Annual Activity Report 2024

EUROPEAN EDUCATION AND CULTURE
EXECUTIVE AGENCY

Contents

EACEA IN BRIEF

The European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) is a Community Body set up by the European Commission and entrusted with the implementation of parts of the Union programmes. EACEA's mandate for the 2021–2027 MFF (^{1}) comprises a broad portfolio of programmes (^{2}) and the ambitious task of bringing the Commission's policies to life, empowering citizen and civil society.

EACEA's mission is to fund and support European projects connecting people and cultures, and reaching out to the world.

Working together in education, culture, media, solidarity, sport, youth, citizenship and values, we foster innovation through the exchange of knowledge, ideas and skills in a spirit of cross-border cooperation and mutual respect.

We strive to provide excellent programme management and high quality service through transparent and objective procedures, showing Europe at its best.

EACEA is governed by a Steering Committee (^{3}) and operates under the supervision of six 'parent' Directorates-General – DGs (EAC, CNECT, JUST, INTPA, NEAR and EMPL). It contributes to the implementation of the political priorities of the European Commission in line with the parent DGs' Strategic plans 2020-2024. The Agency is entrusted with its own operating budget (EUR 69.9 million (^{4}) in 2024) financed by the EU General Budget. The Director of EACEA is the Authorising Officer (AO) and has overall responsibility for implementing EACEA's budget, in accordance with the principles of sound financial management.

In the current challenging geopolitical context, EACEA remains steadfast in managing the funding of important Commission's policies, adapting flexibly to new priorities and continuing to support its beneficiaries. In 2024 EACEA was entrusted with operational appropriations for EUR 1.5 billion (^{5}) and monitored a portfolio of around 8 500 running projects (^{6}).

In 2024, the Agency fulfilled its mission thanks to the dedication of its 536 staff members, whether by supporting educational, youth and sport developments, safeguarding Europe's cultural heritage, promoting open and democratic society, or strengthening solidarity.

(^{1}) Multiannual financial framework.

(^{2}) As described in the Commission Decision C(2022)5057 repealing Decision C(2021)951 and as amended by C(2022)9296, C(2023)4617 and C(2024)2350 EACEA programmes are: Erasmus+, Creative Europe, Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme (CERV), European Solidarity Corps, Neighbourhood, development and international cooperation instrument (NDICI) – part of it being Intra Africa Academic Mobility –, Instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA III), Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions in the area of education, youth, sport, culture and media.

(^{3}) C(2021)2630 of 20 April 2021.

(^{4}) According to the 2024 initial Budget - Commitment appropriations EUR-27.

(^{5}) According to the 2024 work programmes of the programmes

(^{6}) From which less than 5% represent legacy projects.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This annual activity report is a management report of the Director of EACEA to the College of Commissioners. Annual activity reports are the main instrument of management accountability within the Commission and constitute the basis on which the College takes political responsibility for the decisions it takes as well as for the coordinating, executive and management functions it exercises, as laid down in the Treaties ([7]).

A. Key results and progress towards achieving the Commission's general objectives and department's specific objectives

The European Union values stated in Article 2 of the Treaty are at the very heart of European policies. By managing programmes such as Erasmus+, Creative Europe, the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme, Intra-Africa Academic Mobility, the European Solidarity Corps and Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions (PPPAs) in the field of education, youth, sport, culture and media, EACEA directly contributes to creating a society that fully integrates those values. This is more than ever important in the current geopolitical landscape. Through the effective implementation of the delegated programmes and actions, in 2024 EACEA confirmed its capacity to concretely support the European Commission's priorities ([8]), while also swiftly accommodating changes triggered by external factors.

Priorities of the European Commission
- A Europe fit for the Digital Age
- A stronger Europe in the world
- Promoting our European way of life
- A new push for European democracy

Programmes 2021-2027
- ✓ Erasmus+
- ✓ Creative Europe
  - Culture strand
  - MEDIA strand
  - Cross-sectoral strand
- ✓ Citizens, Equality, Rights & Values
- ✓ European Solidarity Corps
- ✓ Intra-Africa Academic Mobility
- + Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions

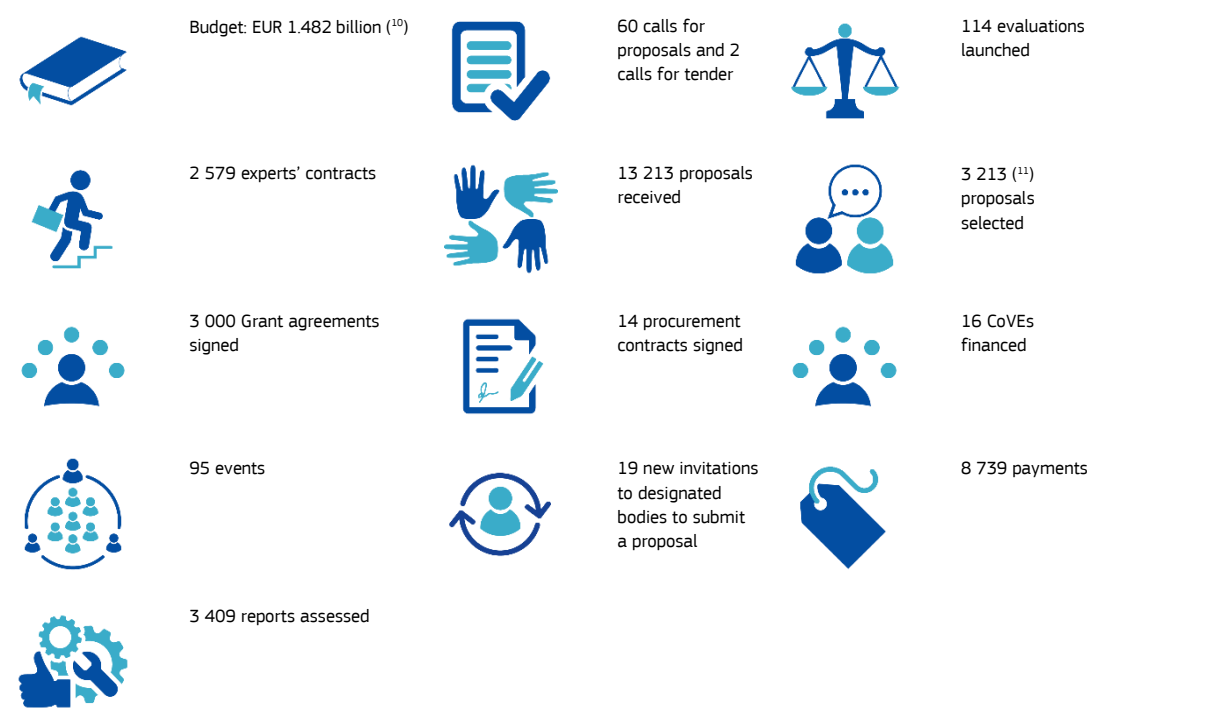
([7]) Article 17(1) of the Treaty on European Union.

([8]) Furthermore, the Agency contributed to the environmental sustainability and climate goals of the Commission's European Green Deal objective through the activities of the EMAS group (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme – see section 'Sound environmental management' for further details).

In doing so, the Agency showed a very good performance, and a high degree of resilience. The latter was particularly evident while facing several challenges, such as:

- the increased workload and number of newly delegated actions;
- more articulated procurement procedures for new digital platforms and IT solutions;
- the need to effectively react to the measures triggered by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine;
- the accelerated phasing out of the legacy programmes and the preparation for the transition to SUMMA [9]

In this context, selection and recruitment procedures represented a further intense and demanding challenge throughout the year, which led to 68 new colleagues joining EACEA to contribute enabling successful delivery of the Commission's objectives.

The good performance of the Agency in 2024 was made possible by the high standard of professionalism and dedication exhibited by the Agency's staff, which, in spite of the mentioned challenges, allowed for the achievement of the following **key results:**

Budget: EUR 1.482 billion [10]	60 calls for proposals and 2 calls for tender	114 evaluations launched
2 579 experts' contracts	13 213 proposals received	3 213 [11] proposals selected
3 000 Grant agreements signed	14 procurement contracts signed	16 CoVEs financed
95 events	19 new invitations to designated bodies to submit a proposal	8 739 payments
3 409 reports assessed		

Moreover, to meet the parent DGs request for qualitative elements complementing the set of quantitative performance indicators, in 2024 the Agency has deployed a pilot action plan in the frame of the **EACEA Feedback to policy (F2P) Strategy** developed together with the parent DGs. The deliverables of the 2024 F2P action plan have exemplary shown how the Agency's programmes and projects contribute to EU specific policy priority areas. The

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[9] The European Commission's next-generation corporate financial system designed to modernise and harmonise EU financial business processes.
[10] Commitment appropriations (C1, C4, C5, E0, R0 credits)
[11] For several calls, the Agency was provided with additional funds, which made it possible to extend the list of applications retained for funding drawn from reserve lists.

pilot will be followed by a new rolling work plan in 2025, meeting the new requests coming from the new Commission priorities.

To contribute to the European Commission unwavering support for Ukraine, EACEA deployed actions to assist Ukrainian citizens and ensure their continued participation:

- In Erasmus+, the Capacity Building in the field of Youth has been extended to the Eastern Partnership region, including Ukraine.
- 34 projects submitted by Ukrainian Higher Education Institutions were successfully selected to participate in the Jean Monnet modules.
- Following an interruption of eTwinning in Ukraine in the past years, the eTwinning National Support Organisation has relaunched its activities in January 2024.
- In January, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine joined the Eurydice network and began cooperation on studies and analyses on education systems, with work currently in progress.
- EACEA produced a special publication highlighting EU support to Ukrainian cultural and creative sectors during the conflict.
- The CERV call on the rights of the child focused on the rights of children with specific needs and vulnerabilities, including those who fled Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Six projects addressing mental health of migrant children, including Ukrainian refugees, were funded.

EACEA also spent considerable efforts in preparing for the **transition to SUMMA**, the European Commission's next generation corporate financial system designated to modernise and harmonise EU financial business processes. The SUMMA4EACEA working group continued its regular meetings during the reporting period, monitoring requests and deadlines from the SUMMA BUDG team. At the same time, high priority was given to closing legacy projects, to minimize the risks entailed by the lack of portability of legacy projects in SUMMA.
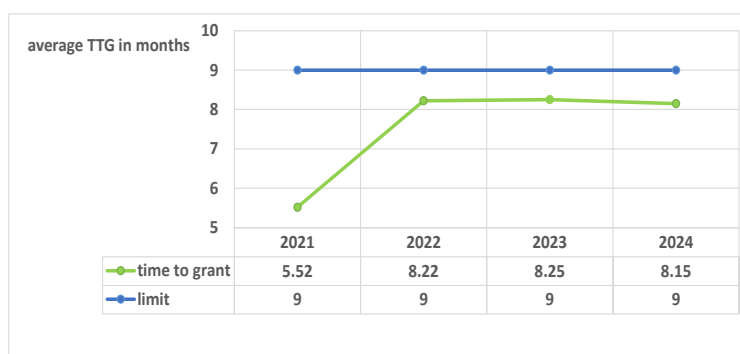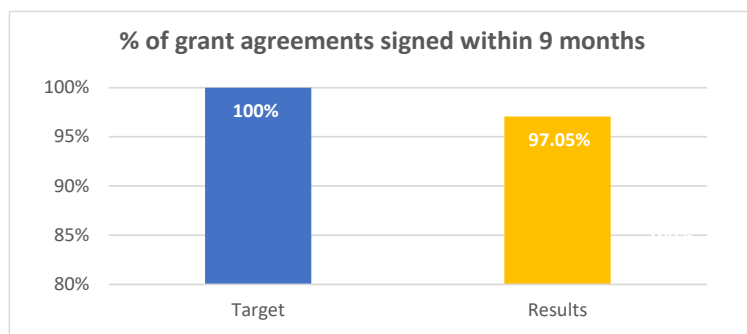
In 2024, EACEA invested heavily to its **digital transformation**, with a view to better support our programmes. Modern tools have been deployed, revamping the communication with our stakeholders. This is the case for example of the Eurydice Network: in 2024, most of the regular reports produced by Eurydice were converted in online publications with visuals and open access to data, including System-level Indicators and the European Education Structures, both used for the Education and Training Monitor. Moreover, the thematic reports published in 2024 were released with open data files that allow users to download and use the data.

Last but not least, in March 2024 EACEA successfully relocated to the North Light building (SB34), together with other Executive Agencies. This confirms our **commitment towards the EMAS requirements** to reduce office space and decrease the Commission's environmental impact. The move to the new building marked a significant milestone for the entire Agency which involved its staff in the steering process and established transparent and continuous communication for a smooth transition to the new work environment.
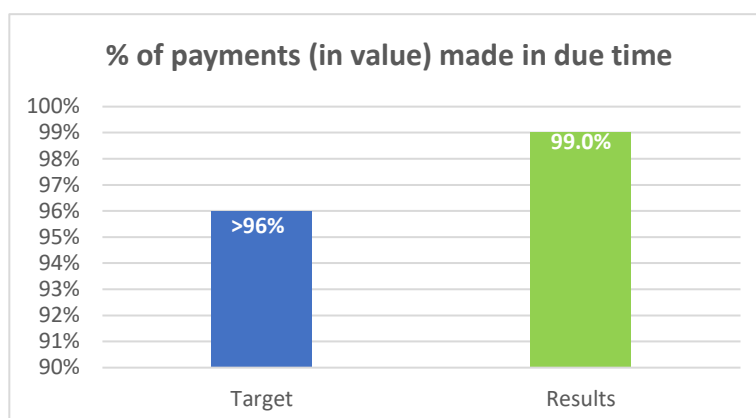
B. Key performance indicators

EACEA uses key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the effectiveness of the implementation of its delegated tasks. Since 2021, the Agency has identified one additional key policy-oriented indicator for Erasmus+. The aggregated results for each of the five indicators are presented below. Further details and any deviation from the targets for the first four indicators are explained in section 2.1.3 Efficiency of controls and in Annex 8.

KPI 1 – Time to grant

% of grant agreements signed within 9 months

	Target	Results
	100%	97.05%

average TTG in months

	2021	2022	2023	2024
time to grant	5.52	8.22	8.25	8.15
limit	9	9	9	9

KPI 2 – Time to pay ([12])

% of payments (in value) made in due time

	Target	Results
	>96%	99.0%

([12]) Concerning transactions of the operational budget (FMA: BGUE) in C1, C5 and E0 appropriations.

KPI 3 – Budget execution ([13]**)**	**% of execution of commitment appropriations vs forecast** target: 100% Results: 100%
KPI 4 – Estimated risk at closure	**% of estimated risk at closure** Maximum value allowed 2% Results 2021 · 2022: 0.80% · 2023: 0.67% · 2024: 0.49%
KPI 5 – Number of Higher Education Institutions taking part in the European University alliances	284 baseline 2020 436 result 2023 571 result 2024
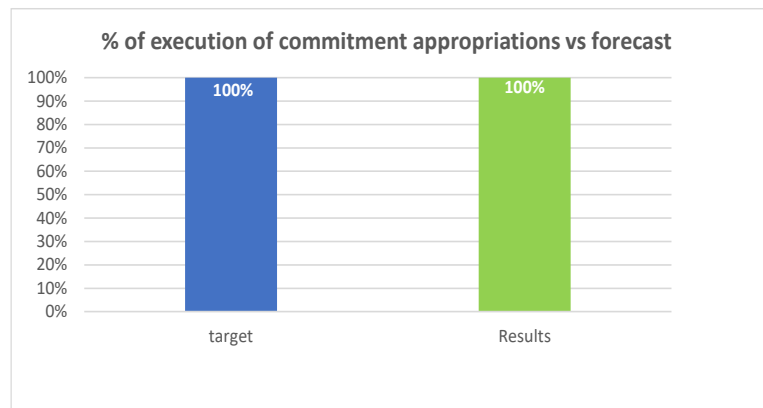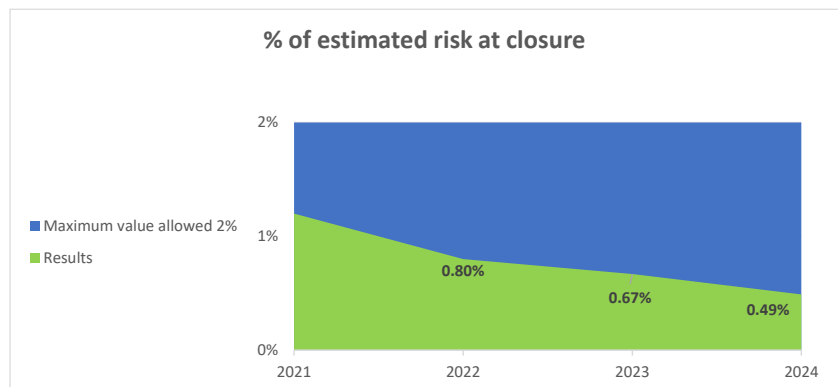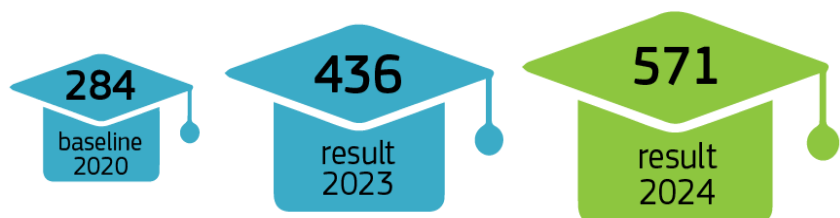
([13]) Concerning transactions of the operational budget (FMA: BGUE) in C1, C5 and E0 appropriations.

C. Key conclusions on internal control and financial management

EACEA has systematically examined the available control results and indicators, as well as the observations and recommendations issued by the internal auditor and the European Court of Auditors. These elements have been assessed to determine their impact on management's assurance about the achievement of the control objectives. Please refer to Section 2 for further details.

In conclusion, management has reasonable assurance that, overall, suitable controls are in place and working as intended; risks are being appropriately monitored and mitigated. The Director, 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 agency's Director and the parent DGs on management matters, the main elements of this report and assurance declaration have been brought to the attention of the agency's Steering Committee and the parent Directorates General.

1. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGENCY'S ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME – HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

In 2024, the Agency managed several programmes under two multiannual financial frameworks (MFFs): the legacy programmes from the 2014-2020 MFF, gradually phasing out (945 projects closed during the reporting period), and above all the current 2021-2027 MFF, for which the Agency is implementing the following key programmes:

- Erasmus+
- Creative Europe
- Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values
- European Solidarity Corps
- Intra-Africa Academic Mobility V
- PPPAs in the fields of education, youth, sport, culture and media

Reliability of information on programme performance

EC corporate processes and systems for programme and financial management are the source of nearly all information about the 2024 performance of the programmes delegated to EACEA. The business process owners of the EC corporate systems for programme management (eGrants) and financial management (ABAC) establish the procedures that users, including EACEA, apply. As stated in 'Data governance and data policies at the European Commission', the business owner of each data asset is accountable for ensuring implementation of data policies, including data quality safeguards. To ensure that eGrants and ABAC data is well-managed and reliable, there are controls on, for example, staff access rights, the authorisation of corrections, and the protection of personal data, as well as on the compliance of beneficiaries' reports with their contractual obligations (via ex-ante checks, risk-based monitoring, and ex-post audits).

For aspects of the PPPAs lifecycle that cannot be managed via eGrants at present, the Agency has adopted specific guidance, templates, and workflows that enable the reliable processing and monitoring of these actions. The key performance data for the PPPAs is extracted from the ARES corporate document management system (e.g. consortium notifications) or ABAC (e.g. grant signatures and payments).

Additionally, local EACEA systems oversaw the remaining projects of legacy programmes. In line with the corporate data governance principles, the Agency has Data Owner and Data Steward roles for the legacy programme systems, contributing to an IT Legacy Management Working Group, which reports to the Agency's senior management. Therefore, there is already a robust structure in place to respond if data quality issues arise in those systems.

Feedback to policy

The Agency **successfully delivered all six Feedback to Policy (F2P) activities** listed in the Agency's Pilot F2P Plan on the Digital Transition, which was agreed with the parent DGs in December 2023:

- ✓ an interactive data visualisation tool on thematic clustering of digital projects;
- ✓ an interactive data visualisation tool presenting digital projects per worldwide country;
- ✓ a note on the results of the calls for proposals that focused on supporting digital education and skills, with a specific focus on the thematic areas covered;
- ✓ a report analysing the project deliverables on AI use in education, with policy observations and key messages;
- ✓ a stakeholder cluster meeting (between project coordinators, EACEA and parent DG representatives) on media literacy across CREA, Erasmus+ and CERV, structured to provide input for policymaking;
- ✓ a flash report containing news from ongoing digital literacy projects.

The Agency's F2P in 2024 went beyond the Digital Plan. Units produced over thirty F2P deliverables, including EACEA-organised meetings with project beneficiaries, eBrochures of projects relevant to a particular policy topic, impact analyses of certain calls for proposals, and reviews of the results of particular actions. The Agency maintains a repository where parent DG staff can access the materials produced.

The Agency agreed with its parent DGs to fine-tune the approach in 2025, to respond to the agenda of the new Commission. F2P correspondents within both the Agency and the parent DGs have developed a rolling-work plan method to jointly assess the F2P needs that emerge during the year and to co-design appropriate activities in response. Requests already incorporated in the 2025 planning cover basic skills development, including links to well-being/inclusion in school, as well as Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education needed for 'green' and other emerging jobs. The initial F2P workplan also features citizenship education, video games as a tool to engage citizens with public policies, and the impact of projects aimed at developing the healthcare sectors in key global regions.

1.1. ERASMUS+

General objective of the European Commission: Promoting our European way of life ([14])

EUR 991 million	40 calls for proposals	2 calls for tenders
71 evaluation sessions launched	1 567 grant agreements and 6 procurement contracts signed	4 812 payments

Similar to previous years, the Agency successfully delivered an information campaign around Erasmus+ calls managed by EACEA, providing applicants with information and technical support sessions. Applicants also received guidance on the online application process, answers to FAQs, video tutorials and other support material.

In 2024, the majority of Erasmus+ activities involved preparing and implementing grant selections and procurement processes. **The results of the grant selections indicate increased participation across all actions.** The most significant increases in submitted eligible applications were observed in the Capacity Building in the field of Vocational Education and Training (VET) call (increase of 85%), the Erasmus+ Virtual Exchanges call (increase of 74%) and the Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters call (increase of almost 50%). Other calls, including Centres of Vocational Excellence, Cooperation Partnerships in the field of Education and Training submitted by European NGOs, Capacity Building in Higher Education, as well as the Jean Monnet actions and Sport calls, also saw increases between 21% and 34% ([15]). Additionally, there was a decrease in the number of ineligible applications. All these factors resulted in a more intense competition compared to previous years.

Face-to-face meetings and project monitoring visits took place mostly in the second half of 2024. These efforts focused on providing reinforced support and monitoring to projects facing challenges and on identifying transferable success stories. Beneficiaries of the programme continued to receive the appropriate guidance for the implementation of their projects and a joint monitoring approach involving EACEA, DG EAC and DG EMPL has been implemented.

The Agency has been involved in the follow up on the delivery of tasks and reports related to the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 Interim Evaluation and Erasmus+ 2014-2020 Final Evaluation. External experts involved in evaluations of proposals, as well as Agency staff, participated in the evaluation surveys and joined interviews with the surveyors.

Upholding the commitments of the Memorandum of Understanding between EACEA and National Agencies (NAs), the Agency participated in DG EAC-led NA events and various information and knowledge sharing activities (online and onsite). NAs have been invited to

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([14]) More details on the results of each programme are presented in Annex 2
([15]) Particularly for the call 'Jean Monnet Action in other fields of Education and Training: Learning EU Initiatives', the interest of schools in applying has grown by 75%

EACEA information events promoting the calls under direct management and other relevant events such as the 20 Years of Erasmus Mundus event and the Meeting of National Erasmus+ Offices and Erasmus+ National Focal Points.

EACEA implemented activities under the following Erasmus+ actions:

- Key Action 1: Learning Mobility
- Key Action 2: Cooperation among organisations and institutions
- Key Action 3: Support to policy development and cooperation
- Jean-Monnet actions

In 2024, the programme continued the roll-out of the big flagship actions supported in direct management (European Universities, Centres of Vocational Excellence, Erasmus+ Teacher academies, Alliances for Innovation) and delivered outputs under the following specific objectives:

Specific objective 5.2 – With the support of the Erasmus+ programme, promote learning mobility of individuals, as well as cooperation, inclusion, excellence, creativity and innovation at the level of organisations and policies in the field of education and training.

In the field of Higher Education, the results of the European Universities 2024 call exceeded expectations, with 60 University alliances involving more than 500 Higher Education institutions: now there are 65 Alliances with more than 570 institutions participating in them. In addition, 10 policy experimentation projects concluded their work on a European degree and the legal status of the alliances and provided a key contribution to the Commission's policy 'package' on a blueprint for a European degree [16]. The Erasmus Charter (ECHE) call saw a record number of 431 applications received with 291 charters awarded.

On 27-28 May, the **Erasmus Mundus action celebrated its 20th anniversary** with a conference in Brussels. The event gathered more than 300 project representatives, students, alumni, National Agencies and policy makers. In addition, nearly 400 people connected to follow the live web-streaming. Representatives from Higher Education Institutions, National Agencies and education experts discussed the action's impact on the education systems, institutions, and university staff as well as the possible pathways for the future. Finally, an award ceremony was held to celebrate the most active universities, oldest projects and the Erasmus Mundus Alumni and Students Association (EMA). To mark this occasion, the study 20 years of Erasmus Mundus – Beyond borders and boundaries

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[16] The results were also recently summarised in a specific report published by the European Commission (COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Report on the final outcomes of the Erasmus+ policy experimentation projects: European degree (label) and institutionalised EU cooperation instruments) and present an analysis of the added value of a European degree alongside a list of 16 co-created European criteria with other suggestions such as toolkits and guidelines to operationalise the co-created European criteria. The report also provides insights on the existing European level solutions for a legal status for alliances of higher education institutions, accompanied by recommendations for the future.

was published, providing an analysis of the transformative long-term impact of the programme on individuals, higher education institutions, and countries both within and outside the European Union. The study revealed positive trends in international student and partner participation, improvements in teaching skills, curriculum internationalisation, and administrative processes. Additionally, it underscored the programme's significant global indirect impacts, such as activating Bologna Process tools and contributing to European and international policy agendas.

Before the Erasmus Mundus celebration, EACEA and the Erasmus Mundus Support Initiative (EMSI) organised the first Erasmus Mundus regional seminar ('Bridging Asia/Pacific and Europe through Higher Education Cooperation Projects') in Tokyo in hybrid mode. The seminar focused on exploring policy practices that foster institutional engagement in international cooperation projects, addressing recurrent cooperation challenges between European and Asian/Pacific institutions, and developing solutions to increase Asia/Pacific participation in the Erasmus+/ Erasmus Mundus programme.

The 'Study in Europe' initiative was relaunched in 2024 with a three-year service contract. The aim is to provide a range of services and advisory support to enhance the attractiveness of European higher education in the world and as a study destination. In addition, several analyses on topics relevant to EU policy on international higher education are being conducted.

In January, the Agency invited the networks of National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs), the International Contact Points (ICPs in NAs) and the ever-expanding network of Erasmus+ National Focal Points (ENFPs) to a meeting. NEOs ([17]) and ENFPs are tasked to promote Erasmus+ in non-EU countries and assist universities, students, youth and sport organisations and other stakeholders to connect, foster collaboration and increase the impact of the Erasmus+ programme. For the first time, the newly created network of ENFPs participated in such a meeting, gathering more than 150 participants to exchange experience, share knowledge and network.

Throughout the year, the Agency delivered training sessions for ENFPs, as part of various events including the **Regional Erasmus+ Week 2024 for Asia, the Pacific and the Middle East** in Bangkok, Thailand, held last November. This initiative implemented under the ongoing contract, aims to increase their knowledge about the programme and gain the skills necessary to perform their roles. EACEA was present also in other regional events such as the **Erasmus+ Week 2024 for Sub-Saharan Africa** in Abidjan, Ivory Coast last June and the **Erasmus+ Week 2024 for Latin America and the Caribbean** in Montevideo, Uruguay in late September/early October 2024 to acquaint ENFPs with the novelties of the new Erasmus+ 2025 calls ([18]).

([17]) A new call for NEOs was successfully concluded in 2024 covering their activities for 2025-2026. Under their new mandate, these NEOs will continue to steer, supervise and coordinate the work of the local Higher Education Reform Experts (HEREs), designated academics that facilitate structural reforms at national level.

([18]) EACEA co-organised in total 7 online info sessions

The Capacity Building in Higher Education action, a recognised soft diplomacy tool within the international dimension of the Erasmus+ programme and a vector of EU values worldwide, saw a steep rise in participation in 2024, denoting peaked interest from higher education institutions across the board, also in embattled regions such as the Middle East and Ukraine. For the new call launched in 2024, the Global Gateway priorities were present to reflect the change in the EU's approach to external action that is now called upon to permeate through all relevant programmes and activities. The year also saw the release of a synthesis **report on the external monitoring exercise 2023-2024**, which was piloted in two regions: the Western Balkans and Asia.

The year 2024 also saw the kick-off of the work of the new service provider for the Alumni communities. A more robust design of services and a new follow-up model will ensure strengthened capacity for the networks providing more networking opportunities, while their online presence will be ensured under the Agency's Erasmus Networks Platform (ENP).

In the area of **Partnerships for Innovation**, the call for proposals for Forward-Looking Projects, published last December, covers a variety of sectors and topics in the Education and Training area ([19]). Forward-Looking Projects are large-scale projects that aim to identify, develop, test and/or assess innovative (policy) approaches that have the potential of becoming mainstreamed, thus improving education and training systems. They will support forward-looking ideas responding to key European priorities ([20]).

Alliances for Innovation have been contributing to advancing the green transition and addressing climate change challenges, in line with the **European Green Deal** initiative. For example, the project BOOST aims to boost agribusiness acceleration and digital hub networking by providing a sophisticated training programme for the application of sustainable Precision Agriculture (PA) methodologies on management, agripreneurship, marketing, networking, and digital transformation. The project's 13 partners in 7 EU countries aim at setting up a need-driven VET programme to provide PA entrants with the required technological, digital, managerial, and environmental skills. This will allow them to offer an innovative approach to PA teaching and pave the way towards sustainable agriculture and climate change/ environmental protection approaches.

The European Policy Experimentations under Key Action 3 aim at supporting evidence-informed policy by identifying and developing innovative (policy) approaches that have the potential of becoming mainstreamed. The 2024 call for proposals covered a whole spectrum of sectors and topics in the Education and Training area ([21]) and exceeded expectations attracting 329 applications (well beyond the estimated 100).

([19]) School Education, Vocational Education and Training, Adult learning, Digital education.

([20]) The call covers 8 topics: basic skills; vocational excellence; development of joint VET qualifications and modules; support to the Pact for Skills for adult learning; career guidance to support adults' participation in training; assessment of digital skills and competences; ethical and effective use of generative Artificial Intelligence systems in education and training; innovative data collection for data-informed decision-making in primary, secondary and iVET.

([21]) Higher education, digital education, school education, vocational education and training, micro-credentials, adult education.

The Erasmus+ Teacher Academies have been contributing to creating European partnerships and to promoting cooperation between teacher education institutions and training providers. Their objective is to offer support for teachers at the beginning of their career and strengthen their professional development. For instance, the funded project on Teaching Sustainability aims to build a new, creative, and diverse European partnership of teacher education and training providers around Educating for Environmental Sustainability. The main outputs will be a Teacher Learning Programme and Learning Teaching Packages.

Following the increased interest in the Jean-Monnet call for schools and VET institutions, the Agency organised a cluster meeting with schoolteachers, which was highly appreciated by participants. The outcomes of this meeting are presented in the Bring the EU to school report.

An important aspect of Erasmus+ is **digital transformation,** focusing on the development of digital skills and competences.

With the objective of streamlining the way our communities, IT projects and platforms are managed, two calls for tenders were launched in May 2024: one for Community management activities and one for IT services.

The call for tenders on Community management and Stakeholders' engagement included five lots, four specifics for EPALE ([22]), ESEP ([23]), ESCI ([24]), EDEH ([25]) and one more generic to cover either existing or new communities that could be delegated to EACEA in the future. All five corresponding Framework Contracts were signed before the end of the year, with specific contracts signed and running as from 1 January 2025 for EPALE and ESEP lots, ensuring business continuity for the management of platforms and communities.

For the IT Services call, the award decision was signed in December. Due to observations received in the stand-still period, the signature of the contract had to be suspended to allow for thorough analysis. The contract thus could not be signed in 2024.

In the meantime, the teams continued to animate and monitor the above-mentioned platforms as well as EHESO ([26]):

- As the annual theme of the ESEP was 'Well-being at school', ESEP provided educators with the opportunity to explore and integrate a whole-school approach to well-being and mental health within the European school education systems;
- As a follow up to the European Year of Skills, EPALE continued to emphasise the importance of skills development. EPALE users actively participated in the discussions on the 2025 focus themes 'Upskilling and Reskilling for the Digital Transition', 'Adult Learning as a way out of Poverty' and 'Adult Learning for Sustainable Development' in numerous activities throughout the year. In addition,

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([22]) Electronic Platform for Adult learning in Europe
([23]) European School Education Platform
([24]) European Student Card Initiative
([25]) European Digital Education Hub
([26]) European Higher Education Sector Observatory

various technical and visual improvements were made on the EPALE platform and the mobile application to further facilitate an active and vibrant adult learning community. The newly launched 'MyCommunity' section provides information on the most popular content, must-reads as well as the most engaged members, who can now also be recognised via a new badge system;

- EDEH members continued working on subjects that impact the digital landscape in education such as hybrid learning space, immersive learning, explainable Artificial Intelligence, wellbeing in education and much more. In 2024, the additional working group on Higher Education Interoperability has been consolidated through the production of manifesto, use cases, reference architecture, inventory and implementation guidelines, using squads, webinars and onsite face to face design thinking workshops;
- On the EHESO side, the teams continued working with the contractors to create a one-stop shop for EU tools/data. In particular, efforts in 2024 focused on building a website as new section within the National Policies Platform, developing and fine-tuning indicators for a Higher Education Scoreboard, and to design the EU Student Observatory;
- OLS continued to promote multilingualism across the EU by expanding its available offer to 29 languages, engaging in real life with learners via community forums and increasing by more than 50% the use of the platform dedicated to Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps mobility participants between 2023 and 2024. The inclusion of VET material meant that the platform could support now a wider range of young people to travel, study, work and live in different regions of the European Union.

Improvements were made to optimise the user experience for the associated networks. For instance, a pilot project has been launched with ESEP using PowerBI to create a management dashboard that presents actionable information allowing the National Support Organisation to visualise and analyse country data. Following the outcome of the pilot project, the tool will have the potential to be extended to other platforms. In addition, the accessibility of all the platforms was significantly improved in support of the DG COMM campaign for Europa sites.

Policy support

In 2024, the agency delivered the following reports related to education policies:

- Learning for sustainability in Europe: Building competences and supporting teachers and schools. This Eurydice report focuses on the development of sustainability competences among learners and the support offered to teachers and schools to meet the challenges of the green transition in 39 European education systems.
- Validation of non-formal and informal learning in higher education in Europe. This Eurydice report investigates whether and to what extent higher education systems across Europe recognise and validate learning outcomes from non-formal and informal learning. The report covers 37 education systems that are part of the Eurydice Network and includes qualitative data for the 2023/2024 academic year.

- [The European Higher Education Area in 2024: Bologna Process Implementation Report](#). This report provides an overview of the latest policy commitments in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and assesses their implementation across the countries.

Specific objective 5.2 – Vocational education and training effectively addresses the labour market needs and prepares people for the green and digital transition.

Implementing vocational excellence approaches features prominently in the overall EU policy agenda for skills and funding. The initiative on Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) supports the gradual establishment and development of **international collaborative networks of European platforms of Centres of Vocational Excellence**, contributing to creating skills ecosystems for innovation, regional development, and social inclusion. 16 projects were selected for funding ([27]). The sectors covered in the projects proposed for funding are diverse and within industrial ecosystems with a high growth and innovation potential (e.g. manufacturing/3D technologies, welding/automotive industry, hydrogen technologies, textile and clothing, building/construction, and tourism, maritime and port industry, science and technology, innovative air mobility, and audio-visual industry).

In 2024, 17 proposals were awarded the **Seal of Excellence**, a label offered to all proposals having obtained the score of at least 75/100 but not selected for funding. During the Forum on Vocational Excellence held in Lyon, France last September participants in the CoVE projects met with other organisations active in the field of VET as well as public authorities. The Forum was organised in parallel with the WorldSkills International Conference, an event attracting thousands of participants and visitors.

A relevant contribution to this objective is the action on **Capacity Building in Vocational Education and Training.** This initiative contributes to the policy objectives that are being pursued between the European Commission and third countries not associated to Erasmus+, including Global Gateway investment packages and the development of Talent partnerships and the Talent pool. More than 70 projects have been selected for funding in 2024.

Specific objective 5.3 – With the support of the Erasmus+ programme, promote non-formal learning mobility and active participation among young people, as well as cooperation, inclusion, creativity and innovation at the level of organisations and policies in the field of youth.

In 2024, the Agency has authored the Staff Working Document on the situation of young people in Europe, accompanying the Commission EU Youth Report on the implementation of the Youth Strategy, that will be launched in 2025.

The Capacity Building Youth action has been extended in 2024 to the **Eastern Partnership Region**, accepting applications from Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Armenia and

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([27])   The figure includes one extra proposal selected from the reserve list

Azerbaijan. 11 proposals from these regions were selected for funding, showing a high interest in the region and good quality of proposals submitted.

The youth calls launched in 2023 and 2024 invited youth organisations to organise and engage in activities leading up to the European Parliament elections in June 2024 and to follow up subsequently. The final conclusions on how these activities mobilised young people to vote are still pending. EACEA participated also in the Youth Week 2024 by promoting the youth calls and the Youth Wiki to the many young people present in the European Parliament for the opening session and the LevelUp! conference (organised by the European Youth Forum) on 12-13 April.

In 2024, the Agency worked for a new call for tender Discover EU, that will be launched in 2025. **The popularity of DiscoverEU has reached an all-time high** with the dedicated budget fully absorbed. More than 320 000 valid applications have been received in the two rounds: in the spring session 35 511 young people from all programme countries were selected to receive a travel pass and in the autumn session 35 762. Together they received the European Youth Card that offers discounts on learning activities, cultural visits, accommodation, and local transportation. Participants are invited to 'meet ups' organised by National Agencies in the programme countries. DiscoverEU is one of the leading examples of **Green Erasmus** promoting environmental sustainability in transport means and responsible behaviour among young people, who can choose different travel routes linked to various policy priorities (green, culture, digital, New European Bauhaus, well-being).

Specific objective 5.5 – With the support of the Erasmus+ programme, promote learning mobility of sport coaches and staff, as well as cooperation, inclusion, creativity and innovation at the level of sport organisations and sport policies.

The year 2024 marked an important milestone for the **Sport strand: 10 years being part of the Erasmus+ Programme.** This anniversary was celebrated during the yearly European Sports Forum, held in Liège, Belgium and organised by the European Commission in collaboration with the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union on 16-17 April 2024. This provided an opportunity for a stocktaking of the experience to date as well as a foreword-looking reflection. To celebrate the achievements and showcase the impact of EU-funded sport activities, EACEA published a video looking back at the evolution and the impact of the programme over the last decade. The award ceremony for the #BeInclusive EU Sport Awards 2023 also took place during the European Sport Forum. The finalists were offered prizes in the following three categories: Breaking Barriers – promoting social inclusion, Be Equal – promoting gender equality and Sport for Peace – promoting peace and European values.

The #BeActive Awards 2024 call, closed for submission in May, receiving 106 applications across four categories: Education, Across Generations, Workplace and Local Hero. The Award Ceremony took place on 26 November 2024 in Brussels.
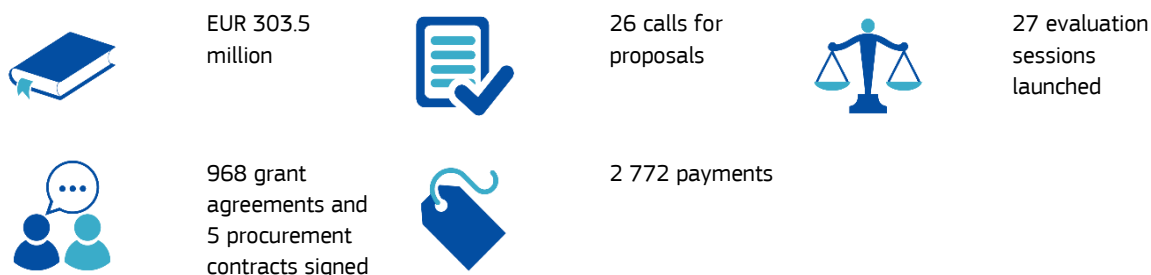
The call for proposals in the field of Sport has been enjoying an ever-increasing popularity. Following the 2024 Sport Info Day, a record number of 1 775 applications were submitted

and a total of 302 grant agreements were signed for the successful projects until the end of the year ([28]). The 2025 Sport Info Day was organised on 16 December 2024, attracting over 400 onsite participants. The event was opened by Mr Glenn Micallef, the newly appointed European Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport. The live web stream generated 4 261 connections. Considering the high attendance, another significant wave of applications is expected for the next call deadline.

1.2. CREATIVE EUROPE

General objectives of the European Commission: A Europe fit for the Digital Age, Promoting our European way of life

EUR 303.5 million	26 calls for proposals	27 evaluation sessions launched
968 grant agreements and 5 procurement contracts signed	2 772 payments	

The Creative Europe programme ([29]) is the EU's multiannual programme for supporting the cultural and creative sectors (CCS). Its objective is to safeguard, promote and develop European cultural and linguistic diversity and heritage. It aims to increase the competitiveness of Europe's cultural and creative sectors and supports independent production and distribution companies in the audio-visual field, and a wide range of operators in the cultural field.

In 2024, EACEA carried out activities in the following strands:

- Culture
- MEDIA
- Cross-sectoral

([28]) For the four actions of the call: Cooperation Partnerships, Small-scale partnerships, Not-for-profit European sport events and Capacity Building in the field of sport.

([29]) Regulation (EU) 2021/818 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing the Creative Europe programme (2021-2027) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 (OJ L189 of 28.5.2021, p.34).

The Agency has also provided feedback to policy through regular cluster meetings with the mirror units in the parent DGs, through contributions to briefings and country sheets, and preparation of ad-hoc reports for specific subjects. Moreover, the Agency has collected and shared several programme data and indicators with the parent DGs in the framework of the Creative Europe mid-term evaluation.

More in detail, EACEA delivered outputs under the following specific objectives:

Specific objective 5.6 – With the support of the Creative Europe programme, promote European cooperation on cultural and linguistic diversity.

Culture

The five calls for proposals under the 2024 Creative Europe Annual Work Programme (AWP) saw **a significant increase in the number of applications received.** In particular, the annual European Cooperation call saw a record-breaking number of almost 1 000 proposals, double the figure from 2021. Considering that the budget has remained relatively stable over the last few years, the selection process for all 2024 calls and actions, resulted in lower selection and success rates.

For the first time, the new Creative Europe-MEDIA Data Base Books has been used for the submission of applications (Circulation of European Literary Works call). This database will also be used to monitor and manage projects' statistics and information on literary works translated, published and distributed.

Perform Europe, a Creative Europe funding scheme for the European performing arts sector and sustainable touring is implemented by a consortium of six organisations. Following the launch of the open call, 400 applications from partnerships of performing arts professionals and organisations were received to make the touring of performing arts greener, more inclusive and more diverse. In total, 42 cascading grants were awarded to the successful partnerships to implement their touring activities across all Creative Europe countries [30].

In 2024, the Agency participation in the Brussels and Frankfurt book fairs has been very active and fruitful. Both events held special significance this year: the Brussel Book Fair featured the European Union as its central theme, giving more prominent place to programme presentations and conferences. Meanwhile, at the Frankfurt book Fair, Creative Europe participated with its own space for the first time, as part of a new partnership between EU and the Book Fair. The Agency hosted discussion panels on the programme and information sessions involving the publishers.

A mapping of awarded Cooperation projects allowed to identify those working around themes such as green, digital, gender, health and democracy and monitor them in a structured way. The projects had the possibility to network during the grant holders'

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[30] Perform Europe - Reimagine International Touring

meeting last autumn and exchange views on partnership challenges, explore potential solutions and share their interest in different policy priorities.

Finally, the following **publications** have been released since the beginning in 2024:

- Supporting Ukraine's arts and culture: EU values and solidarity at work contains a meaningful sample of how the EU supports the Ukrainian cultural and creative sectors through a variety of actions.
- Creative Europe's support to the book and publishing sector (2021-2023) presents an overview of the funding schemes, themes, projects and initiatives including 'Translators on the cover', the EU Prize for Literature, the Day of European authors, the support to the Youth and Young professionals and the support to the Ukrainian cultural and creative sector.
- Literary translations playbook 2021 comprises a dynamic catalogue of literary translations published with the support of Creative Europe. The playbook includes excerpts from the translated works in 2021 and a list of the supported publishers by country.

Specific objective 6: A modern, open and pluralistic society in the digital age where online disinformation is countered and diverse cultural content is available to all Europeans.

MEDIA

The funding opportunities of the MEDIA strand have attracted increased attention among the stakeholders of the audiovisual industry, with a strong increase of the number of submitted proposals in all actions. Moreover, the success of Creative Europe MEDIA was highlighted once again with the **selection of MEDIA-supported films at the 74th edition of the Berlin Film Festival and the 77th edition of the Cannes Film Festival**, held in February and in May. A total of 15 MEDIA-supported films were presented in different sections of the Berlinale, including seven films supported through Development. Another 14 films co-funded by the MEDIA strand were screened during the different sections of the Cannes Film Festival, with two major prizes awarded to the Indian-European coproduction 'All we can imagine as light' by Payal Kapadia (Grand Prix) and to Miguel Gomes for 'Grand Tour' (Best Director). Several films presented at the festivals, received later support for their distribution across Europe.
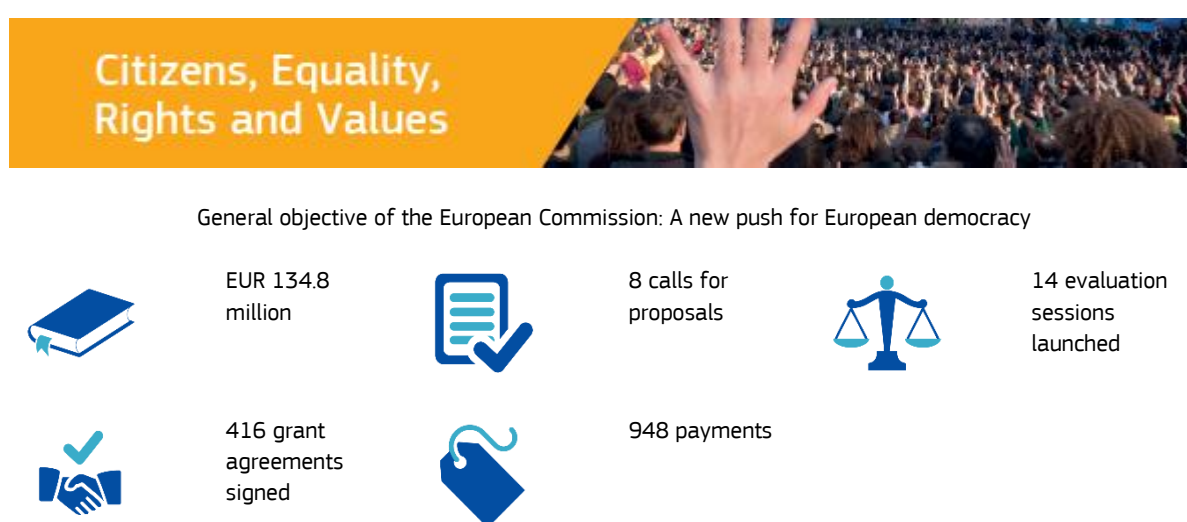
The tender managed by the Agency continues to ensure that the MEDIA stands are present at the biggest trade events of the audiovisual sector, such as the film markets in Berlin and Cannes. This year, the stand at the Cannes Marché Du Film hosted 272 participants active in the audiovisual sector, coming from 25 different countries. For the second year, a stand was also organised during Gamescom in Cologne, one of the more important events for professionals of the video-games industry. The stand allowed 64 participants from 23 countries to benefit from the facilities in order to organise their business meetings.

In the context of providing feedback to policy to DG CNECT, the Agency prepared ad-hoc reports in view of changes in the 2025 work programme specifically for the Talent&Skills, Film Distribution and Films on the Move actions.

Cross-sectoral

Under the Cross-sectoral strand, the Creative Innovation Lab and the Media Literacy calls registered a big increase in applications. The Creative Europe Desks have continued to play a key role by organising information activities to present the Creative Europe programme's activities in their countries. A direct award procedure was renewed for the Creative Europe Desks with 40 organisations selected, nominated by their national authorities. They will ensure support for the potential beneficiaries for the rest of the programming period.

1.3. CITIZENS, EQUALITY RIGHTS AND VALUES

General objective of the European Commission: A new push for European democracy

EUR 134.8 million

8 calls for proposals

14 evaluation sessions launched

416 grant agreements signed

948 payments

The Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme under its four strands, protects and promotes Union values (Union values strand), promotes rights, non-discrimination and equality, including gender equality (equality, rights and gender equality strand), promotes citizens' engagement and participation in the democratic life of the Union (Citizens' engagement and participation strand), and aims to fight violence, including gender-based violence (Daphne strand). CERV brings together the former Rights, Equality and Citizenship and Europe for Citizens programmes. According to its mandate, and in cooperation with DG JUST, the Agency implements activities under the two following strands ([31]):

- Citizens' engagement and participation;
- Union values.

In 2024, EACEA delivered outputs under the following specific objective:

Specific objective 3: Improved framework to protect democracy in the European Union.

([31]) EACEA also implemented activities under the strand of Equality, Rights and Gender Equality but limited to a small part of the budget (linked to the call for proposals on the rights of the child and children's participation)

For the first time, EACEA managed the call for proposals on the rights of the child and children's participation (^{32}) which this year introduced a new priority on mental health. Following a substantial increase in budget, the number of applications submitted doubled, and 23 projects were ultimately selected for funding until the end of the year.

The 2024 Union Values call with the financial support to third parties scheme attracted almost twice as more applicants, compared to the previous 2022 call. This increase was in line with the forecasts, and 15 projects were awarded a grant during the reporting period. To support the ongoing Union Values projects, **a risk monitoring strategy and internal monitoring systems were put in place and implemented.**

For the four-year framework partnership agreements, all 73 beneficiaries applied by the deadline, and 72 were awarded a grant. These partnership agreements support European networks, civil society organisations active at the EU level, and European think tanks in the area of Union values. Framework partners qualifying as European networks benefit from the re-granting scheme by providing financial support to their member organisations. A new call for proposals for three-year Framework Partnership Agreements and for operating grants in the areas of Union Values was published in October, and the information session was held in December.

Ahead of the European Parliament elections in June, as well as several parallel regional, communal, and national elections, EACEA organised a Connecting EACEA event on 15 May 2024, entitled **'European Parliament elections & Citizens Engagement: Perspectives from the EU Civil society'.** The event welcomed representatives from selected Civil society organisations funded by the Citizens Engagement and Participation Call under the CERV Programme. At the event, five selected projects showcased results and innovative methods for engaging Europe's citizens, particularly youth voters. The projects shared their activities, impact, and youth engagement strategies. The event attracted participants from various DGs and Agencies.

EACEA has been actively involved in the preparation of the CERV communication campaign to enhance the programme visibility. It has also been involved in the interim evaluation of the CERV programme and the ex-post evaluation of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) and Europe for Citizens (EfC) programmes.

Finally, in the context of the Civil Dialogue, and where relevant in close collaboration with DG JUST, EACEA organised:

- a networking meeting with operating grant partners who cover all the policy priorities of the CERV programme (in presence);

- peer-to-peer webinars with the beneficiaries of the Union Values call providing financial support to third parties. This helped also knowledge and good practice sharing;

(^{32}) Previously managed by DG JUST

- information sessions and awareness-raising activities with good response rate and high level of attendance. During these events, the Agency presented the funding opportunities available and provided hands-on guidance, while reaching out to potential new applicants;

EACEA also supported DG JUST in the presentation of CERV projects and results to other EU institutions, including the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions, to further promote the programme.

1.4. EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

General objective of the European Commission: Promoting our European way of life

EUR 19 million	3 calls for proposals	4 evaluation sessions launched
34 grant agreements and 3 procurement contracts signed	108 ([33]) payments	

The European Solidarity Corps ('the Corps') aims to strengthen the engagement of young people and organisations to volunteer for accessible and high-quality solidarity activities. The programme helps strengthen cohesion, solidarity and democracy in Europe and abroad and to address societal and humanitarian challenges on the ground, with a particular focus on promoting social inclusion.

In 2024, EACEA implemented and managed actions and measures in the following fields:

- Volunteering
- Quality and support measures

and delivered outputs under the following specific objective:

Specific objective 5.4 -With the support of the European Solidarity Corps, enhance the engagement of young people and organisations in accessible and high-quality solidarity activities as a means to contribute to strengthening cohesion, solidarity and democracy in

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([33]) Including 5 for of the EU Aid Volunteers legacy programme.

the Union and abroad, addressing societal and humanitarian challenges on the ground, with particular effort to promote social inclusion.

For the Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas (VTHPA) call, the selection results show a stable number of proposals compared to previous years The funded projects are geographically balanced and address both priority areas: i) relief for people fleeing armed conflicts and other victims of natural or man-made disasters, ii) fostering positive learning experiences and outcomes for young people with fewer opportunities.

A total of 169 Quality Labels for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering have been awarded between 2021 and 2024. The highest number of Quality Label holders are located in Italy, Spain and Turkey (support organisations in programme countries) and in Latin America (host organisations in third countries). The Quality Label certifies that an organisation is capable of carrying out high quality solidarity activities in compliance with the principles, objectives and requirements of the action 'European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps'. Under the 2024 call, the number of proposals increased in comparison to 2023, and 13 projects were selected for funding in 2024.

Young candidates wishing to participate in Humanitarian Aid Volunteering need first to complete compulsory training. It consists of online training at the EU Academy, an online test and a five-day face-to-face training for those who passed the test. The demand for the training keeps increasing since the launch of the action in 2023. So far, approximately 3 500 young people have completed the online training on EU Academy and nearly 1 600 have attended the face-to-face courses. Most participants are from Italy, Spain and France. Out of the trained volunteers, more than 500 have already been offered a volunteering opportunity in Humanitarian Aid Volunteering.

1.5. INTRA-AFRICA ACADEMIC MOBILITY

General objective of the European Commission: A stronger Europe in the world

EUR 32 million	1 call for proposals	1 evaluation session launched
28 payments		

The Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Scheme is the EU's programme to encourage international learning mobility across the African continent by providing support for

consortia of African Higher Education Institutions and scholarship opportunities for African trainees, students and staff. Building on its successful past experience, the current Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Scheme (2022-2027) aims to contribute to the economic, social and human development of Africa by improving the skills and competences of individuals in different areas, particularly those linked to **Global Gateway priorities in Sub-Saharan Africa.** Beyond supporting mobility flows, the scheme intends to build up the capacities of the African Higher Education Institutes, exchange practice among institutions and exploit the expertise of the EU partner universities.

In 2024, EACEA delivered outputs under the following specific objective:

Specific objective 14: Human development for all is improved, in particular for youth, women and girls, and the most marginalised and vulnerable populations.

The Agency's dedicated team monitored the legacy projects as well as the newly selected and organised various communication, dissemination and capacity building activities:

- A kick-off meeting for the newly selected projects;
- Two cluster meetings were held: one to support the Youth Mobility for Africa Flagship Initiative, in Botswana, and another one on the Global Gateway strategy's impact on higher education, job creation, and skills transfer in Western Africa, in Benin. These meetings were combined with monitoring and institutional visits of the ongoing projects;
- a programme leaflet as promotional material for the programme, a brochure providing an overview of the most recent selection as well as results and statistics from the previous phase of the programme, video tutorials for institutions on financial management of the grants and, for individuals on how to apply for a scholarship.

In autumn, the Agency launched the second Intra-Africa call of the current MFF. To promote the call, an online information session took place in November. More than 600 participants received comprehensive details about the 2024 call, its key objectives, and primary features. Upon request from the public, the call documents were translated into French and Portuguese for a wider outreach. Frequently Asked Questions became also available.

1.6.   PILOT PROJECTS AND PREPARATORY ACTIONS

EUR 2 million

1 call for proposals

1 evaluation sessions launched

71 Payments

15 grant agreements
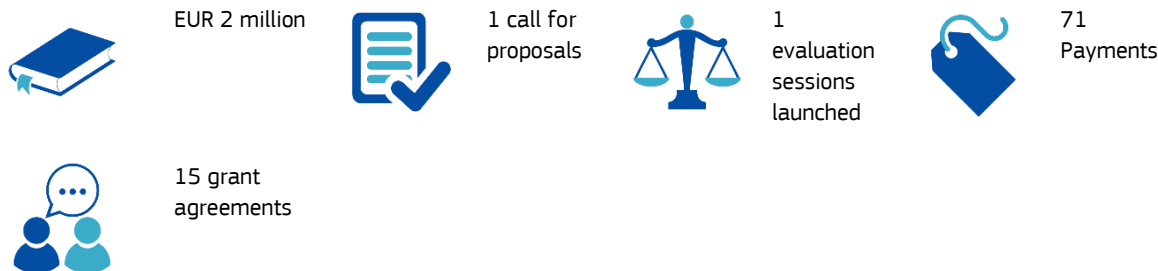
Since 2021, the Agency has been tasked to launch and manage calls for Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions (PPPAs) in the fields of education, youth, sport, culture and media.

Education and Sport

The treatment of the legacy pilot projects in VET Mobility has been proceeding as planned with the last ones estimated to close in 2025.

In 2024, 11 grant agreements were signed with beneficiaries of the two 2023 Sport-related PPPAs and all projects commenced the planned activities. The actions supported under the Pilot Project 'Sport for people and planet' aim to raise environmental awareness, create sustainable sport events and contribute to healthy and eco-conscious lifestyles, thus taking responsibility for the climate footprint of sport.

The actions supported under 'Emergency sport actions for youth' address the needs of migrant children and young people by helping them overcome traumas, improve well-being and integrate into the hosting societies through participation in sport and physical activities. The latter Pilot Project continued with a Preparatory Action, for which a call was published in 2024. The selection process is currently ongoing.

Culture and MEDIA

Regarding the Preparatory Action for MEDIA on Writing European, a presentation of three selected projects took place during the Film market in Cannes attracting an interested audience:

- Europe's first virtual writer's room programme through the latest VR (virtual reality) technology (Words Across Europe)
- a project dedicated to film professionals specialising in thriller, fantasy and horror writing for TV series (Full Moon Creative Lab)
- a think tank and writers' room bringing together talents with cutting-edge specialists to work on topics such as climate change, organised crime, disinformation, migration and social justice (War Room Content).

2. INTERNAL CONTROL AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Management monitors the functioning of the internal control systems on a continuous basis and carries out an objective assessment of their efficiency and effectiveness. In annex 7, there is a list and details of the reports that have been considered. The results of the above assessment are explicitly documented and reported to the Director.

2.1. Control results

Management uses control results to support its assurance and reach a conclusion about the cost-effectiveness of those controls, meaning whether the right balance between the following elements is achieved:

- Effectiveness The level of error found, based on the controls carried out.
- Efficiency The average time taken to inform or pay.
- Economy The proportionality between the costs of controls and the funds managed.

2.1.1. Overview of the budget and relevant control systems (RCS)

EACEA's 2024 operational and operating budget

In 2024, EACEA processed 8 739 payments under the operational budget and 654 payments under the operating (administrative) budget for a total executed payments respectively equal to EUR 1 285 million and EUR 68 million. In addition, the Agency implemented part of the budget (EUR 2 million) allocated to Intra-ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) through the European Development Fund (EDF).

2024 Total Payments execution in MEUR		
All EACEA Programmes		EDF
Operational Budget	1 284.92	2.03
Operating Budget	68.34	

As for the share of expenditures, grant management represents more than 90% of the total 'payments made' while procurements account for 5.6% (4.9% in 2023) and expert payments for 0.9% (0.7% in 2023).

In the reporting year, the Agency implemented actions under the 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 programming periods. 4 final payments were executed under the 2007-2013 multiannual financial framework (MFF) in 2024.

in MEUR Total Payments 2024 by Programming period	
Programming period 2007-2013	
Tempus	0.23
Programming period 2014-2020	
Erasmus+	116.31
Creative Europe	10.63
Europe for Citizens	0.33
EU Aid Volunteers	0.11
Solidarity Corps	0.07
Programming period 2021-2027	
Erasmus+	696.38
Creative Europe	318.94
CERV	124.42
Solidarity Corps	17.49
TOTAL (without EDF)	**1 284.92**
EDF	2.03

The tables above report to the main cost segments of the relevant control systems of EACEA. The 2021-2027 MFF accounts for 90% of payments executed, while the 2014-2020 MFF only accounts for 10% of payments executed. The total amount paid (excluding EDF) is 3% lower than in 2023.

EACEA's assurance building and materiality criteria are outlined in annex 5. Annex 6 outlines the main risks together with the control processes to mitigate them and the indicators used to measure the performance of the relevant control systems.
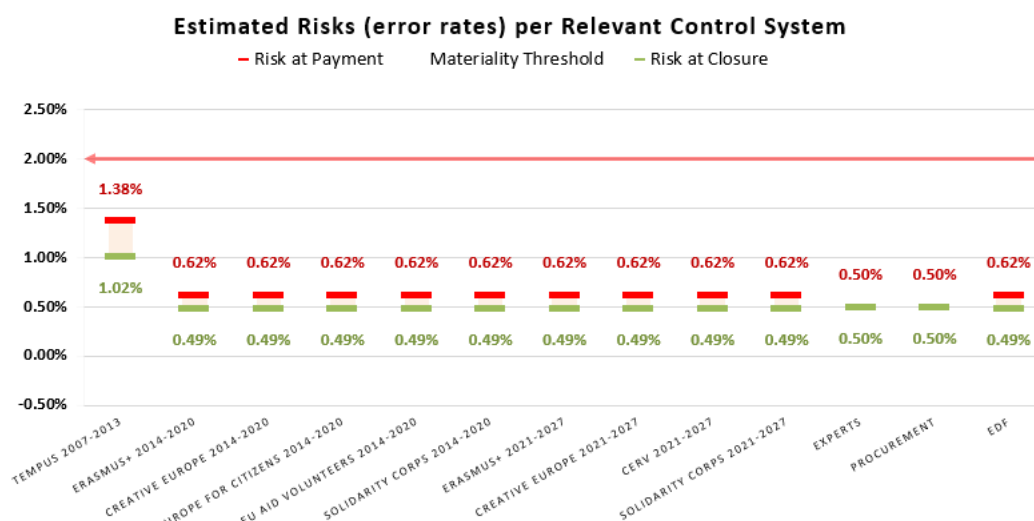
2.1.2. Effectiveness of controls

a) Assessment of control results per RCS for expenditure

For grant management, which represents the vast majority of expenditures, EACEA has put in place the necessary controls to ensure the legality and regularity of the transactions, which are summarised in a multiannual error rate below the materiality level, in line with the principles illustrated in Annex 5. The benefits of those controls are both quantifiable and non-quantifiable ([34]) (further details found in Annex 7).

([34]) The main benefits can be summarised as follows:
- compliance with the rules and high-quality selection process, thus addressing the objectives of the work
  programmes to achieve the highest added value for the EU;
- clarity and legal security both for the beneficiaries and the Agency, for all the selected applications
  (contracting phase);
- detection of ineligible costs (quantifiable benefit) when analysing the payment requests (monitoring phase)
  or during ex post audits (ex post controls phase), which normally lead to recovery orders.

Estimated Risks (error rates) per Relevant Control System

Risk at Payment — Materiality Threshold — Risk at Closure

As very limited audit results (^{35}) were available for the 2021-2027 programming period, the calculation of the amount at risk in the current MFF is mostly based on the average error rate calculated for the 2014-2020 programming period (^{36}). The table below illustrates the multiannual detected error rate (DER) and the residual error rate (RER, after *ex post* corrections) for the **2014-2020** programming period, leading to a materiality below the 2% target for all programmes and subsequently to absence of any reservation in 2024.

| Programming period 2014-2020	DER	RER	Reservation?
Erasmus+	0.50%	0.47%	No
Creative Europe	0.94%	0.90%	No
Europe for Citizens	0.88%	0.85%	No
EU Aid Volunteers	0.73%	0.68%	No
Solidarity Corps (no audit results yet available)	Not yet* available	Not yet available	N/A
* Auditable closed projects hardly available in the reporting period.			

The relevant expenditures under this programming period represent the majority of the total EACEA relevant expenditures for 2024, so 2014-2020 projects were still subject to ex-post audit in the reporting year. The 2007-2013 programming period has been phased out.

(^{35}) Only 2 audits closed in 2024 for projects running under the current MFF. In terms of payments, although their vast majority concern the current MFF, almost 84% of their value is represented by pre-financing payments.

(^{36}) To calculate the overall amount at risk at payment: for the 2014-2020 programming period, the Agency follows a conservative approach. To estimate the average error rate, EACEA uses, as a basis for all programmes, risk-based and random audit results related to that MFF. Furthermore, the Agency has prudently calculated its corrective capacity as 0.13% based on the 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 results of ex post controls only (ex post audits). The figure (ARC) provided by DG BUDG had to be adjusted as it included corrections made for the 2007-2013 programmes.

b) Estimation of the overall risk at payment and risk at closure

The estimated overall risk at payment for 2024 expenditure is the AOD's best conservative estimate of the amount of relevant expenditure during the year, not in conformity with the contractual and regulatory provisions applicable at the time the payment was made. This expenditure will subsequently be subject to ex-post controls and a proportion of the underlying errors will be detected and corrected in subsequent years, corresponding to the conservatively estimated future corrections for 2024 expenditure. The difference between those two results in the estimated overall risk at closure ([37]).
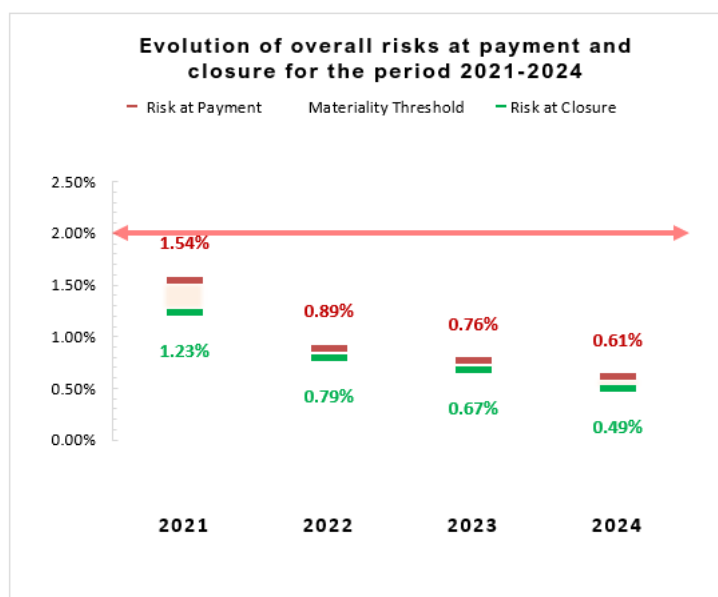
There is a decreasing trend since 2021, indicating an increased confidence in effectiveness of the ex-ante control and a higher acquaintance of participants to contractual and regulatory provisions of the programmes.

For an overview at Commission level, the departments' estimated overall risk at payment, estimated future corrections and risk at closure are consolidated in the AMPR.

c) Quantitative benefits of controls: Preventive and corrective measures

With its ex-ante and ex-post controls, EACEA has an effective mechanism in place for detecting and correcting errors, reaching in total EUR 10.70 million of corrections for 2024. Ex-ante controls resulted to EUR 8.51 million and ex-post controls resulted to EUR 2.19 million. Please see details in annex 3 table 8.

Compared to 2023, there is an apparent increase in corrective capacity (in 2023 ex-ante and ex-post correction were respectively with EUR 6.91 million and EUR 0.58 million).

([37])   This is the AOD's best, conservative estimation of the expenditure authorised during the year that would remain not in conformity of applicable regulatory and contractual provisions by the end of implementation of the programme.

However, this is due to the higher number of old audits files closed in 2024. Considering the corrective capacity by Annual Audit Plan this value remains stable over the years.

d) Assessment of control results for non-expenditure items

Not applicable for EACEA.

e) Fraud: prevention, detection, and correction

EACEA has developed and implemented its own anti-fraud strategy since 2012, based on the methodology provided by OLAF. The strategy was updated and adopted on 18 December 2024. **It covers exceptionally a four-year period (2024-2027) until the end of the current MFF.** Its implementation is being monitored and reported to the management every six months, through the mid-term and annual reports. All necessary actions of the previous antifraud strategy have been implemented. In particular in 2024, four trainings were delivered and four newsletters were published on the agency intranet.

EACEA has participated in the working group of the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy Action Plan of July 2023 on plagiarism and provided input on anti-fraud training materials.

Department EACEA received **9** OLAF financial recommendations during the period 2020-2024. During the year 2024, EACEA has

- fully implemented **1**
- partially implemented **3**
- decided not to follow **1** OLAF financial recommendation, because of contractual reasons.

The implementation of **4** OLAF financial recommendations remains ongoing.

On the basis of the available information, EACEA has reasonable assurance that the anti-fraud measures in place are effective overall.

2.1.3. Efficiency of controls

Efficiency is key in the 2021-2027 programming period. The key control indicators for grant management (the main operating process for the Agency) are the Time to Grant (TTG), made up of the Time to Inform (TTI) + Time to Sign (TTS), and the Time to Pay (TTP).

Time-to-Grant:

According to the Financial Regulation (FR), the Agency has 9 months after the call deadline to sign grants (TTG – Article 197.2 FR). In common with the other EU programmes managed in the eGrants system, this deadline is transposed into numbers of days (TTI: 183 days,

TTG: 275 days). In 2024, the **average number of days for TTI was 144 days and for TTG 248 days,** both below limits.

The TTG performance achieved in 2024 expressed in % of grant agreements signed within 9 months is **97%.** The target of 100% was not reached due to a number of concurrent causes:

-   challenges with large international consortia involving entities in Third countries with lengthy legal entity validation processes and additional administrative complexities. These risks are inherent to the type of business of EACEA but they are addressed;
-   delays in the Grant Award Preparation (GAP) with legal entity validation issues for schools, selected under the Jean Monnet actions;
-   difficulties faced with some projects selected under the European Cooperation call during the GAP phase (partnership's change or budgetary corrections).

The table below demonstrates the evolution of the indicator in relation to 2022 and 2023:

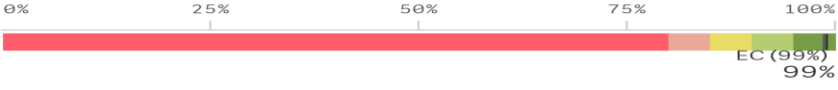| TTG per year of last GA signature				
Year GA Signature	# GA signed (including reserve list)	# GA signed	# GA signed in time	% GA signed in time (TTG)
2022	3 942	3 913	3 490	**89%**
2023	3 219	3 160	2 895	**91.6%**
2024	3 000	2 913	2 827	**97%**

The mitigating measures put in place by end of 2022 to closely follow up of the validation of new beneficiaries and ensure a smooth grant preparation process are proving effective and limited the impact on TTG. In addition, EACEA undertook action to improve information and communication towards its beneficiaries, in view to increase their reactivity and speed up grant agreement preparation (GAP). Even though, delays already cumulated could not be fully recovered from previous year, **the Agency improved significantly its performance on TTG from 91.6% in 2023 to 97% in 2024**.

These circumstances confirm that the control system is solid and functions as expected: it detected the negative impact of external factors, it allowed identifying the root causes and led to the implementation of effective actions, mitigating albeit not fully reversing the final impact on TTG.

Having reached its cruising speed in terms of volume of grants and yearly budget managed, the Agency is now more acquainted with the process and has improved its performance on this KPI since 2022.
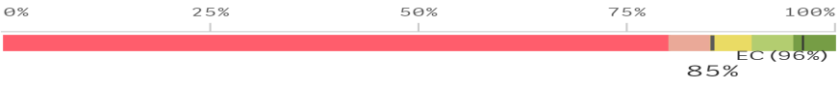
Time-To-Pay (TTP)

The average time-to-pay respects the different deadlines for the different type of payments and more details are provided in Table 6 of Annex 3. As for the timely payments:

Timely Payments	EACA, EACEA Score	EC Score
0% 25% 50% 75% 100% EC (99%) 99%	**99%**	**99%**

For the payments of the operational budget, EACEA performance (99%) exceeds the KPI target of >96% and has improved compared to the previous year (96%). Result is in line with the EC average.

Timely Payments	EACA, EACEA, PMO Score	EC Score
0% 25% 50% 75% 100% EC (96%) 96%	**96%**	**96%**

For the payments of the operating budget, the result (96%) is similar to the previous year (97%) and is in line with the EC average.

Timely Payments	EACA, EACEA Score	EC Score
0% 25% 50% 75% 100% EC (96%) 85%	**85%**	**96%**

For the payments of EDF, EACEA results (85%) have improved significantly from last year (46%). The % of late payments is mostly due to lack of availability of funds (delays in the transfer of the budget form relevant DG to EACEA).

Other indicators relevant to the efficiency of controls: Budget execution in terms of commitments and payments – Operational budget

100% of commitment appropriations ([38]) were executed vs forecast meeting the target. 100% of payment appropriations ([39]) were executed vs forecast exceeding the target of 99%.


([38]) C1, C5, E0 credits (representing contribution from EEA/EFTA countries)
([39]) C1, C5, E0 credits (representing contribution from EEA/EFTA countries)

2.1.4. Economy of controls

In 2024 the total costs of controls for grant management are EUR 76.3 million (EUR 66.1 million in 2023, 60.6 million in 2022, EUR 48.3 million in 2021). The increase in 2024 of the total costs of controls, in absolute value, compared to 2023 is largely due to the increase in the average cost of staff (calculated according to corporate guidelines). **The total costs of controls compared to relevant funds managed [40] is 76.3/1 284.9=5.9%** (it was 5.2% in 2023, 5.4% in 2022, 10.1% in 2021). The slightly higher ratio in 2024 is due to the increase of staff and experts' costs.

The Agency also monitors the share of operating costs over the operational budget, both figures expressed in terms of payments executed. In 2024 this ratio is (68.3/1 284.9) equal to 5.3% (it was 4.8% in 2023, 5.2% in 2022, 10.2% in 2021). Again, the slightly higher ratio in 2024 is mainly due to the increase in operating costs.
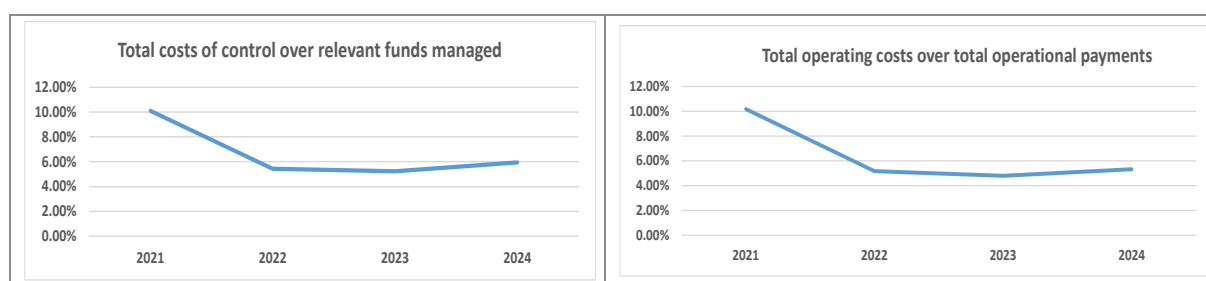
In conclusion, the total costs of controls and operating costs have increased this year, in line with the increase of average cost of staff, and as the volume of payments executed is similar of last year, the above-mentioned ratios are slightly higher than last year. Over the past three years, the evolution of the ratio cost of control over funds managed shows a stable trend. In other words, EACEA is reaching cruising speed in the current MFF, thus enabling a more and more economical use of resources, despite the typically small size of (labour intensive) grants to be processed by EACEA staff.

2.1.5. Conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of controls

Based on the most relevant key indicators and control results reported above, EACEA has assessed the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of its control system and reached a positive conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of the controls for which it is responsible.

The control environment and control strategy remained stable during the reporting year. As highlighted in the previous section, in 2024 the Agency met the target of paying its beneficiaries on time and, at the same time, EACEA put in place controls keeping the multiannual detected error rate by programme below 2% at a limited cost (economical use of its resources). Therefore, a positive conclusion can be drawn on the cost-effectiveness of the controls in place.

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[40] Total relevant funds managed are equal to operational payments in 2024 (Excluding EDF and including procurement)

2.2. Audit observations and recommendations

This section sets out briefly the state of play for all audit observations and recommendations reported by auditors related to internal control and financial management – including the limited conclusion of the Internal Auditor on the state of internal control. Further details for IAS and ECA audits can be found in Annex 8.

Where an audit has detected weaknesses affecting any internal control principle or the department's assurance, a detailed analysis is provided further below in section 2.3 and 2.4, accordingly.

Internal Audit Service

In 2024 EACEA had no new or overdue critical or very important IAS audit recommendation(s).

In its contribution to the 2024 Annual Activity Report process, the Internal Audit Service concluded that the internal control systems in place for the audited processes are effective.

European Court of Auditors

Reported	Audit Title	Accepted Recommendation	State of play in 2024	Impact on the assurance for 2024
2023	Statement of Assurance (DAS)	None	☑	☑

☑   Action plan implemented and closed by IAS or ECA / No impact on the assurance

2.3. Assessment of the effectiveness of internal control systems

The Commission has adopted an Internal Control Framework based on the highest international standards. ([41])

EACEA has adapted the Internal Control Framework to their specific characteristics and organisational structure. The internal control systems are suited to achieving its policy and internal control objectives in accordance with the internal control principles, having due regard to the risks associated with the environment in which it operates.

Management's assessment of the effectiveness of the internal control system has been carried out according to the methodology established in the Implementation Guide of the Internal Control Framework of the Commission, and following the general principles

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([41]) The Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission Internal Control Integrated Framework, the golden standard for internal control systems.

included in the Communication on the Revision of the Internal Control Framework, with the support of all relevant sources of information ([42]).

EACEA has assessed its internal control system during the reporting year and has concluded that:

it is effective and the components and principles are present and functioning as intended.

2.4.   Conclusions on the assurance

The assessment given on Section 2.1 refers to all programmes managed by the Agency and gives a comprehensive overview of the budget delegated to the Director of EACEA. It gives a true and fair view of the operations carried out in the reporting year and provides assurance on the use of resources based on the principle of sound financial management and in respect of legality and regularity. The conclusions give, overall, a positive picture. The conclusions of Sections 2.2 and 2.3 are positive. The systematic analysis of the available evidence provides sufficient guarantees as to the completeness and reliability of the information reported and results in the full coverage of the budget delegated to the EACEA Director.

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

2.5.   Declaration of Assurance

Declaration of Assurance

I, the undersigned,

Director of EACEA

In my capacity as authorising officer for the operating (administrative) budget and authorising officer by delegation for the operational budget

Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view **([43])**.

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

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([42]) As detailed in Annex 7
([43]) True and fair in this context means a reliable, complete and correct view on the state of affairs in the DG/Executive Agency.

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 EACEA or those of the Commission.

Brussels

(e-signed)

Sophie BEERNAERTS

3. MODERNISING THE ADMINISTRATION

3.1. Human resource management

Human resources

In 2024, EACEA continued to work intensively on selecting and recruiting contract and temporary agents. In total, it launched three external selections for contract agents, finalised an external selection for temporary agents and participated in joint external selections with other Executive Agencies for contract agents. Furthermore, EACEA also organised seven Inter-Agency selections, and handled 20 internal mobility procedures. Overall, the Agency has recruited 68 ([44]) new staff members during the reporting period.

The Agency continued to work closely with the parent DGs in a joint effort to ensure a good level of female representation in middle management positions, aiming to achieve better gender balance. By the end of 2024, the Agency counted 1 female Head of Department (out of 2), and 4 female Heads of Unit (out of 14), representing 36% of the middle management roles. Additionally, 54% of deputy Heads of Unit (7 out of 13), and 61% of Heads of Sector are women.

During the course of the year, the Learning & Development programme offered a diverse range of activities targeting staff professionalisation and wellbeing, responding to a changing environment and to an increased workplace digitalisation. EACEA also proposed a wide offer of soft skills courses, and organised targeted activities for Heads of Sector, including training and co-development sessions. Moreover, EACEA worked with the other Executive Agencies to enhance talent management through the Inter-Agency Talent Programme, job shadowing and staff exchange initiatives.

EACEA also collaborated with other Executive Agencies on the mid-term actions of the Inter-Executive Agencies HR Strategy, working on several initiatives such as developing common selection and recruitment guidelines and harmonising external training courses practices. EACEA also successfully organised together with HaDEA a series of workshops to address Mental Health and Prevention of Psychosocial Risks at work.

In 2024, the Agency played a key role in coordinating the Inter-Agency Anti-Harassment Network: as its lead, EACEA managed the organisation of a joint call for appointing new Confidential Counsellors and organised the 'Respect and Dignity@work week' in October.

Staff survey, internal and external communication

In response to the results of the 2023 Staff Survey, released beginning of 2024, EACEA's management actively involved staff in creating an action plan, which was presented during an all-staff event in autumn, with implementation beginning towards the end of the year.

([44]) The new recruits consist in 47 contract agents, 14 temporary agents, and 7 seconded officials

The 2024-2026 Internal Communication strategy has been approved, along with its action plan for 2024: this strategy is designed to meet the evolving needs driven by new ways of working. To support the two-way communication between staff and the management, internal communication introduced innovative products, such as a Director's vlog and a new weekly interactive Management meeting live-debrief. In terms of external communication, the work mainly focused on the preparation of the external communication strategy 2024-2026, which was approved in the second part of the year.

The fruitful collaboration with the other Executive Agencies in the Inter-Executive Agency informal 'Internal Communication Network' on several joint HR campaigns has been recognised at corporate level. In May, the network received the 'Diversity and inclusion award' from Commissioner Johannes Hahn in the category Outstanding initiative for the campaign 'Respect and Dignity at work' held in 2023.

3.2. Digital transformation and information management

Digital transformation

In 2024, the Agency continued its digital transformation by implementing its Digital Strategy for 2023-2025, focusing on the use of corporate tools and reusable components. In doing so, the Agency serves a double objective: advancing the new Commission Digital Strategy and optimising the use of its digital capacities.

- Objective #1 DIGITAL CULTURE. Data and cybersecurity awareness remained a continuous activity. The migration to the new intranet, based on SharePoint Online, was completed in 2024 and enhanced data and knowledge management. The **Cybersecurity Roadshow** – organised together with the other Executive Agencies in SB34 and DIGIT – was one of the highlights of the continuous effort in raising cybersecurity awareness among staff.

- Objective #2 DIGITAL-READY POLICY MAKING. Although the Agency does not formulate policies, it collaborated with its delegating DGs to ensure that digital aspects are integrated from the outset in policy implementation actions. The Agency made progress in feedback and reporting on policy implementation by harnessing innovative technologies.

- Objective #3 DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION. The Agency has enhanced its capacity in the **data management domain** – covering all stages e.g. collection, processing, analysis, and visualisation. Corporate, cloud-based technologies have been selected to build a sustainable foundation for forthcoming data management challenges of the Agency. EACEA also successfully explored innovative solutions (e.g. Neo4J), in collaboration with the central services.

- Objective #4 SEAMLESS DIGITAL LANDSCAPE. Some of Agency's most important digital solutions already made extensive use of corporate solutions. The phase-out of legacy grant management systems connected to ABAC was completed by the end of 2024. The relevant digital assets from the legacy systems remain available for project closures until their shut-down, in line with the Commission Digital Preservation Strategy.

- Objective #5 – GREEN, RESILIENT AND SECURE INFRASTRUCTURE. The Agency achieved the cyber-security priorities, including the availability and necessary renewal of IT Security Plans and the implementation of the relevant security controls.

Information and IT security rules

In 2024, the Agency focused on IT Security Risk and Compliance processes. Significant progress was made in creating and updating IT Security Plans (ITSP) for the different Information Systems, following the IT Security Risk Management Methodology (ITSRM). This exercise was conducted by using the IT Security Plan as a Service (ITSPaaS) proposed by DIGIT.

By September 2024, 100% of IT systems have valid ITSPs in place (target 95%). By end of 2024, 100% of Priority Controls have been attested for all IT systems, with all Departmental Controls in compliance. By October 2024, EU Login is used by 100% of IT systems.

The Agency maintained its position in the 'Acknowledge' sector of the Risk-Maturity Quadrant (RMQ), meaning it is classified as high maturity & low risk, scoring both lower on the overall risk and higher on the maturity than the EC institution's average.

Data, information, and knowledge management

The Knowledge, Information and Data Working Group initiated a common note, co-signed at Director level, aiming at strengthening the cooperation framework and joint governance between the Agency and DG EAC on data, data analytics and AI.

The Agency completed the process that it set out in 2022, to meet the corporate target of 80% implementation of EC data governance principles by the end of 2024. The main task was to document the data management policies for the internal legacy IT systems. Once this was achieved, the Agency formally registered the data policy fiches, approved by the Data Owners, for all EACEA data assets. These fiches list measures for good data management. The implementation of the data governance principles within the Agency has reached 90%, thus exceeding the 2024 corporate target.

Following the move of the archives to the new EACEA premises to the North Light building, the Document Management Officers (DMO) team mainly focused on implementing the Action Plan for organising the archives.

Data protection

The Agency pursued its efforts to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Regulation, publishing data protection records ([45]) and notices for the new processing operations while updating existing ones.

The Data Protection Officers (DPOs) responded to the EDPS ([46]) consultations and had been involved in the preparation of the Agency's tender specifications, ensuring privacy by design and by default. Additionally, a data retention period exercise was launched across all units and departments to ensure data minimisation and the deletion of personal data once the applicable retention period was exceeded.

Three training sessions were organised to further increase staff awareness of data protection requirements, including how to handle data breaches and requests from data subjects. As a result, 98.2% of EACEA's statutory staff (with at least six months of seniority in the Agency) attended at least one awareness-raising event on data protection, virtually reaching the corporate 2024 target of 100%. Finally, the DPOs of the Agency participated actively in various networks across the Executive Agencies, Commission services and EU institutions.

3.3. Sound environmental management

EACEA has taken significant steps in reducing its carbon footprint and promoting sustainability among its staff. Following its relocation, the Agency encouraged staff to adopt more environmentally friendly work habits and commuting choices.

Through its EMAS correspondent and the Greener EACEA group, EACEA has developed and participated in a range of sustainability initiatives. These include participating in the BEST winter and summer campaigns, equipping meeting rooms with hybrid systems, and promoting greener transportation options.

As part of the Executive Agencies' (EAs) Green Week 2024 held in December, EACEA co-hosted various activities to promote sustainability and reduce waste. These events included the 'Pre-Loved Quality Clothes Fair', where staff members could donate and resell gently used clothes, and the 'Toys Exchange', which facilitated the exchange of second-hand toys, reducing waste and promoting eco-friendly practices.

3.4. Examples of economy and efficiency

([45]) EACEA Public register https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/about-eacea/data-protection/public-register-processing-activities_en
([46]) European Data Protection Supervisor

Continuous effort in implementing corporate IT systems

The implementation of corporate IT systems pushed forward in 2024 (eGrants, eProcurement, e-Ordering, AUPO workflow for the ex-post Audit, SUMMA as accounting system) is heavily shaping the control system of the Agency. The Corporate IT tools decrease bottlenecks and redundancies in internal procedures and provide for embedded controls leading to leaner and more **efficient** use of resources.

Network of Inclusion and Diversity Officers in EACEA

The Network of Inclusion and Diversity Officers in EACEA has been successfully implementing the Inclusion and Diversity Action Plan, for the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes for the past two years. This is meant to facilitate exchanges with policy maker on matters pertaining policy shaping and paves the way for an efficient decision-making process for the next generation programmes.

In 2024, the topic of the EU Diversity Month was 'Embracing the future of work through diversity and inclusion'. EACEA, together with the equality coordinator of DG EAC, organised an event open to all Commission services, also inviting a representative from a supported project ([47]). The Eurydice report on 'Promoting Diversity and Inclusion in schools in Europe' was presented, with a particular focus on diversity among the teaching profession and initial teacher education in addressing diversity in the classroom. Additionally, the Network held four meetings throughout the year, during which topics such as citizenship education and inclusive education in terms of policy deliverables of the *EEA ([48])Working group on Equality and Values in Education and Training* were discussed together with representatives from DG EAC.

([47])   STEAME Teacher Facilitators Academies

([48])   European Education Area