the systems and issued two critical and several very important recommendations. The residual risks related to these recommendations may affect one or several control principles and/or components. As a result of the 2018 audit, the IAS contribution to the 2018 Annual Activity Report process states that the internal control systems in place for the audited processes of the Agency are overall not effective.

¹³⁶ Decision C(2014) 9109 of 2 December 2014 establishing guidelines for the establishment and operation of executive agencies financed by the general budget of the Union.

¹³⁷ Audit of Erasmus+ and Creative Europe grant management – phase I (from the call to the signature of contracts) and phase II (from project monitoring to payment),

In the meantime, these issues are being addressed through the implementation by the Agency of the recommendations stemming from the phase II audit, in accordance with the action plan that has been submitted and assessed as satisfactory by the IAS. The mitigating actions put in place by EACEA for phase II include the following:

- Better reporting from the AOSDs to the AOD including the key building blocks which support the declaration of assurance on internal control;
- Development of an improved register of exceptions and non-compliances;
- Strengthened procedure for handling exceptions and non-compliance events;
- Provision of training on implementing the internal control framework and on exceptions and non-compliances in particular in collaboration with central services.

As a result of the actions put in place by the Agency in 2018 and 2019 to respond to the audit recommendations, the IAS has closed all the recommendations from the phase I audit and downgraded the critical recommendation from the phase II audit to 'very important'.

In addition, the new Director of the Agency is planning significant changes in the Agency to further improve the situation. In particular, a structural reorganisation of the Agency is planned that should take effect in the second half of 2019. This will also put EACEA on a sound basis for the next Multiannual Financial Framework. The Director of EACEA has accordingly made a reservation in EACEA's AAR 2018 for Internal Control Component III "Control Activities" and partially for Component V "Monitoring Activities".

Assessment

Overall, DG EAC considers that its supervision of the Executive Agency, whose Authorising Officer receives delegation directly from the Commission, has been effective and sufficient in 2018.

All the reports foreseen in the Memorandum of understanding between EACEA and its parent DGs as well as the reinforced measures were provided and enabled DG EAC to closely monitor the implementation of Erasmus+ and Creative Europe.

Therefore no reservation is required by the parent DGs.

Reservation on predecessor programmes in EACEA's AAR

In the context of its own AAR, **EACEA has maintained its reservations on the predecessor programmes**, where the use of an actual cost approach makes the inherent risk of error high, and which has been addressed at the level of programme design for the 2014-20 period by the introduction of scales of unit costs, lump sums and flat rates. Initial data on error rates for Erasmus+ and Creative Europe are encouraging though insufficient in size to be representative.

The errors concerning the predecessor programmes relate mainly to the difficulties encountered by some beneficiaries in producing adequate justifying documents and the non-respect of some eligibility rules under the criteria of reimbursement of actual costs. All errors identified were recovered.

In its Annual Activity Report (AAR) 2018, **EACEA maintained its reservation** on the management of the **(2007-2013)** Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP), Tempus and Culture programmes because of the occurrence of significant errors in the underlying transactions found through ex post controls by external auditors¹³⁸.

¹³⁸See EACEA AAR based its own error rates on the results of approximately 120 ex post audits per year.

Reservations have been made due, among other factors, to the effect of specific closed audits with a particularly high error rate, bringing the detected error rate above 2%. As this situation has been presented transparently in EACEA AAR based on their consultation with the central services, **no reservation is required by DG EAC in this case as regards its supervisory role as parent DG.**

The Agency had continued to implement the **action plan adopted in response to the reservations made**, and had also decided to implement additional actions, with the aim of improving the desk control strategy on on-going projects and having an impact on the LLP error rate at a shorter term. While these actions are expected to result in some reduction in errors, a more sustained improvement is only foreseen in the period 2014-2020 via the switch from cost-based grants to grants based on lump sums or flat rates under the future Erasmus+ programme.

The **difference in error rates experienced by EACEA for LLP and Youth in Action compared with the NAs** can be explained by the nature of the actions. While the latter mainly deal with European-wide cooperation projects for which the coordinator is responsible for financial management, the NAs mainly deal with individual mobility, smaller partnerships and some cooperation projects; these are simpler in nature and make greater use of lumps sums.

Key indicators of EACEA have either met or surpassed target over the last four years. In terms of the subsidy paid by DG EAC (€46 million including contributions from DG NEAR managed by DG EAC), the EA has justified its use and any unused appropriations have been recovered by the parent Directorates-General.

On the budget lines for the EACEA subsidy, no specific difficulties were encountered and no weaknesses are to be reported.

For the management of *operational* appropriations, EACEA has maintained a reservation on the LLP programme 2007-2013, Tempus programme 2007-13 and for the Culture programme 2007-2013 under its multi-annual calculation of the error rate.

C. Supervision of the Research Executive Agency (REA)

Control results

DG EAC is **one of the parent Directorates-General** of the **Research Executive Agency (REA)**, which is responsible for implementing the major part of the Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions (MSCA), DG Research and Innovation being the lead parent DG for REA. The payments delegated to REA for MSCA (€ 823,3 million in 2017), represents 46,6% of REAs financial activity.

No issues are noted regarding DG EAC's contribution to REA's operating costs, which has received a consistently positive opinion from the European Court of Auditors.

In its AAR 2018, **REA has not made a reservation regarding the MSCA part of the H2020 Programme supervised by DG EAC**, based on specific audits for this low-risk segment. Only 92 audited MSCA participations have been finalised with an actual local representative error rate of only 0,05%. Many audits from the representative sample have not yet been completed and therefore the representative error rate is expected to increase further when additional audit findings become available. For the purpose of the assurance building, REA will refer to the last-known FP7 specific detected error rate of 1,73 %, considered as still reliable, until more MSCA representative audits will be closed. The development of the error rate of the MSCA, insofar as it shows a lower impact due to the different nature of its regularity risk compared to H2020 as a whole, is based on representative audits¹³⁹. The 1,73% based on the rate for the People programme in AAR

¹³⁹ See REA's AAR.

2017 on projects audited *ex post* under the representative strand for the MSCA is estimated to have a budgetary impact¹⁴⁰ of 1,55% based on the rate for People in 2017. Given the low number of audit findings, this error rate cannot be regarded as a statistically reliable estimate but corroborates the assessment of a low risk level of legality and regularity errors inherent to the People programme. The financing modalities for researchers mobility grants are based on an extensive use of unit costs and remain much simpler compared to other parts of H2020. The impact, in terms of ineligible, EU funding of the main type of error (i.e. underpayment of researchers) remains relatively low. The Director of REA confirms that he has reasonable assurance on the proper use of resources and that the available control procedures provide the necessary guarantees on the legality and regularity of underlying transactions for the programme managed for DG EAC.

Based on the regular reporting and monitoring activities carried out during the period, supervision of REA appears effective for the elements relevant to DG EAC. No reservation is required given that there is no weakness in terms of EAC's supervision responsibilities.

No reservation is required on MSCA for 2018. As regards DG EAC's specific participation, REA's 2018 Annual Activity Report showed **no reservation on the MSCA**. This is due to the favourable design of the grant scheme, with greater use of flat rates and unit costs making errors less likely. For this AAR of **DG EAC**, **no financial or reputational reservation** is required.

D. Supervision of the European Investment Fund

Governance

At the end of 2014, DG EAC signed the Delegation Act with the European Investment Fund (EIF) as foreseen in the Erasmus+ legal base, for the implementation of the Student Loan Guarantee Fund. The scheme became operational in June 2015. Administrative and incentive fees have been paid to the EIF during 2018 concerning the signature of guarantee agreements with financial intermediaries. With a cap at 90% for an individual loan and at 18% of the total portfolio volume, the EU risk is limited to 16% of the total loan amount. Guarantee payments to the Financial Intermediaries (due to defaults by students) have been quite limited so far.

The supervision framework with respect to the EIF is governed by a Financial Administrative Framework Agreement common to all instruments and a Delegation Agreement based on a template provided by central services which DG EAC has applied with no major derogations. DG EAC exercises its supervisory and operational control via the Steering Committee for the instrument, as well as through EIF's internal control framework supplemented by a number of 'Agreed Upon Procedures' (checks carried out by an external auditor).

Building blocks

The reporting assurance is reinforced under the indirect management mode with an annual declaration of assurance, including on the results of monitoring and control of Financial Intermediaries, and an Independent Audit Opinion. DG EAC has agreed modalities for the reporting of the independent audit body using agreed-upon-procedures. Asset management is outlined in the "safeguarding of assets" section below.

Control, supervisory and audit results

¹⁴⁰ The difference between the gross error rate and the budgetary impact is due to the fact that some negative adjustments detected through an audit relate to the (e.g. annual) reporting period, but will not have a budgetary impact on the (multi-annual) project because the eligible costs and financial contribution are normally corrected at the final payment stage.

The agreed-upon-procedures report was received from the EIF's external auditor in accordance with the Delegation Agreement on 15 March 2018. No issues were noted as a result of the procedures carried out. 2 Monitoring Visits were carried out by the EIF revealed that implementation by one financial intermediary encountered a number of issues, which contributed to BPCE's discontinuing its SLGF participation. No other issues were identified during 2018.

Due to the currently low financial exposure (no payments were due to the EIF in 2018), **DG EAC does not consider there is any significant assurance risk for EIF** relating to 2018 or arising from its supervisory activities as member of the Steering Committee and designated service for the instrument during the year.

E. Supervision of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology

The executed payments made by DG EAC to the EIT in 2018 represent 13% of the total, or €345 million, of which €6.4 million is the operating budget of the EIT itself.

Governance

The **Governing Board of the EIT** is entrusted with the role of strategic leadership and the overall direction of the operational activities implemented by the EIT Headquarters. It is independent and autonomous in its decision-making and is responsible for the selection, evaluation and support of the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs). The Executive Committee supports the activities of the Governing Board (GB) by overseeing the implementation of its strategic decisions. It consists of the EIT Governing Board Chairperson and three appointed Governing Board Members.

In accordance with the EIT Regulation, the European Commission has appointed an **observer from DG EAC** to take part in the meetings of the **Governing Board** and of the Executive Committee.

DG EAC as partner DG **supervises EIT's operational and administrative activities**, as defined in the relevant regulations and via Memoranda of Understanding and Working Arrangements.

Building Blocks

The EIT is responsible for the **primary and secondary controls on KICs activity**. The EIT's primary controls consist of performance assessment and administrative controls which are augmented by audit certification on the major items of expenditure in accordance with the Horizon 2020 methodology. *Ex post* audits after payment are performed on a representative and risk basis.

In addition to these building blocks, the EIT also maintains an **in-house internal audit capability** to provide recommendations to improve sound financial management.

EIT was granted **full financial autonomy as of 1st of January 2018**, and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) including provisions on reporting, monitoring and supervision, has been developed during 2018.

External to the EIT, the IAS is its internal auditor as defined in the framework financial regulation¹⁴¹. The European Court of Auditors is the external auditor in the context of the EIT's annual discharge, covering the entire budget of operational and administrative appropriations, and also provides recommendations via special reports. They are therefore valuable inputs for DG EAC in evaluating the performance of the EIT.

¹⁴¹ OJ L 328, 7.12.2013, p. 42–68

Control, supervisory and audit results

The procedure for the **selection of a new EIT Director** is still ongoing, due to the fact that the recruitment was relaunched after a first unsuccessful process.

As with Executive Agencies, DG EAC does not carry out direct audits or controls on the EIT or the KICs, but is able to carry out supervisory and monitoring visits in the context of its new MoU.

The **control results of the EIT's ex post audits showed a detected and residual error rate below 2%** (0,98%%, residual 0,95%)¹⁴², with no reservation being necessary in EIT's 2017 AAR. The Declaration of Assurance given by the European Court of Auditors for 2017 indicates that the EIT's accounts were true and fair and that the underlying transactions were legal and regular with no qualifications.

Nevertheless, and without qualifying their opinion, the Court included an "other matter" paragraph, in relation to handling amendment requests to the specific grant agreements (SGAs), an issue which has since been rectified in the approach to the reimbursement rate in subsequent years.

Benefits of control (EIT)

As reported in its annual activity report, the EIT performs the technical and financial assessment of all final reports to assess the adequacy of the implementation of Business Plans and to establish the final balances due. In line with its EIT's Grant Assurance Strategy, in terms of cost eligibility the EIT relies mostly on Certificates on Financial Statements (CFS) issued by independent auditors. Ineligible costs identified and corrected at the ex ante stage are estimated to be 2,05% of the amount claimed by KICS.

DG EAC considers that its supervision responsibilities were fulfilled and in view of the positive assessment by the ECA, and that it has assurance for 2018 for the EIT.

F. Direct management

Governance

DG EAC has a **small remaining amount of direct expenditure** (3% of executed payments during 2018) which is managed directly via centralised financial circuit, except for the Library and e-Resources Centre.

Building blocks

As mentioned above, **financial initiation and verification tasks have been centralised** in a single financial cell in order to concentrate financial expertise and to benefit from economies of scale. In 2018 **ex post audits** of actions implemented by direct management by the DG through cost based grants (approximately 1,5% of executed payments) were carried out by an external audit firm and based on a random and risk selection methods across all such transactions of the DG, which provides a sound and conservative basis for applying the results of the controls to the full sub-population. In addition to ex-post grant audits, **additional ex post controls** are carried out for (immaterial) additional categories of transactions such as expenditure under procurement contracts and corporate services (Traineeship Office, Library and e-Resources Centre).

¹⁴² <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/150424/Consolidated%20Annual%20Activity%20Report.pdf>

Control results

Authorising Officers by sub-delegation have reported no issues that would put into doubt the assurance on this management mode, and previous accounting controls indicate the regularity and legality of transactions introduced in ABAC are reliable.

The multi-annual residual error rate **for DG EAC's direct management by the DG is 1% over 2014-2018** (0,83% over 2011-2017), which is below the 2% threshold. For the reasons above, it is considered that **DG EAC has reasonable assurance on direct management for 2018**.

G. Amount at risk at closure

In the context of the protection of the EU budget, at the Commission's corporate level, the DGs' **estimated overall amounts at risk and their estimated future corrections are consolidated**.

For DG EAC, the estimated overall amount at risk at payment¹⁴³ for the 2018 payments made is 15,87 M€. This is the AOD's best, conservative estimation of the amount of relevant expenditure¹⁴⁴ during the year (1.5867 M€) not in conformity with the applicable contractual and regulatory provisions at the time the payment is made. The weighted average error of 1% is a conservative estimate consistent with the confidence interval in measuring the error, in order to ensure a sufficiently conservative and straightforward calculation.

This expenditure will be subsequently subject to ex-post controls and a sizeable proportion of the underlying error will be detected and corrected in successive years. The conservatively estimated future corrections for those 2018 payments made are 0,2 M€. This is the amount of errors that the DG conservatively estimates to identify and correct from controls that it will implement in successive years.

Corrective capacity is limited by the fact that DG EAC transactions are generally high volume, low value, so the impact of individual corrections is low. In an environment where errors are low and evenly distributed, large errors are rare, so corrections have a low impact on reducing the amount at risk.

The difference between those two amounts leads to the estimated overall amount at risk at closure for the 2018 expenditure of 15,67 M€.

¹⁴³ In order to calculate the weighted average error rate (AER) for the total *relevant expenditure* in the reporting year, the *detected*, estimated or other equivalent error rates have been used.

¹⁴⁴ "*Relevant expenditure*" during the year = payments made, minus new pre-financing paid out, plus previous pre-financing cleared.

Table - Estimated overall amount at risk at closure

DG EAC	"payments made" (FY; m€)	<i>minus</i> new prefinancing [<i>plus</i> retentions made] (in FY; m€)	<i>plus</i> cleared ^c prefinancing [<i>minus</i> retentions (partially) released ^b and deductions of expenditure made by MS] (in FY; m€)	= "relevant expenditure" (for the FY; m€)	Average Error Rate (<i>weighted AER</i> ; %)	estimated overall amount at risk <i>at payment</i> (FY; m€)	Average Recoveries and Corrections (<i>adjusted ARC</i> ; %)	estimated future corrections [and deductions] (for FY; m€)	estimated overall amount at risk at closure (m€)
-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7	-8	-9	-10
EAC	2.650,20	- 2.597,91	1.534,48	1.586,77	1%	15,87	0	0,2	15,67
Overall, total	2.650,20	- 2.597,91	1.534,48	1.586,77	1%	15,87	0	0,2	15,67

Most transactions under Delegation Agreements (DA) with NAs have a cycle of 3-4 years (the DA for year N is finalised in N+4). Only management cost and networks, which have an annual cycle, are cleared in a shorter cycle; they are paid in year N and cleared based on the yearly report received in year N+1. The NA pre-financings (the majority of PF paid by DG EAC) are mainly for 3 year projects; each DA foresees a 1st and 2nd / 3rd pre-financing. Partial clearings are performed each year for reports which are not finalised based on the realised amount declared by the NA in the yearly reports; the clearings are done after the evaluation of the operational units of the yearly reports. In a context where the budget is progressively increasing, there is a persistent difference between opened PF and clearings.

2.1.1.1.2 Fraud prevention, detection and correction

Within DG Education and Culture, the controls aimed at preventing and detecting fraud are not unlike those intended to ensure the legality and regularity of the transactions (the unintentional errors). Each year DG EAC reviews all reporting from National Agencies on possible fraud or irregularities. These cases are mainly followed up at national level where the National Agencies have direct access to means of legal redress and referral of fraud cases. In 2018, none of them has required specific precautionary measures, but there has been close monitoring of two major cases being handled by the national authorities, with OLAF being kept informed.

DG EAC is also regularly called upon to contribute to ongoing **OLAF investigations** or to organise the follow-up to completed OLAF investigations. €0,028m of financial prejudice to the EU budget resulting from fraud was established in final OLAF case reports concerning DG EAC received during 2018. No cases were referred to OLAF and none to IDOC during 2018 by DG EAC, but a number of cases were followed up during the year directly with National Agencies and National Authorities.

DG EAC has developed and implemented its own **anti-fraud strategy (AFS)** since 2014, elaborated on the basis of the methodology provided by OLAF. It was updated in November 2017¹⁴⁵, to further emphasise data analysis to identify potential risk areas. It will be updated in 2019 following the update of the Commission-wide anti-fraud strategy.

DG EAC has continued **awareness raising activities** mainly covering indirect management. Fraud was included as a topic in the NA seminar carried out in June 2018. Creation of a combined database of Erasmus+ transactions in direct and indirect management has enhanced the capability to monitor a beneficiary's entire activity across the programme.

Considering the level of fraud impact faced by the DG, in particular the financial prejudice recorded by the European Anti-fraud Office in the remit of DG EAC, **the residual risk of fraud does not justify additional measures**. DG EAC maintains close cooperation with OLAF and follows the small number of ongoing cases closely.

Suspected irregularities or fraud and ongoing investigations of the European Antifraud Office (OLAF) had no impact on the assurance over the reporting period.

2.1.1.1.3 Safeguarding of assets

DG EAC has entrusted management of funds related to the Student Loan Guarantee Fund Financial Instrument to the European Investment Fund (EIF), as stipulated in the Erasmus+ legal base. EIF manages a minimum reserve (set at €10m in the Delegation Act, revised in mutual agreement to €5m in early 2016), and also manages non-Euro currency where non—Eurozone financial intermediaries are participating in the instrument. Asset management is conducted via the "Asset Management Designated Service (AMDS)", DG ECFIN, according to agreed Asset Management Guidelines (AMG). The main asset management goal is to maintain the value of the fiduciary (and subaccounts) in the context of a negative interest rate environment, while ensuring the necessary liquidity for the instrument.

Pre-financing is also managed and controlled mainly in the context of Delegation Agreements with National Agencies. No issues have been identified as regard the assurance on safeguarding of assets.

¹⁴⁵ Ares(2017)5993030

2.1.1.1.4 Accounting controls

In the context of the accounts quality exercise, DG EAC has established a work programme for accounting controls in 2018, based on the risk assessment carried out at the beginning of the year. This work programme, which contributes to the quality of the final financial data, includes regular controls to verify the correctness and completeness of the accounting registrations in the DG.

The controls carried out in 2018 do not show significant or systematic errors, which confirm the accuracy of the central financial cell.

2.1.1.1.5 Budget execution

The total available budget including all types of appropriations in DG EAC's "domain" (including amounts implemented by Executive agencies) amounted to EUR 4.697 billion in (CA) and EUR 4.629 billion in payment appropriations (PA). Overall execution (all appropriations) end of December reached 95% in commitments (94% in 2017) and 88% in payments (90% in 2017).

In terms of voted appropriations (C1) of the year:

Commitments appropriations: the operational credits show a 100% execution rate on every budgetary chapter. As regard the administrative expenditures, the execution rate reached also 100%.

Payment appropriations: The overall execution rate reached 99.5% of available appropriations. The operational credits have been fully executed apart for the European Solidarity Corps due to the late adoption of the legal base in 2018. The remaining credits have been carried over to 2019. The overall execution rate for administrative expenditure reached 80% which was perfectly in line with the overall forecast (81%). However, four administrative budget lines with a small budget did not reach their consumption target.

2.1.1.1.6 Cross-sub-delegations

Crossed-subdelegations received represent €23.994 million in Commitment Appropriations (CA) and €1.811 million in Payment Appropriations (PA). The total executed CA represents 14%, this rather low execution rate is primarily due to the assignment at the end of 2018 of important global commitments by DG DEVCO for Panafrica which will be consumed in 2019, and 97% in PA.

Crossed-subdelegations given represent €0.202 million in CA (excluding outstanding commitments RAL) and €1.702 million in PA . The total executed CA represents 100% and 88% in PA.

The Authorising Officers by Delegation of other DGs have all submitted their reports on the 2018 activities as foreseen in cases of crossed sub-delegation.

2.1.1.2 Efficiency = Time-to... indicators and other efficiency indicators

Assessment of the control efficiency: National Agencies

Once the costs and benefits of controls have been assessed, the question is whether the **optimal** relationship exists between the resources used and the outputs (or results)

produced. In addition to the resources used, pertinent efficiency indicators include:

The workload in volume and value, i.e. the number of transactions (contracts, grants, payments etc.):

National Agencies deal with a high workload in volume which is generally of low value (21,490 projects in 2018 with average value of approximately €87,000). This implies a generally higher cost of control, taking into account the need to be reactive to beneficiary needs.

The number of audits and their audited amounts, the size/fragmentation of the programme, any (dis)economies of scale:

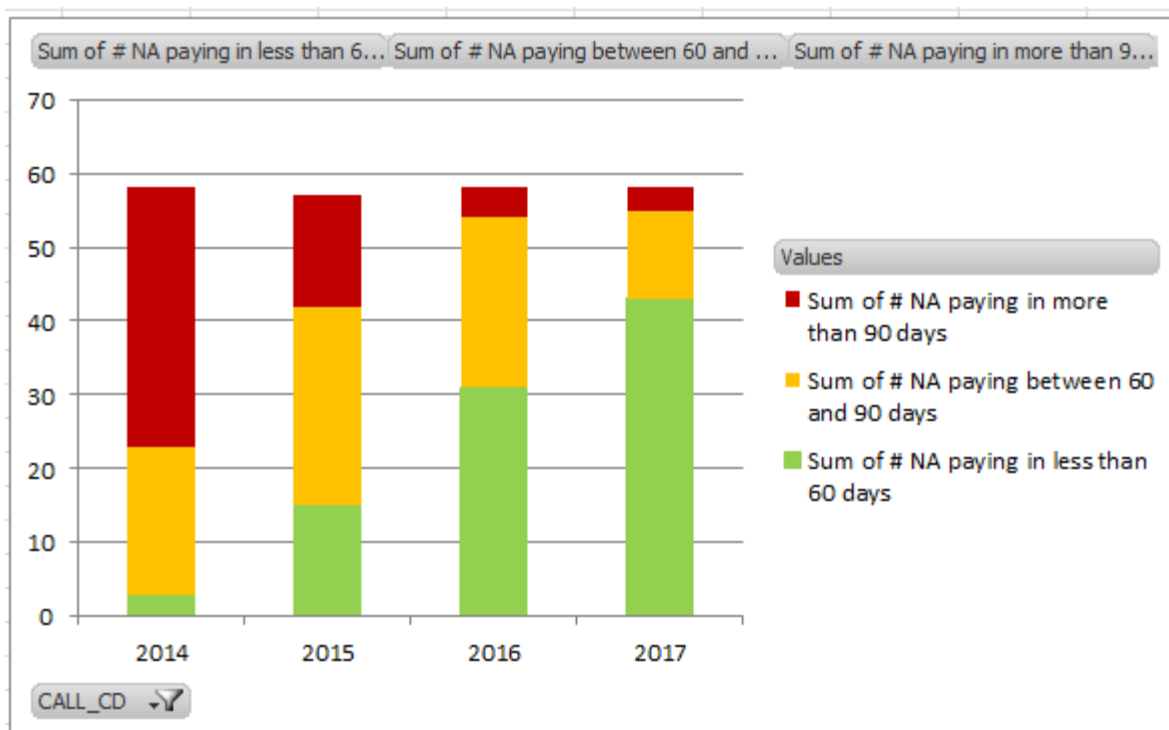
To ensure economies of scale, systems checks are performed when justified by the volume in activity (so-called "top receivers"), factors resulting in diseconomies of scale include the diversity of sectors covered, and the need for National Agencies in every programme country, which can then be split into different sectors (e.g. Youth and VET), despite the fact that DG EAC encourages single NAs to be formed where possible. The programme also involves many communication and policy-development aspects which require additional resources.

The workload in complexity, i.e. the level of (expensive) expertise required to verify the regularity (e.g., eligibility, conformity, etc.) of the transactions; any high-risk profile:

Due to the large number of applications and relatively low success rate, the volume of applications are initially assessed by experts who have to be guided, trained and managed by the National Agencies. The Commission has to provide extensive guidance and consultation to ensure a consistent approach is used across the programme countries.

The time required to complete the processes (i.e. "time-to-Indicators", number of processes completed within the legal deadlines):

On average, National Agencies meet the legal deadlines, but with some NAs there are ongoing issues with late payments, often for country specific reasons. Overall the situation has improved year-on-year:



Assessment of the control efficiency: EIT

Based on the information presented above, the *ex ante* (2,05%)¹⁴⁶ corrective capacity of the EIT is already close to its total costs of control (2,47%), which makes the control efficiency very high. This is achieved by the systematic framework of externalisation achieved by the EIT. This is further detailed in EIT's annual activity report.

2.1.1.3 Economy = the cost of controls

Per the Commission corporate policy, at least 90% of the "payments made" (as per AAR Annex 3, Table 2) are to be covered under all "significant expenditure" and shown in your Annex 5 to the AAR as a Relevant control system. For this reason, DG EAC's direct management which represents 3% of payments made, is not included, leaving only 2 relevant control systems: that related to National Agencies and to the EIT.

Further details are provided in annex 10 Financial management.

Cost estimates and sources: National Agencies

For the National Agencies (NAs), DG EAC discloses separately:

- i. the Commission's cost;
- ii. the estimated cost at Member States and/or Entrusted Entities level as well as the source of these figures and how they were calculated.

For Commission costs, DG EAC has quantified the full-time equivalents (FTEs) allocated to the functions/activities listed in Annex 3 by using the best available data collection

¹⁴⁶ See section 2.1.1.1.1 on benefits of control (EIT) : Ineligible costs identified and corrected at the *ex ante* stage are estimated to be 2,05% of the amount claimed by KICS.

tool(s) at their disposal (e.g. ATLAS¹⁴⁷, Unit Management Plans, surveys or studies). DG EAC therefore uses ATLAS figures applicable for 2018.

DG has estimated the related cost by using the average FTE costs communicated each year by DG Budget.

DG EAC also incurs control costs in the context of its external (ADEC) audits each year.

For the Entrusted Entities level (indirect management, i.e. National Agencies): these costs are estimated based on the management fees paid to them by the Commission, even though it is acknowledged in the guidance that these contributions cover broader elements than only control costs in the strict sense. The costs at Entrusted Entities (NAs) level is obtained via the National Authority October reports.

¹⁴⁷ Activity and Task Logging for Allocated Staff (DG HR's IT Tool in Sysper2).

The costs are as follows:

Total payments DG EAC (without EIT)			2.305.020.582	
NA Management Costs		93.245.474		
FTE	231,8	34.306.400		
Audits		300.000		
Total costs		127.851.874		
% Costs of control Commission			5,55%	
Costs of control NA		60.476.492		
Global total		188.328.366	8,17%	
		Ex ante	6,3%	145.012.842
		Ex post	1,9%	43.315.524

Percentage	Amount	Stage	Indicators (annual)	Description
8,17%	188.328.366	Overall indicator	Overall cost of control (€ and %)	Total cost of controls of process out of total amounts managed during the year (payments made, revenues, assets, liabilities); amounts delegated or subject to a distinct discharge procedure are excluded from the total amounts managed
6,29%	145.012.842	All <i>ex ante</i> controls	Cost of <i>ex ante</i> controls (€ and %)	Total cost related to <i>ex ante</i> controls out of total amounts managed
1,88%	43.315.524	<i>ex post</i>	Cost of control <i>ex post</i> verifications and/or audits (€ and %)	Total cost related to <i>ex post</i> verifications and/or audits out of total verified and/or audited value

Overall, the revised global DG EAC cost of control for **NAs** including an estimate of entrusted entity costs for 2018 is 8,2% of the budget managed (see table above) and is a prudent and conservative estimate. The structures in place are considered to be cost-effective.

Cost estimates and sources: European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

For EIT the cost calculation is more straightforward as it is monitored mainly by one unit and has a clearly distinguished administrative budget.

Total payments EIT			345.176.976	
EAC FTE	8	1.184.000		
% Costs of control Commission			0,34%	
EIT management costs		6.374.030		
EIT Audit certificates		826.000		
EIT <i>ex post</i> audit		149.950		
EIT costs total		7.349.980		
% Costs of control EIT			2,13%	
Global total		8.533.980		
			2,47%	
		Ex ante	2,19%	7.558.030

	Ex post	0,28%	149.950
--	---------	-------	---------

Overall, the revised global DG EAC cost of control for EIT including an estimate of entrusted entity costs for 2018 is 2,47% of the budget managed (see table above) and is a prudent and conservative estimate. The structures in place are considered to be cost-effective.

2.1.1.4 Conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of controls

Based on the most relevant key indicators and control results, DG EAC has assessed the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the control system and reached **a positive conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of controls**.

The applied control strategy is the best suited to fulfil the intended control objectives efficiently and at a reasonable cost. This control strategy ensures an adequate balance between low error rates, fast payments and low costs of controls, while taking into account that reducing controls will also reduce the costs and speed up processes, but may increase the risk of error (and vice-versa).

Cost of controls are being limited by i) the elimination of redundancy in certified correct workflows where necessary; ii) the use of electronic workflows (instead of paper workflows) iii) delegating low risk transactions to lower hierarchical levels; and iv) modifying the control strategy by limiting the frequency of control checks in case no substantial errors had been detected.

The above mentioned evolution over time of the estimated costs of controls at Commission and entrusted level and of the average time to pay/grant/sign can serve as a basis for the conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of controls.

DG EAC's control environment and control strategy remained stable during the reporting year, the conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of controls is unchanged compared to last year. The corporate methodology for the estimation, assessment and reporting on the cost-effectiveness of controls was revised in September 2018 and applied for the first time in the 2018 annual reporting. The difference in the estimated cost of controls as compared to previous years derives from this new methodology and does not reflect any substantial change in the DG's control strategy.

The stability of the control environment can be explained by elements, such as the continuity of the spending programmes and related types of transactions, the absence of new emerging risks, the stability of the DG's organisation. The costs of controls are reported on the basis of the latest available assessment.

2.1.2 Audit observations and recommendations

This section reports and assesses the observations, opinions and conclusions reported by auditors in their reports as well as the limited conclusion of the Internal Auditor on the state of internal control, which could have a material impact on the achievement of the internal control objectives, and therefore on assurance, together with any management measures taken in response to the audit recommendations.

DG EAC had no critical or very important recommendations from the IAS in 2018.

While at the end of 2017, there were 6 outstanding IAS recommendations, by the end of

2018 **there were no open recommendations** for DG EAC, with 2 recommendations ready for review at IAS level to be followed up in 2019.

Opinion of the Internal Auditor/ IAS Audits

The Internal Audit Service has concluded for DG EAC that in 2018 "the internal control systems in place for the audited processes are effective."

One IAS "Audit on DG EAC's ex post financial audits, independent audit bodies' opinions and controls on grant proposal evaluation for Erasmus+ actions implemented by national agencies" was ongoing in 2018, with the final report received in January 2019, containing 2 "important" recommendations. IAS follow-up of audit reports

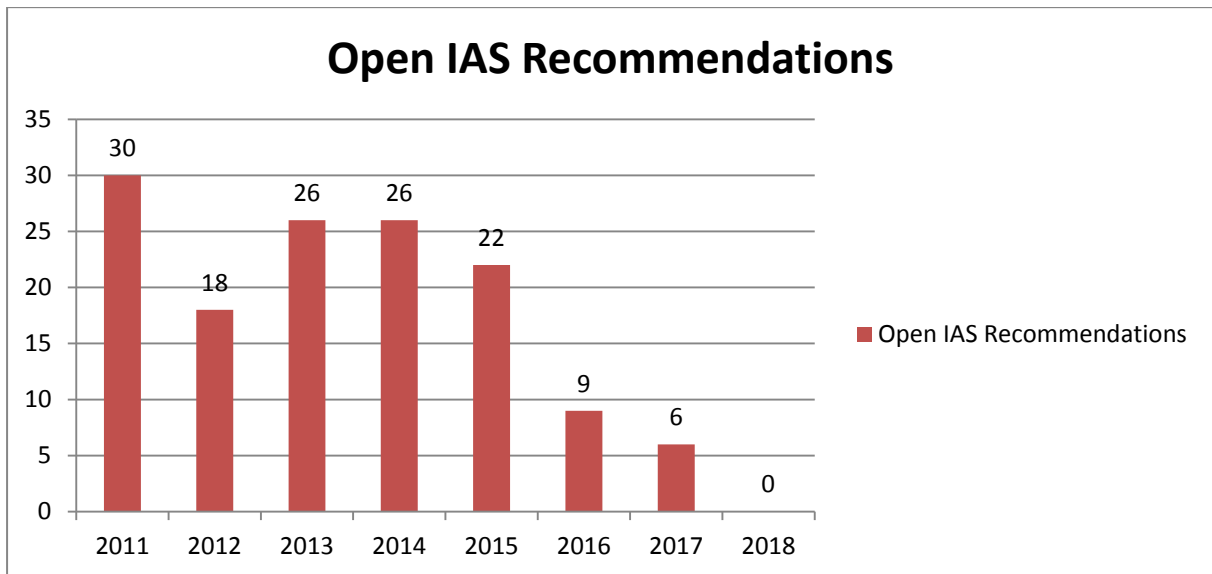
In 2018, the IAS performed the review of several implemented recommendations related to the following audits:

1) "Audit on the performance management systems in DG EAC, including the contributions of Executive agencies and National agencies to the achievement of policy objectives" : the audit resulted in 3 important recommendations, one followed-up and closed by the IAS in 2018 in relation to the exchange of best practices between the working groups in 2018 and two more implemented by DG EAC in 2018 and ready for review by the IAS in early 2019, in relation to:

- the monitoring and reporting on policy making and programmes implementation;
- internal performance and allocation of resources by action/output, in particular for policy actions.

2) "Audit on the effectiveness and efficiency of the Erasmus+ Control Strategy in EACEA and National Agencies"- the audit resulted in two important recommendations, one related to guidelines for the National Agencies and the other related to the controls performed ex-ante and during programme's implementation. Both recommendations were reviewed by IAS and in 2018 closed as implemented.

3) "Audit of performance of National Agencies" -the implementation of one remaining recommendation from the 2013 performance audit of National Agencies was also reviewed by IAS in 2018, as the Erasmus+ Mid-Term evaluation has been finalised and published in January 2018.



(*) Figures for 2011-2018, which include the IAS recommendations closed at DG EAC level, for which the implementation status had yet to be analysed by IAS;

European Court of Auditors' findings and recommendations

For its **2017 Declaration of Assurance (DAS)** the estimated level of error reported by the Court for payments in the "*Competitiveness for growth and jobs*" area (Chapter 5 of the ECA Annual Report) is **4.2%**, which remains stable in comparison to previous year (4.1 % in 2016).

This error rate is not broken down by policy area so there is no "DG EAC" rate from the ECA. There were no specific errors or references for EAC in this Chapter.

The Court recommends that Commission promptly addresses the weaknesses identified by the Internal Audit Service (IAS) in the EACEA's Erasmus+ grant management procedure, as well as in the monitoring of research and innovation projects and closing of overdue audit recommendations. DG EAC and EACEA have already addressed and implemented all recommendations by end 2018.

DG EAC's performance is in line with its peer Directorates-General in the policy group, with no major evidence of systematic weakness on the basis of the findings of the Court.

European Court of Auditors (ECA) performance audits

In 2018, ECA issued the special report: "**Mobility under Erasmus+: millions of participants and multi-faceted European added value; however performance measurement needs to be further improved**"¹⁴⁸

In this audit report published on 6 September 2018, the Court assessed the performance and European added value of Erasmus+, focusing on learning mobility of individuals as regards education and training, which represented more than half of the Programme's budget allocation for the period 2014-2020. The European Court of Auditors has identified in the report areas for improvement which the Commission generally agrees

¹⁴⁸ <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=46686>

with. The Commission will seek to implement the improvements in the next Erasmus programme, which is under discussion with the legislative authority.

The report resulted in 6 recommendations, all accepted by the Commission, with only one being partially accepted.

For the recommendation which was not accepted ("2b"), the Commission does not consider that it is desirable or operationally feasible to allocate funds based on results and impacts, as recommended by ECA, where assessment is possible only over a long timescale. The Commission considers the performance criteria, as defined in the legal basis, used for the allocation of funds to be appropriate.

For the future Erasmus+ programme, the ECA auditors recommend that the European Commission should:

- suggest additional European added value elements, which should be prioritised at the project appraisal stage, monitored and reported on;
- improve the measurement of objectives achieved and prioritise performance when allocating funds;
- simplify the scheme further to reduce administrative burdens, with improved IT tools;
- include school students in Erasmus + Mobility and consider more flexibility for PhD students;
- assess the possibility of reintroducing funding for traditional classroom language teaching;
- include doctoral and undergraduate mobility under the Student Loan Guarantee Facility.

Among the positive points presented in the report:

- 1) Erasmus+ Mobility provided European added value in many ways in addition to those required in the legal basis, such as a strategic approach to mobility, an increase in sense of European identity and multilingualism;
- 2) Most of the targets for the indicators set in the legal basis were met; and
- 3) Erasmus+ introduced many innovations towards administrative simplification for mobility.

Negative points presented in the report:

- 1) Although most of the targets for the indicators set in the legal basis are being met, these indicators did not cover all the general and specific objectives set out in the Regulation making performance measurement difficult. The qualitative indicators were largely based on perceptions of participants via interviews and surveys; and
- 2) The innovative Student Loan Guarantee Facility had not produced the expected results leading to the Commission reallocating the relevant funds.

The recommendations have been introduced to be followed up by DG BUDG in the RAD

system, resulting in 11 sub-recommendations to be implemented by DG EAC.¹⁴⁹

DG EAC was **associated DG** for two special reports issued by the Court of Auditors in 2018, with other DGs being in lead:

- Special report 13/2018: "**Tackling radicalisation that leads to terrorism: the Commission addressed the needs of Member States, but with some shortfalls in coordination and evaluation**"¹⁵⁰, published in May 2018. This audit resulted in 3 recommendations, all accepted by the Commission. The report acknowledges the fact that the EU support for Member States in their fight against radicalisation is financed by various funds, including Erasmus+. The auditors recommended that the European Commission should improve the way it coordinates its actions to address radicalisation, increase practical support to practitioners and policymakers in the Member States and improve its framework for assessing results.
- Special report 35/2018: "**Transparency of EU funds implemented by the NGOs: more effort needed**"¹⁵¹, published in December 2018. This resulted in 4 recommendations, out of which 3 were accepted by the Commission.

Discharge authority recommendations

Following the European Parliament resolutions on previous years discharge, DG **EAC was in the lead for the implementation of 4 recommendations:**

In 2016, ECA issued the Special Report 04/2016 "**The European Institute of Innovation and Technology must modify its delivery mechanisms and elements of its design to achieve the expected impact**".¹⁵² All recommendations on the EIT side have been already closed, with only one recommendation for the Commission, who was invited to propose an amended EIT legal basis to the European Parliament and Council. This is still ongoing.

The proposal for a revised EIT Regulation will be submitted to European Commission in the first quarter of 2019. The purpose of this revision is to make improvements based on recommendations from a number of EIT evaluations and reviews and align the Regulation with the main priorities, objectives and activities set out in the Horizon Europe proposal. It will provide the legal basis for the continuation of the EIT's operations beyond 2020 and reflect its specificities.

European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)'s discharge 2017

The Court of Auditors issued an **unqualified audit opinion on the EIT for the discharge 2017 exercise** on the basis that all the transactions underlying the annual accounts are legal and regular 'in all material respects'. It included an "other matter" paragraph in relation to handling amendment requests to specific grant agreements (SGAs), an issue that has since been rectified in the approach to the reimbursement rate. The estimated error rate was under the materiality level of 2%. Internal Audit Service (IAS) activity related to the EIT.

¹⁴⁹ RAD references from 2018/AUD/0141 to 2018/AUD/151

¹⁵⁰ <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=45801>

¹⁵¹ <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=48587>

¹⁵² RAD reference: 2016/AUD/0027

The IAS performed an audit on the ex-ante verification of payments to KICs in 2018. The final report was received from the IAS end of January 2019. EIT has rejected two recommendations (one Very Important and one Important, out of three), in the area of fraud detection and prevention and for the error rates and cost-effectiveness of controls, as EIT considers that it has already initiated measures in these areas. The EIT submitted an action plan with implementing measures and a clear timeline on 1 March 2019.

The Internal Audit Capability (**IAC**) of the EIT finalised the following reports in 2018: a consultancy on the potential outsourcing of the Accounting Officer's functions to the European Commission, Annual audit report in respect of 2017, Consultancy on the Follow-up the EIT's Financial Autonomy, draft report on the 2018 Follow-up to IAC Recommendations. EIT management accepted all recommendations and the submitted appropriate action plans. The IAC will draft its annual audit plan for 2019 after receiving the IAS multiannual plan.

As a result of the assessment of the risks underlying the observations made together with the management measures taken in response, **the management of DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture considers that the recommendations issued do not raise any material assurance implications** and are being implemented as part of on-going continuous efforts in terms of further improvements.

2.1.3 Assessment of the effectiveness of the internal control systems

The Commission has adopted an Internal Control Framework¹⁵³ based on international good practice, aimed to ensure the achievement of policy and operational objectives. In addition, as regards financial management, compliance with the internal control framework is a compulsory requirement.

DG EAC has put in place the organisational structure and the internal control systems suited to the achievement of the policy and internal control objectives, in accordance with the standards and having due regard to the risks associated with the environment in which it operates.

While 2017 was a transition year towards implementing and applying the revised internal control framework, in 2018 DG EAC further focused on implementing internal control priorities and its internal control monitoring criteria as defined in its Management Plan 2018. As announced in AAR 2017, one of these priorities concerned supporting the director of risk management and internal control in its new function of ensuring the completeness, reliability and robustness of AAR part I policy achievements and reporting.

DG EAC's management assesses on a continuous basis the effectiveness of the internal control systems in order to determine whether they work as intended and ensuring that any control weaknesses in the system are detected, analysed and considered for improvement. DG EAC's detailed Internal Control Action plan is validated each year and is monitored on a regular basis, as well as the audit recommendations. Besides the fact that management of risks is part of daily management in DG EAC, in 2018 two risk and internal control assessment exercises were performed, i.e. at mid-term and at year end. Exceptions and non-compliances are continuously monitored and reported upon at least bi-annually. Where necessary, measures are taken to reinforce internal control functioning. DG EAC's internal control action plan 2018 and quarterly internal control reporting to senior management served as main monitoring and reporting tools in DG EAC during 2018.

¹⁵³ C(2017)2373 final, 19.4.2017

In 2018, a mandatory training for heads of unit, deputy heads of unit, and assistants to directors was organised on the revised internal control framework and **an additional specific assessment** survey was organised, called **DG EAC's Management Health Check Survey**¹⁵⁴, which resulted in the identification of needs for improvements and support in the implementation of internal control principles in the daily management of Heads of Unit in DG EAC. The outcome mainly pointed at the need for further training and awareness raising actions in a few internal control areas to be implemented in 2019.

Methodology and sources for the specific annual internal control assessment exercise

The annual assessment of the functioning of the internal control system was performed between January and March 2019. The methodology established in the "Implementation Guide of the Internal Control Framework of the Commission" was followed. This assessment is based on three main pillars: (1) desk review of information from various sources, (2) a series of interviews and written bilateral consultations with representatives of middle management and specialised functions (among others BCP, HR, DPC), (3) evaluation of internal control monitoring criteria for 2018. Its outcome was consolidated by a bilateral assessment of the relevant principles with the unit responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the internal control principles.

As sources, the assessment of internal control monitoring criteria 2018 served as a primary source. Secondary sources were exceptions and non-compliance events and mitigating measures, ongoing monitoring of the implementation of control and anti-fraud strategies, ongoing Audit findings and recommendations, AOSD reports (AAR), and DG EAC Internal Control Action plan 2018. New requirements from central services, for example in the domain of personal data protection, were particularly taken into account.

Assessment of the internal control systems

DG EAC's assessment was performed on the basis of the 17 internal control principles and 5 components of the internal control framework, taking into account the deficiencies identified based on the above mentioned sources and their remedial measures where necessary. This led to the overall conclusion on the functioning of DG EAC's internal control system.

Based on the outcome of this assessment exercise, the **overall conclusion is that DG EAC's internal control systems are present and effective**. For the **principle 11 as regards selecting and developing general control activities over technology** to support the achievement of objectives, although IT governance seems to be effectively functioning, **some improvements** are needed as regards *documenting* the update of DG EAC governance and IT strategy, and in view of risks in relation to the e-forms. These improvements are in any case with high priority on the radar **in the context of the preparations for the next MFF**.

In 2018, 2 IT security incidents occurred with the Mobility Tool which were immediately addressed. While facing challenges to keep up with a complex environment, and in view of ensuring the adequate level of security of information and data, DG EAC intends to raise awareness amongst staff and stakeholders of constantly evolving security risks. DG EAC has participated in information sessions organized by DG DIGIT in September 2018, which will introduce a new IT Security Risk Management Methodology. DG EAC will then assess the DG EAC IT systems that it is responsible for, in order to identify potential security-related risks.

¹⁵⁴ Ares(2019)929576

In this assessment DG EAC took into account the 2018 IAS audit recommendations as regards the internal control functioning against the Agency EACEA in EAC's assessment. Taking into account that DG EAC's supervision was not questioned in this context, it was assessed that the principle 3¹⁵⁵ which covers the supervision of entrusted entities, was not affected. DG EAC continues to implement its supervisory approach and working arrangement with the agency and supervises closely the state of implementation of IAS audit recommendations in 2019 as was the case in 2018.

In 2019, besides principle 11 on general control activities over technology, DG EAC will further focus on strengthening **with priority**:

- **Principle 3:** DG EAC's already established governance framework to prepare for the next MFF will be monitored on its strengths and weaknesses in view of fine-tuning it where necessary by end 2019.
- **Principle 4/6:** as regards human resources, in 2018 a number of measures were taken to reallocate of resources to areas of high priorities. This continues to be of high importance in 2019. In view of preparing for the next MFF, **internal performance management (ICP 6)** will be improved and a **screening analysis** will be performed by the end of 2019.
- **Principle 13:** As of the second half of 2018, DG EAC has been proactively preparing for the implementation of the new Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 on the **protection of personal data** following the Secretary General's note of June 2018. The process of implementation is high on the radar in 2019. Also knowledge sharing and awareness activities to staff responsible as data owners in view of assuring data protection/security requirements are foreseen.
- **Principle 15:** DG EAC should put in place systems to monitor and evaluate (ex-ante and ex-post) its external communication actions in line with the **Code of conduct on measurement and evaluation of communication activities**. The roles and responsibilities of the unit in charge of communication within the DG (covering planning and review of the planned activities, approval of the external communication plan, and reporting, monitoring and evaluation of the activities) are being updated and a framework on reporting/measurement on communication indicators for the operational units is being put in place.

DG EAC has assessed its internal control system during the reporting year and has concluded that it is effective and that the components and principles are present and functioning as intended. In addition, on the principle 11, even though it is present and functioning overall, some improvements are needed in relation to documenting the IT governance, IT strategy and in the context of IT security.

In 2018, no significant control system weaknesses were identified by EAC's management that were of such nature, duration, nature and scope that these could not be compensated or corrected. DG EAC has reasonable assurance that the internal control principles adopted by the Commission are implemented and functioning in DG EAC, that the assessment findings are evaluated and that any deficiencies are communicated and corrected in a timely manner, with serious matters reported as appropriate.

¹⁵⁵ Internal control principle 3 concerns the establishment of oversight, structure, reporting lines and appropriate authorities and responsibilities in the pursuit of objectives, including those vis à vis entrusted entities.

2.1.4 Conclusions on the impact as regards assurance

This section reviews the assessment of the elements reported above (in Sections 2.1.1, 2.1.2, and 2.1.3), the sub-conclusions above, and draws the overall conclusion supporting the declaration of assurance and whether it should be qualified with reservations.

The information from the various building blocks which support the assurance as described in part 2 covers the entire budget delegated to the Authorising Officer by Delegation of DG EAC. The underlying inherent risk and the effectiveness of the NA controls have remained stable, as demonstrated by the multiple sources of evidence available at primary, secondary and supervisory level in line with the internal control framework. DG EAC will make no reservation on the management of the budget it is directly responsible for.

The information reported in Section 2.1 stems from the results of management and auditor monitoring contained in the reports listed. These reports result from a systematic analysis of the evidence available. This approach provides sufficient guarantees as to the completeness and reliability of the information reported and results in a comprehensive coverage of the budget delegated to the Director-General of DG EAC.

Overall Conclusion

In conclusion, management has reasonable assurance that, overall, suitable controls are in place and working as intended; risks are being appropriately monitored and mitigated; and necessary improvements and reinforcements are being implemented. The Director General, in her capacity as Authorising Officer by Delegation has signed the Declaration of Assurance.

2.1.5 Declaration of Assurance

I, the undersigned,

Director-General of the Directorate-General of Education, Youth, Sport and Culture,

In my capacity as authorising officer by delegation

Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view¹⁵⁶.

State that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the self-assessment, ex-post controls, the work of the Internal Audit Service, and the lessons learnt from the reports of the Court of Auditors for years prior to the year of this declaration.

Confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported here which could harm the interests of the institution.

Brussels, 29 March 2019

(Signed)

Themis CHRISTOPHIDOU

¹⁵⁶ True and fair in this context means a reliable, complete and correct view on the state of affairs in the service.

2.2 Other organisational management dimensions

2.2.1 Human resource management

In 2018 the HR Modernisation project continued with new procedures being developed and HR tasks being attributed and reattributed between DG HR, the AMC and the BC. The HR BC showed a lot of flexibility aiming at adapting to the changing procedures and responsibilities and first and foremost ensuring business continuity at DG EAC. Management and staff had to continue making specific efforts to adapt to the new HR structures and procedures.

As in previous years, the allocation of resources was aligned to the DGs' priorities, namely the European Solidarity Corps (ESC), the inclusion of young people, Erasmus+, the preparation of the new programmes, investment in education, the follow-up to the New Skills Agenda, the European Year of Cultural Heritage, and the Digital Single Market. As in the previous year, internal redeployment tried to optimise the use of existing human capital.

DG EAC worked towards the strategic target for first appointments of female colleagues in middle management of 40% by 2020. While the 2015 baseline was 33,3% of female representation in middle management, as of 2017 the DG HR priority focused on first appointments of women to middle management. The target for this until 2019 is 2 first appointments for female Middle Manager in DG EAC. In 2018 DG EAC achieved 50% of the target by 2018.

DG EAC's two other strategic HR targets were improving staff engagement and wellbeing of staff. In this context DG EAC launched a specific EU Survey among its staff at the beginning of 2018, concentrating on the 11 questions where EAC staff had scored lower than the Commission average in the 2016 survey. 26,57% of staff took part in that EU Survey. Results are overall better than before with top improvements on learning and development (+22,38%) and accommodating health needs of staff (+31,88%). Considerable deterioration had to be noted on achieving a good balance between private and professional life (-11,75%).

Another measure was the organisation of an Away Day. DG EAC also aimed at improving its staff's wellbeing through the support of interested staff's active participation in "VeloMai" and the "Walking Challenge" in the framework of the European Week of Sport. Apart from that a varied and motivating fit@work programme is on offer.

2.2.2 Better regulation

In 2018, the DG finalised three evaluations¹⁵⁷, continued working on three ongoing evaluations¹⁵⁸ and launched one new evaluation¹⁵⁹. In addition, in the context of preparations for the post-2020 generation of programmes, the DG prepared one full¹⁶⁰ and three partial¹⁶¹ impact assessments and one ex-ante evaluation¹⁶². The results of

¹⁵⁷ Ex Post evaluation of the 2016 European Capitals of Culture, Mid-term evaluation of the Creative Europe programme (2014-2020), Evaluation of the European Week of Sport

¹⁵⁸ Ex Post evaluation of the 2017 European Capitals of Culture, Evaluation of European Heritage Label, Evaluation of EACEA for the period 2015-2017

¹⁵⁹ Ex Post evaluation of the 2018 European Capitals of Culture

¹⁶⁰ Erasmus+

¹⁶¹ Creative Europe, MSCA, EIT

¹⁶² European Solidarity Corps

evaluations, studies and projects developed under DG EAC's programmes continued to be valorised as sources of evidence for future policy making. See Annex 9 for more details.

2.2.3 Information management aspects

Document management

In 2018, the main priority of the DG as regards Document management activities was to optimise resources through a more effective use of two Ares functionalities: the e-signatory to validate documents and Areslook to register emails.

The e-signatory is widely used within the DG to validate documents (81%) but has not reached the target date set for 2018, 85%. The level of use of the e-signatory is monitored by the CAD (*Centre d'Administration des Documents*) since it is one of the three indicators of the monthly Dashboard of Directors. Awareness actions were organised by the CAD with all DMOs correspondents in each directorate to find out possible difficulties encountered and promote its use and advantages.

Areslook is one of the most used functionalities of Ares to register emails. Its use rate is increasing in the DG. It is monitored via the report on document management.

The filing rate of the DG reached 97% being the target rate 95%. The way of measuring filing rate has been changed in the 4th quarter of the year to better reflect filing results: it is measured now as a percentage instead of as a numerical value and focused on the documents for which EAC is lead DG instead of all documents received.

Quality of official e-files (metadata, content and closure) was also an important element of document management during 2018. The creation of e-files is not harmonised across the DG, hence important actions were carried-out on this matter. To solve the issue the DMO created new guidelines to create official e-files, delivered extensive training for DMOs correspondents and prepared a quality control system.

The number of open files that have not received any document in the last year indicates the level of control of their files of every unit. This indicator remains stable between a reasonable rate of 17-20%.

In line with the Knowledge management strategy of the Commission information should be shared more widely across the Commission while reinforcing restrictions on sensitive information. The CAD has worked with the units to increase the number of official files shared with the rest of the Commission. The current rate is 21% of EAC files are opened to others DGs.

DG EAC is owner of several IT systems that automatically register and file documents in Ares and create files in NomCom via HRS (HAN Repository Services). In 2018, the DMO has closely worked with the IT unit (R.4) to integrate into Ares/Hermes the current applications managing EC Stages and European Solidarity Corps. The integration is currently ongoing.

An extensive campaign to promote best practices were carried out at the end of the year in each directorate. It focused on specific problems encountered by each service and helped to better understand the user's needs, identify recurrent issues and propose practical solutions.

Knowledge Management

Activities that targeted the employee engagement focused on the improvement of knowledge sharing through the creation of a dedicated team and strategy, specific meetings, workshops and coaching sessions.

Last year, the knowledge management team focused its activities on improving knowledge sharing installation in the DG by diversifying the channels to which solutions travel from place A to place B.

A new dedicated community of practice was created in May ("KM Correspondents"), 34 colleagues with different backgrounds met 3 times, innovate experimenting new communication methodology (Knowledge Café), participate to calls to action and collaborate through a blog.

Collaboration is still promoted internally but supported by "One-stop-shop" project solutions in order to better capturing, sharing and retrieving knowledge across the DG (28 new workspaces/subworkspaces).

Data protection

As of June 2018, DG EAC has been proactively preparing for the new Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 following the Secretary General's note. This entailed the set-up of an encompassing stock taking and the evaluation, documentation and regularisation of all processing activities of personal data to these new standards, including risk assessment and conversion of all existing Notifications into Records. This implementation process will have to continue well into 2019.

The function of Data Protection Coordinator had to be strengthened. DG EAC therefore nominated the Head of Unit of the Unit for organisational performance and legal affairs as Data Protection Coordinator for the DG and decided that he would be supported by the Deputy Data Protection Coordinator to achieve synergies with the legal team.

Measures are being taken to mitigate the risk of non-compliance, covering the continued implementation of the DG EAC's data protection action plan, the submission of EAC's documented inventory of all data processing activities involving personal data, and the provision / request for additional resources (IT and human) to proceed with all necessary checks.

The implementation of the DG EAC's data protection action plan entails aspects such as continuously updating of the inventory of personal data processing activities, the assessment of compliance with general principles (Art. 4 Reg. 2018/1725), in particular as regards lawfulness, data minimisation and storage limitation, re-drafting the existing privacy statements so as to convey clear and intelligible information to the data subjects concerned, and the identification and, where necessary, the establishment of internal rules governing the restrictions of data subjects rights

Since November 2018 knowledge sharing and awareness activities towards data owners and all other staff have been ongoing in view of assuring data protection/security requirements.

As this is a priority at DG and Commission level, DG EAC will ensure regular monitoring and bi-annual reporting to senior management on the Data Protection Action plan.

2.2.4 External communication activities

DG EAC's communication and dissemination activities aim at informing citizens about policy developments in the fields of education and training, youth, sport and culture as well as **communicating programmes' opportunities and results** to stakeholders. The activities also promote DG EAC's contribution to implementing **President Juncker's political priorities**, particularly the priority linked to "Jobs, Growth and Investment" and, more recently, the priority to "strengthen the European identity through education and culture".

In that respect, 2018 was in particular a landmark year celebrating the **European Year of Cultural Heritage** (EYCH). The purpose of the EYCH was to encourage people to discover and engage with European cultural heritage and help reinforce a sense of belonging to a common European space. The EYCH initiatives and activities **reached more than 7 Million European citizens** with the EYCH's main messages. A series of initiatives and events were organised across Europe to enable people to feel closer and more involved with their cultural heritage. All the EU institutions, EU Member States and many international organisations as well as civil society were involved in this initiative and organised events to celebrate the EYCH. A dedicated call was launched under the Creative Europe programme for cooperation projects relating to the EYCH and a wealth of additional opportunities were available under Erasmus+, Europe for Citizens, Horizon 2020, and other EU programmes. A dedicated website contributed to this success. ARTE was an official partner of the Year. The Year also featured significantly in social media, with the hashtag #EuropeForCulture mentioned 154,000 times over the course of the year.

The other main events and initiatives of 2018 were:

- The **First European Education Summit**, which was held in Brussels on 25 January 2018, attracted good press and social media coverage. The objective of the Summit was to raise the political profile of education as a vital force for economic growth and social cohesion and to give a renewed focus and stronger impetus to the reform/modernisation of education policies. It brought together 21 education ministers and around 600 participants, experts and stakeholders, a mobilisation of the European educational world without precedent. Coming in the wake of the Gothenburg Summit and the European Council conclusions of 14 December 2017, the Summit gave strong encouragement to deliver on the commitment to create the European Education Area. .
- The launch and dissemination of the **Education and Training Monitor 2018** was supplemented with a range of specific factsheets and EU and countries infographics and included a user-friendly presentation of the report on the website and social media.
- The adoption of the legal basis for the **new programme** to enable young Europeans to engage in voluntary work, the **European Solidarity Corps** required a wide and clear communication to potential participants. Since the launch of the pilot phase, more than 100.000 people have registered in the ESC database. A Facebook group on the European Youth page has brought together around 4,000 young people interested in this initiative.
- The **Eurobarometer** survey on youth was completed and the results published in early 2018. The survey explored young EU citizens' participation in a range of social aspects of European life, including voluntary activities, political elections, as well as groups and organisations such as youth or sports clubs. Its main findings showed, compared to previous surveys, an increase in

young Europeans considering education and skills, environmental protection and fighting climate change, employment and the management of migratory flows and integration of refugees as the priority that the EU should tackle. The survey also showed that **young people have been more active** with a third of them stating that they had been involved in organised voluntary activities in the last 12 months; more than half are involved in organisations such as sports clubs, youth clubs or local NGOs. In particular, 64% of the respondents say that they have voted in a political election in the last 3 years.

- The **EC corporate campaigns**: [EU invest](#), [EUandME](#) and [EU protects](#) progressed and DG EAC continued to contribute to them with its information and materials on projects results.
- The **European Week of Sport**, which yet again, received immense enthusiasm and participation across the EU and beyond. Celebrated from 23 to 30 September, this flagship initiative run by DG EAC included activities all across Europe and was extended to the Eastern Partnership and Western Balkans countries and regions for the first time. Pending final figures, it is estimated that this year's campaign may have reached about 15 million participants, all following the motto #BeActive. One of the main novelties was the #BeActive night. It was organised on 29 September in all participating countries and regions.
- The **European Researchers' Night** organised in 27 countries, reached even further than in previous editions in the levels of participants and visitors.

In order to increase the visibility, accessibility and impact of our policies and programmes and enhance our efficiency, we undertook a review and made changes in relation to our processes and tools, in particular:

- With the revision of the **Dissemination and Exploitation Strategy** for Erasmus+ and Creative Europe, we aimed at better target the needs of our stakeholders as regards the dissemination and exploitation of programmes results. The dissemination strategy processes and procedures were simplified, the strategy was complemented by SMART objectives and indicators, and synergies with networks were proposed to be reinforced (National Agencies, Eurodesks, Creative Europe desks. etc.). Further improvement were made to the user friendliness of the [Erasmus+](#) and [Creative Europe Project Results' Platforms](#) via analysis of statistical data and improvement of performance indicators.
- We pursued the process of the improvement of **EAC's web presence** and the contribution to the EC corporate digital transformation process: all revamped EAC's websites follow users' needs and are in line with the corporate guidelines. The websites of Education and Training, Traineeships, MSCA were updated, content rationalised and improved, new functionalities added.

Overall, DG EAC mostly used social media to interact with a young, engaged audience and to generate interest in events, programmes and policies. The combined audience of the DG's social media accounts exceeded 1 million people in 2018, with Erasmus+ being the biggest DG-specific Facebook page in the Commission (with more than half a million followers). Facebook Live or live tweets at events and conferences, Twitter walls, infographics, animations and videos, competitions, Facebook and/or Twitter campaigns and the promotion of thematic days have been carried out for programme- and policy-related events and communication opportunities of DG EAC. DG EAC also increasingly used the corporate Instagram account to pass relevant messages to target audiences. 24 press releases were prepared to communicate on main events, initiatives or policy documents release.

2.2.5 Examples of economy and efficiency

Efforts in 2018 pursued to preserve efficiency in the delivery of the different policies and programmes, in coordination with the designated executive agencies, and when applicable in coordination with other DGs who jointly manage instruments contributing to the same objectives or areas, such as DG for Employment and Social Affairs as regards the Erasmus+ programme, and DG for Communication Networks, Content and Technology, as regards the Creative Europe programme and with the DG for Research and Innovation as regards Horizon 2020.

As in previous years, DG EAC invested further in **dedicated IT tools (eForms, EPlusLink, Mobility Tool, Lifecard) for supporting EAC decentralised actions via National Agencies**. Specific effort focused on **adapting the existing Erasmus + IT tools** to cater for the new European Solidarity Corps programme. Continuous efforts focused on reinforcing the monitoring and reporting (Management Reporting, BO reports & Qlikview dashboards) to ensure **more effectiveness, efficiency and better compliance regarding the grants managed by the National Agencies**. Improvements were made for the European Solidarity Corps/Youth Portal and the dissemination of project results (VALOR) to support the European Solidarity Corps programme. Adaptations and new developments will provide better grounds to define the new IT Tools strategy for the next generation of programmes and to facilitate the creation of new programme actions and policy initiatives.



Themis Christophidou @ChristophidouEU · 17 Nov 2018

Proud, dynamic team at the service of European citizens !

Working on #education, #culture, #sport.

And on #digital, #research, #skills, #creativity, #innovation, #LLL.

For the #youth. For all ages.

TOGETHER
WE ARE STRONGER

We are #DGEAC 

