



# 2019

# Annual Activity Report

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







2019 was a special year - a year of change for the political leadership of the Commission, as well as the Council and European Parliament. Education, culture, youth and sport remained priorities for our President Ursula Von der Leyen, who recognised that these policy areas are where the foundations of the future of the European project are laid. It is through education, culture, youth and sport that European citizens can discover who they are, what they love, and how they can contribute to move us all forward.

The President's ambition to lead Europe to strive for more are reflected in our work:

In 2019, as we continued to work towards the **European Education Area**, the European Union adopted new policy initiatives aimed at improving the quality of early childhood education and care systems and the teaching and learning of foreign languages, and raise the ambition in terms of investment in green education and training infrastructure. The **8<sup>th</sup> Education and Training Monitor** reported the progress made in EU on the education and training 2020 targets, with a focus on **teachers and teaching careers**. The results were presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Education Summit that attracted Ministers, civil society and over 150 teachers from across Europe.

We also accelerated our implementation of the **Digital Education Action Plan which aims to make education and training institutions fit for the digital age** and equip them with the capabilities needed for making better decisions and for improving learners' skills and competences. We are also working towards presenting an upgrade of this Action Plan as it is one of the priorities of the President.

Our work towards the transformation of the European higher education in the digital era is supported with the launch of the **European Universities** and the **European Student Card**. The Commission continued work with Member States on the automatic recognition of school and higher education qualifications, and of learning periods abroad.

The 2019 edition of the **European Youth Week** involved 120,000 young people across Europe and provided a valuable opportunity for the first meeting of the EU Youth Strategy platform.

In 2019, **the Jean Monnet Activities**, the strand of the Erasmus+ programme promoting excellence in the teaching and research of European integration, **celebrated 30 years of existence**. Since 1989 more than 1,000 universities in 90 countries around the globe have been funded, educating about 300,000 students per year.

The **European Week of Sport** reached a new record in 2019 with the participation of 15.3 million Europeans from 42 countries and regions in 28,300 events. We also organised the third edition of the **#Beinclusive EU sports awards**, recognising organisations that use the power of sport to promote social inclusion and a seminar to take stock of the actions set out in the **Tartu Call for a Healthy Lifestyle**.

In the field of cultural, 2019 was devoted to coordinating the implementation of the **European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage**. 2019 was also the year that saw, with great success, the launch of the first call of **I-Portunus**, a pilot scheme for Individual Mobility for artists and creative professionals.

In 2019, the **European Researchers' Night** organised in the framework of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions has attracted more than 1.6 million visitors and showcased what researchers do for society in interactive and engaging ways. In 2019, the Commission adopted its proposal for a recast Regulation and a Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021-2027 of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), further and reinforcing its role in the Horizon Europe context.

These achievements were made possible thanks to the ideas, enthusiasm and dedication of DG EAC staff, who during a year of change worked tirelessly to build long-lasting and trust-based policy initiatives for the benefit of a united and stronger Europe in the world.

**Themis Christophidou**  
Director General DG EAC

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## THE DG IN BRIEF

### **Mission statement**

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

- to **foster equity and excellence in modern education and training systems**, support effective and efficient investment in people's competences and education infrastructure, promote career development of researchers and cross-fertilisation between education, research and innovation,
- to raise awareness of and promote Europe's shared, diverse heritage and to **use the full potential of culture in supporting innovation**, creativity, sustainable jobs and growth, in building a more inclusive and fairer Union, and in reinforcing the external relations of the EU,
- to **maximise the potential and well-being of young people** and their active participation in society and work life,
- to develop the **European dimension in sport**,
- to **ensure the strategic implementation of 4 EU flagship programmes**,
  - Erasmus+
  - the European Solidarity Corps
  - Creative Europe
  - As part of Horizon 2020: the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology
- to **exploit and strengthen synergies between policy and programme actions**, and promote their systemic impact.

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

Guided by the Treaty on the European Union<sup>1</sup>, DG EAC's mission and political priorities for 2019 are defined on the basis of **President Juncker's political guidelines**<sup>2</sup> set for the Commission 2014-2019 and its translation in Commissioner Navracsics' mission letter, and outlined in Commissioner Gabriel mission letter as from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2019. Under the leadership of the Commissioner responsible for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, DG EAC contributed to the Commission's priorities for growth, jobs and investment.

DG EAC is in charge of multiple policy areas, for which the Treaty on the functioning of the EU establishes the possibility to carry out actions to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States. This mainly takes place through a combination of policy activities and funding programmes.

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

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

For the next Multiannual Financial Framework, DG EAC coordinates the contribution of education, culture and sport to the preparation of the post-2020 European **Structural and Investment Funds** and the **InvestEU programme**. It has endeavoured to foster synergies between Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, the European Social Fund+ and InvestEU. DG EAC is actively involved in fostering the role of inclusive education and common values in preventing radicalisation in the framework of the Security Union Task Force.

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

In 2019, the total available budget in commitment appropriations for the EU programmes and actions under the policy portfolio of DG EAC amounted to about **€5.66 billion (+20% as compared to 2018)**, including administrative budget and the contribution of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA/EEA), the financial participation of third countries as well as internal revenues.

## **Programme implementation**

DG EAC's policies are supported by EU funding programmes that all invest in people, often with a direct interaction with citizens. The DG spending programmes implement actions mainly by means of grants funded under Heading 1 of the budget complemented with funding from Heading 4 and from the European Development Fund as regards external actions.

- **Erasmus+**, promoting mobility, cooperation and policy development in education, training, youth, Jean Monnet activities and sport. The programme also includes the

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<sup>1</sup> [OJ C 326, 26.10.2012](#)

<sup>2</sup> [President Juncker's Political Guidelines, 15.07.2014](#)

Erasmus+ Student Loan guarantee facility and the international dimension of higher education and youth cooperation. The total financial envelope over 2014-2020 is:

- €14.5 billion from heading 1 'Smart and Inclusive Growth'
  - €1.7 billion from heading 4 'Global Europe'
  - €85 million for European Development Fund (EDF)
- the **European Solidarity Corps** (ESC), under its own legal base as of 2018, promoting solidarity activities, mainly through volunteering, but also traineeships and jobs, to enhance the engagement of young people and organisations in accessible and high quality solidarity activities:
    - €375.6 million for the 2018-2020 period
  - **Creative Europe** (CE), the programme covering the culture and the audio-visual sectors, including the new guarantee facility for small and medium-sized enterprises in the cultural and creative sectors:
    - €1.46 billion for the 2014-2020 period
  - **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions** (MSCA), investing in European researchers, to work and collaborate in other countries, at all stages of their career, backing initiatives that break down barriers between academia, industry and business; and the **European Institute of Innovation and Technology** (EIT), which reinforces Europe's innovation capacity by connecting and empowering people and organisations to create, educate and innovate, are both part of the €77 billion **Horizon 2020** Framework Programme for Research and Innovation:
    - €6.2 billion for MSCA the 2014-2020 period
    - €2.4 billion for EIT the 2014-2020 period

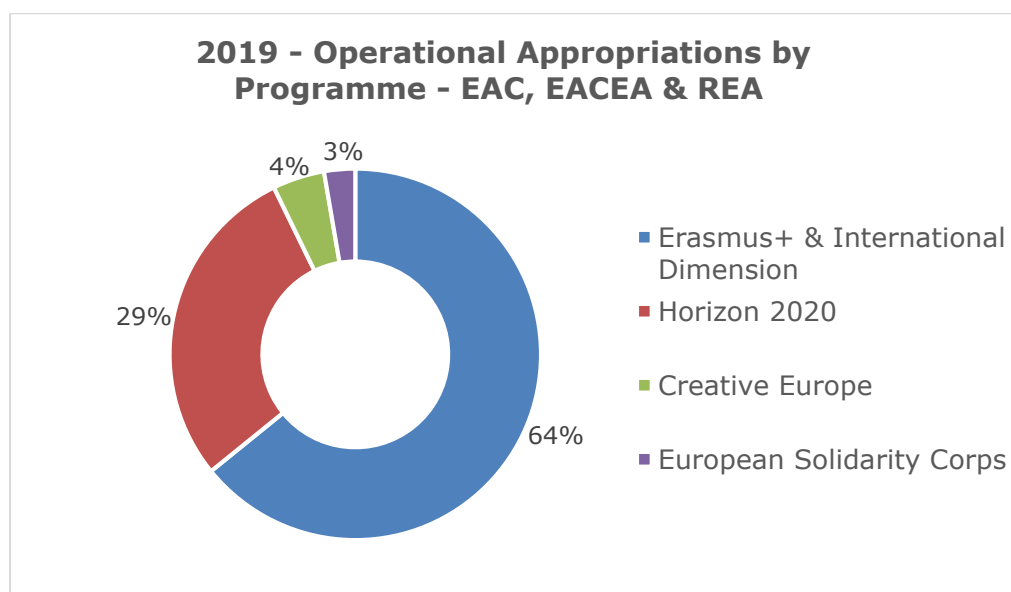


Figure 1 shows the relative importance of the programmes and highlights the predominance of Erasmus+. DG EAC's own budget, i.e. expenditures which are covered by the assurance of the DG, amounts to €3.315 billion (in commitments made) or €3.136 billion (in payments made) in 2019.

With the exception of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, the programmes generally finance a high number of small actions and projects with a relatively short duration (rarely more than two years). The main actions can be summarised as follows:

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

DG EAC implements the EU budget using four distinct **implementation modes**, including three forms of externalisation:

- **Direct management through two EU Executive Agencies** mainly for those parts of programmes where projects are allocated across Europe based on excellence<sup>3</sup>, and representing close to 35% of 2019 DG EAC budget. DG EAC assumes responsibility through the Steering Committee of each Executive Agency. In compliance with the relevant Acts of Delegation, the actions implemented through the Executive Agencies contribute significantly to the objectives of the DG. Solid performance and efficiency indicators have resulted in mandate successive extensions for the Agencies. Both are subject to regular cost-benefit analysis of the externalisation through Agencies which demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of this management mode:
  - The **Education Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency** (EACEA), with 15% of 2019 EAC budget, implements these parts of Erasmus+ and Creative Europe. It has also provided specific horizontal services for the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) since 2018. See their respective Annual Activity Report.
  - The **Research Executive Agency** (REA), with 20% of 2019 EAC budget, implements the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions. See their respective Annual Activity Report.

It is worth noting that the operational budgets of the Executive Agencies are not funds that the DG has entrusted but are funds the Agencies have received directly from the Commission (co-delegation type II). Therefore, the Executive Director of the respective Executive Agency, as Authorising Officer by Delegation<sup>4</sup>, is fully in charge and accountable for the operational budget, and bears the responsibility to provide assurance on the operational expenditure in the Annual Activity Report<sup>5</sup>. Thus, DG EAC has principally a supervision responsibility over the Executive Agencies.

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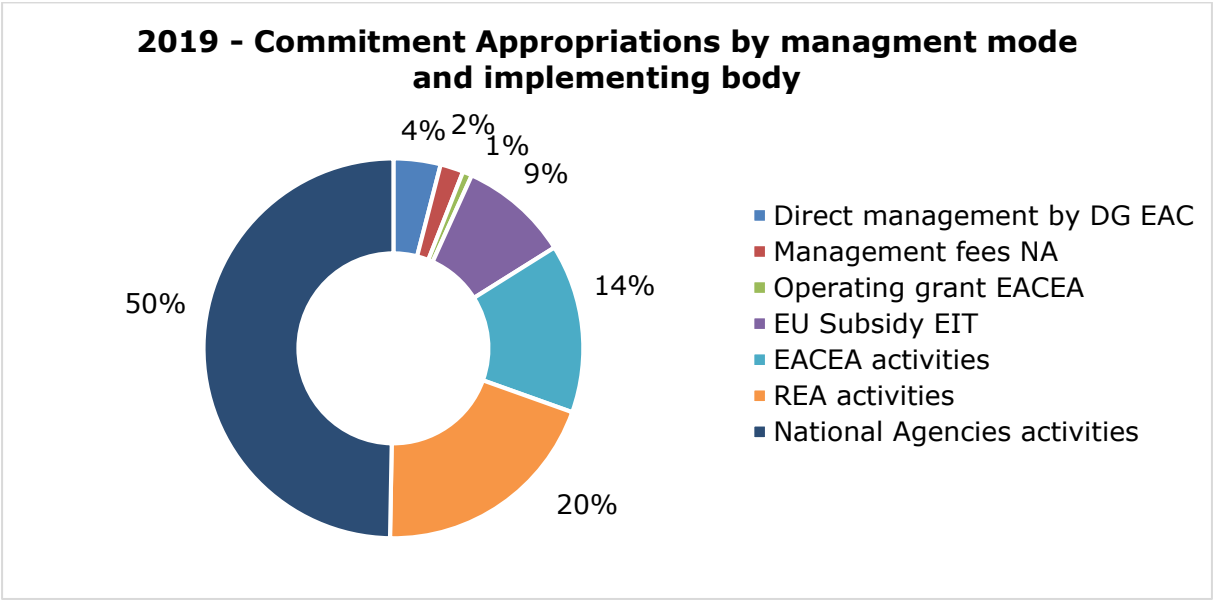
<sup>3</sup> Proposals are submitted by applicants under competitive, bottom-up calls for proposals. They are then evaluated by external experts on the basis of pre-defined criteria and finally ranked and selected for funding according to their overall quality.

<sup>4</sup> Art. 69(2) of the Financial Regulation (2018) applicable to the general budget of the European Union.

<sup>5</sup> As far as the operating budget granted by DG EAC to the Agency is concerned, DG EAC remains responsible as Parent DG. Those administrative expenditures are therefore covered by the reasonable assurance given in the AAR.



- **Indirect management through National Agencies (NAs)** appointed the National Authorities (NAUs) of the participating countries to the Erasmus+ programme and supervised by the NAUs, Independent Audit Bodies (IABs) and DG EAC. This implementation mode is used for more than two thirds of the Erasmus+ budget, in particular for mobility actions, partnerships, and certain cooperation projects. NAs are equipped to manage the large volume of actions of relatively low amounts that require proximity to the beneficiaries. DG EAC retains full responsibility for these parts of the programmes. In addition, NAs are also now in charge of managing most of the actions implemented under the European Solidarity Corps legal base for 2018-2020. The actions implemented through NAs represent nearly 50% of the 2019 budget.
- **Indirect management through other bodies:** The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), and the European Investment Fund (EIF) for the Erasmus+ Student Loan Guarantee Facility, manage a budget representing together 9% of the 2019 budget. They are both characterised by a focused number of actions with a longer time scope:
  - The new Framework Partnership Agreements signed in 2016 between the EIT and the KICs (Knowledge and Innovation Communities) foresee a period of 7 years starting from 1 January 2016);
  - The EU-guaranteed master loans have a duration of minimum five and maximum ten years, with repayment only starting one or two years after completion of the one- or two-year Master programme.
- The remaining actions implemented by **DG EAC under direct management** represent 4% of the commitment appropriations. These actions consist mainly of administrative expenditure (Library and e-Resources unit of the Commission, Blue Book traineeships programme, studies, external communication and dissemination of Programmes, IT systems, etc.), policy coordination and support actions, politically sensitive and new actions, pilot projects and preparatory actions (14 actions in 2019), as well as the management of horizontal services for European Solidarity Corps participants.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Annual Activity Report is a management report of the Director-General of DG EAC to the College of Commissioners. Annual Activity Reports are the main instrument of management accountability within the Commission 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<sup>6</sup>.

### a) Key results and progress towards the achievement of the Commission's general objectives and DG's specific objectives

In line with its 2016-2020 Strategic Plan<sup>7</sup> and 2019 Management Plan, DG EAC contributed during 2019 to both the **competitiveness and social inclusiveness dimensions** of the European Commission's first political priority, 'A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment'. DG EAC focused on implementing relevant policy work contributing to these goals, and fully mobilised its programmes<sup>8</sup> to this effect.

As stated during the informal **EU27 leaders' meeting in Sibiu**, Romania,<sup>9</sup> on 9 May 2019, investing in people is a priority under the current strategic agenda. Investing in young people, who are enthusiastic, committed and strongly believe in democratic values was also the core of the Young Citizens' dialogue, one of the main events in Sibiu organised by DG EAC the day before the Leaders' meeting.

DG EAC continued to significantly strengthen its **analysis and knowledge capacity in 2019** regarding education and training systems. A key output to support evidence-based education policies was the **8<sup>th</sup> Education and Training Monitor**, published on 26 September 2019, which reported the progress made in EU on the education and training 2020 targets, including the Europe 2020 headline target on education. In 2019, the Monitor's focus was on **teachers and teaching careers**.

In 2019, DG EAC prepared the ground for a new **cooperation framework in education and training**, the successor of the existing ET 2020, foreseen to be adopted in 2020. The January 2019 Forum on the Future of Learning kicked off the discussion on future priorities with a wide range of stakeholders.

DG EAC also followed up on the ambition of the **European Council**<sup>10</sup> to act on common educational challenges, and to enable all young people to receive the best education and training and to find jobs across the continent, and on the Commission Communication on **'Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture'**<sup>11</sup>.

The ambition is to work towards a shared European agenda in education and training and to create a **European Education Area** by 2025 where everyone has access to quality education and training, where learning, studying and doing research would not be hampered by borders and where spending time in another Member State – to study, to learn, or to work – has become the standard.

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<sup>6</sup> Article 17(1) of the Treaty on European Union – [OJ C 326, 26.10.2012](#).

<sup>7</sup> Every department of the European Commission publishes a strategic plan. This sets out the department's vision for a five-year period, up until 2020. See [Strategic plan 2016-2020 – Education and Culture](#)

<sup>8</sup> Erasmus+, Creative Europe, the European Solidarity Corps, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology.

<sup>9</sup> [Europe in May 2019](#). Preparing for a more united, stronger and more democratic Union in an increasingly uncertain world. The European Commission's contribution to the informal EU27' leaders' meeting in Sibiu (Romania) on 9 May 2019.

<sup>10</sup> [European Council meeting of 14 December 2017, Conclusions EUCO 19/1/17 REV 1](#).

<sup>11</sup> [COM\(2017\)673 – 14.11.2017](#)

The **Digital Education Action Plan**, one of the flagship initiatives, was received very well by stakeholders, who welcomed the Commission's ambition to support Member States and education and training systems to be better fit for the digital age. In 2019, the implementation went smoothly, with a total reach of beyond 5 million people globally. Flagship actions such as the SELFIE self-reflection tool, the Digital Education Hackathon, EU Code Week and Safer Internet Day unfolded their potential and contributed to promoting digital education and skills in Europe.

The **European Universities Initiative** was kick-started with the selection of the first 17 European Universities in June. This initiative has the ambition to enhance the quality and attractiveness of European higher education and boost cooperation between institutions, their students and staff. The selection of European Universities includes a broad range of higher education institutions from across the EU, ranging from universities of applied sciences, technical and fine arts to comprehensive and research-intensive universities. A second call was published on 5 November 2019.

DG EAC has set the **European Student Card** initiative in motion. The first phase of its implementation, in which more than 1,900 higher education institutions were actively involved, ran as planned. Full rollout under the next Erasmus programme is being prepared.

DG EAC worked on the implementation of a number of education and training policies proposed by the Commission and adopted by the Council throughout 2018 and 2019. These include recognition of qualifications and learning periods abroad<sup>12</sup>, learning of languages<sup>13</sup>, and high-quality early childhood education and care<sup>14</sup>.

2019 was also marked by the **30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Jean Monnet Activities** which was celebrated in a series of very successful conferences, seminars and other events organised by DG EAC and by Jean Monnet Professors and coordinators around the world. The main celebration event took place in Brussels on 18 June 2019. Under the label 'Jean Monnet Activities: 30 years of excellence in EU studies', the events were an opportunity to discuss current challenges of EU affairs, the future of European studies and the role of Jean Monnet Activities especially to motivate young people to study topics related to European integration.

In addition, DG EAC organised for the second time the award of the **Altiero Spinelli Prize for Outreach**, awarding outstanding projects aiming to enhance the active civic engagement of young people in the EU.



©European Union, 2019

DG EAC also started to implement the **new EU Youth Strategy** adopted at the end of 2018 that is based on three key objectives: empowering, engaging and connecting with young people. The 2019 edition of the **European Youth Week**, which involved some 120,000 young people across Europe, provided a valuable opportunity for the first meeting of the EU Youth Strategy platform. Held just before the European elections, the Youth Week focused, under the theme '*Democracy and me*', on youth participation in decision-making, and young people's participation in society generally.

Further, two very successful application rounds for **DiscoverEU** were launched in January and May 2019. The January round received almost 80,000 applications and

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<sup>12</sup> [OJ C 444, 10.12.2018, p. 1](#)

<sup>13</sup> [OJ C 189, 05.06.2019, p. 15](#)

<sup>14</sup> [OJ C 189, 05.06.2019, p. 4](#)

awarded 14,536 young people a travel pass, while the May round, under the theme 'Learning about Europe', attracted 94,093 applications and awarded 20,006 young people a travel pass.

Since its launch in December 2016, more than 191,000 young people have signed up to the **European Solidarity Corps**, and about 34,500 were deployed, showing their great interest in getting involved in solidarity work across Europe.

During 2019, DG EAC has continued to support the world-wide **Sustainable Development Goal** 'Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning', not only via Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 funding but also by building on the Commission's 2017 Communication on a 'renewed impetus of the Africa EU Partnership' and the creation of a new EU-Africa Alliance for Sustainable investments and Jobs, which puts youth, knowledge and jobs at the heart of the **EU's cooperation with Africa**. Excellent progress was made towards President Juncker's commitment to support 35,000 African students and academics with the Erasmus+ programme by 2020, as part of ambitious new 'Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs'.

The **EU Strategy for the Western Balkans** sets out new flagship initiatives, including doubling the amount of Erasmus+ funds allocated to the region.

Both **Africa** and the **Western Balkans** will benefit from a **pilot VET mobility scheme** launched and contracted in 2019: three projects have been selected for enlargement (€2 million, 1 project) and African countries (€6.5 million, 2 projects).

DG EAC successfully implemented the first **EU-Japan** joint call for proposals for Erasmus Mundus-like Joint Master Programmes, with three new programmes selected in July 2019.

DG EAC developed the **European dimension of sport** and promoted the participation in sport and physical activity, including through the EU Work Plan for Sport, the European Week of Sport and the Tartu Call for a Healthy Lifestyle. A second progress report on the implementation of the Council Recommendation on promoting health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA) across sectors was adopted by the Commission in 2019<sup>15</sup>.

The **EU Sport Forum** that took place on 8 and 9 April 2019 in Bucharest and the **Tartu Call seminar** on 19 June 2019 were important moments to gather sport stakeholders and to give visibility to sport's contribution to Europe's economy in terms of job creation, growth and innovation, while also tackling cross-border challenges that impact the integrity of sport.

The **5<sup>th</sup> edition of the European Week of Sport** organised during the last week of September 2019 reached a new record with the participation of over 15.3 million Europeans from 42 European countries and regions in more than 28,300 events. The third edition of the **#Beinclusive EU sports awards** recognised organisations using the power of sport to increase social inclusion for disadvantaged groups. Finally, a seminar focused on the 'specificity of sport' attracted high-level participation from the sport movement, sport lawyers and academics as well as national authorities.

When it comes to research and innovation, DG EAC supported the mobility and training of excellent researchers, and the development of excellent doctoral programmes through the **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions** (MSCA). For the first time ever, a call to financially support **MSCA fellows with special needs** was launched in 2019, leading to 23 researchers obtaining funding for additional costs linked to their disability. A second call for **Widening Fellowships** was organised which will lead again to a significant increase in the number of fellowships taken up in widening countries<sup>16</sup> in 2020. In

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<sup>15</sup> [COM\(2019\)565 – 06.11.2019](#)

<sup>16</sup> The Member States currently eligible for Widening support are: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

addition, an **MSCA Presidency conference** was held under the auspices of the Romanian Presidency focusing on how to increase participation from widening countries. DG EAC successfully defended the new MSCA text in the Horizon Europe Framework Programme and managed to obtain a clause to support additional costs of beneficiaries related in particular to maternity or parental leave or the change of family status of a researcher.

The **European Researchers' Night** has become the largest research communication and promotion event on research in Europe. In 2019, the Night took place on 27 September 2019 in more than 400 cities and attracted 1.65 million visitors, through 55 projects funded by the MSCA involving 35,000 researchers. In addition, together with the Research Executive Agency, DG EAC organised an **MSCA clustering event on Artificial Intelligence** in December 2019, feeding back projects results into policy-making of several Commission services. Finally, DG EAC organised an **MSCA Stakeholders Consultation Conference** event on 3 and 4 December 2019, the results of which will be reflected in the MSCA Work Programme 2021-2022.

Moreover, DG EAC prepared the Commission's proposals for a **Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021-2027** of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and for a recast of the **EIT Regulation**, adopted by the College on 11 July 2019. The EIT is part of the Commission's overall strategy to **support innovation and entrepreneurship across the EU** based on the concept of integration of the **Knowledge Triangle** (education, research and enterprise). Thanks to its focus on the knowledge triangle, the EIT contributes not only to the Horizon Europe objectives but also to other complementary initiatives such as Erasmus+.

In the field of culture, DG EAC followed-up on initiatives of the **New European Agenda for Culture**, aimed to harness the power of culture and cultural diversity for social cohesion and well-being, to support jobs and growth in the cultural and creative sectors, to strengthen international cultural relations, and to better exploit the digital potential in culture. DG EAC also actively cooperated with Member States in implementing the Council **Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022**, adopted in November 2018. **I-Portunus**, a pilot scheme for Individual Mobility for artists and creative professionals took a big step forward in launching its first call. The significant number of applications in three rounds of applications proves the needs for such a support.

In the field of cultural heritage, 2019 was devoted to coordinating the implementation of the **European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage** published in December 2018. The Framework secures the long-term policy impact of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage and sets a common direction for heritage-related activities in EU policies and programmes, through a set of well-defined concrete actions.

In 2019, DG EAC also contributed actively to the negotiations in the Council and the European Parliament for the next generation of programmes under its responsibility within the **future Multiannual Financial Framework**: Erasmus+, European Solidarity Corps, Creative Europe, and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions and European Institute of Innovation and Technology as part of Horizon 2020.

Finally, DG EAC successfully negotiated a regulation establishing contingency measures to enable participants in the Erasmus+ programme to complete their mobility even in the event of a no-deal **Brexit**.

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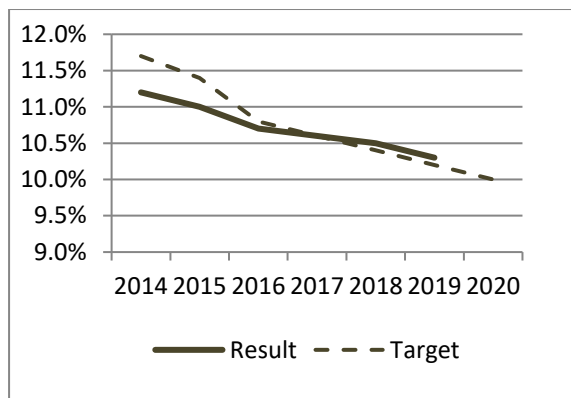
Following Associated Countries are also considered as widening countries: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, The Republic of North Macedonia, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine.

## b) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

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

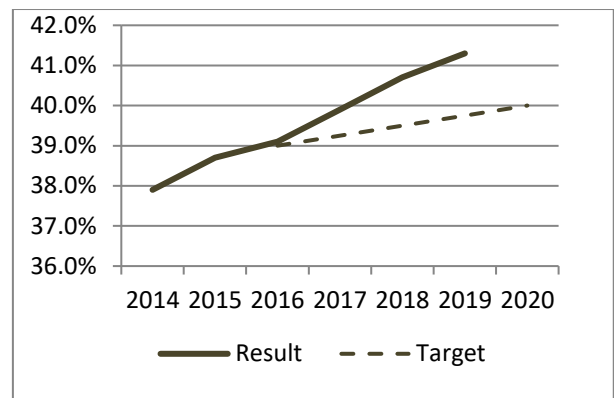
### 1. Share of early leavers from education and training

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



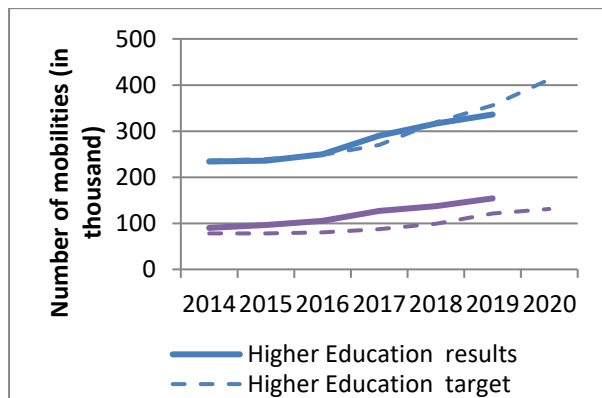
### 2. Tertiary educational attainment

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



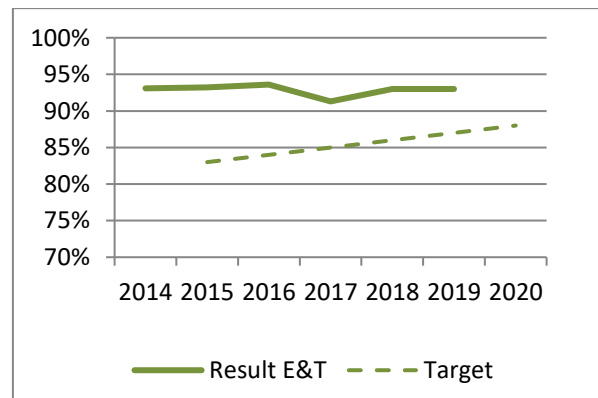
### 3- Learning mobility opportunities

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



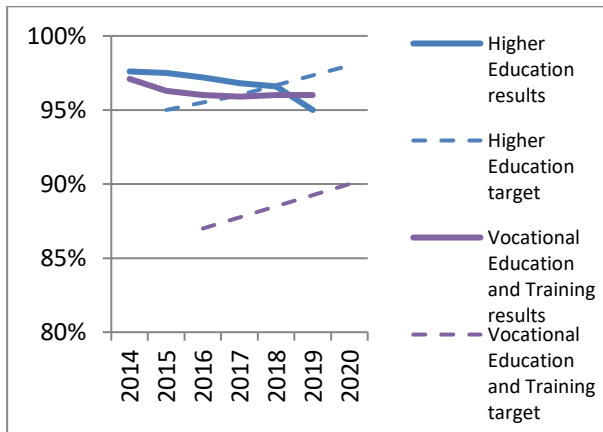
### 4 - Better skills for participants

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



## 5 - Language skills for participants

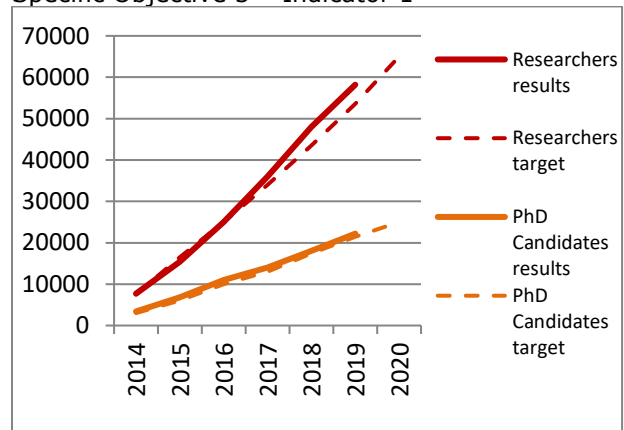
Result indicator 25  
Erasmus+ Programme statement Specific  
Objective 5 - Indicator 1



\*Actual results - EU28 final figures can only be provided when projects are finalised. Data is extracted from completed participant surveys.

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

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions  
Output indicator 28  
H2020 Programme statement  
Specific Objective 3 - Indicator 1



## 7 - Multi-annual residual error rate

✓ Less than 2%

Stable and in line with previous years, the multi-annual residual error rate is below 2% in 2019 for all management modes.



## **c) Key conclusions on Financial management and Internal control (executive summary of section 2.1)**

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

**To ensure the achievement of policy and management objectives, the Commission has adopted a set of internal control principles, based on international good practice. The financial regulation requires that the organisational structure and the internal control systems used to implement the budget be set up in accordance with these principles. DG EAC has assessed its internal control systems during the reporting year and has concluded that it is effective and the components and principles are present and functioning well overall, but some improvements are needed. Please refer to AAR section 2.1.3 for further details.**

**In addition, DG EAC has systematically examined the available control results and indicators, including those for supervising entities to which it has entrusted budget implementation tasks, 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 2.1 for further details.**

**In conclusion, the management has reasonable assurance that, overall, suitable controls are in place and working as intended; risks are being appropriately monitored and mitigated; and necessary improvements and reinforcements are being implemented. The Director General, in his capacity as Authorising Officer by Delegation has signed the Declaration of Assurance without making a reservation.**

## **d) Provision of information to the Commissioner**

**In the context of the regular meetings during the year between the DG and the Commissioner on management matters, the main elements of this report and assurance declaration, have been brought to the attention of the Commissioner responsible for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth.<sup>17</sup>**

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<sup>17</sup> To be done in coordination with RTD



# 1. KEY RESULTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE COMMISSION'S GENERAL OBJECTIVES AND DG SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

## 1.1 Policy aspects of the main outputs for 2019

In 2019, DG EAC policy work has focused on preparing the next generation of programmes, deepening and implementing policies adopted in 2018, and working on policy initiatives in the fields of education, youth, sport and culture.

### 1.1.1. Setting up the European Education Area

DG EAC actively followed up on the European Council conclusions of 14 December 2017 and on the **Communication on Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture**. With its vision for a **European Education Area**, the European Commission has committed itself to an ambitious agenda aligned with the Sustainable Development Goal 4 – ‘Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning’ set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015.

Future major trends in education and training were considered by the **European Education and Training Expert Panel**, whose work was presented and discussed during the ‘**Forum on the Future of learning**’ in January 2019. The Forum brought together education, training and youth stakeholders and policymakers to discuss the major societal challenges - demography, citizenship and inclusion, digitalisation, technological change and the future of work, sustainability and environment, and governance and investment - and how they will shape education and training across Europe. The two activities provided expert and stakeholder perspectives on the future development of the European Education Area<sup>18</sup>.

In addition, DG EAC contributed to the implementation of the principles of the **European Pillar of Social Rights**: to principle 1 that everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning to maintain and acquire skills that enable to participate in society and manage transitions in the labour market, and to principle 11 that children have the right to affordable early childhood education and care of good quality.

During the reporting period, DG EAC focused its attention on the following key initiatives:

- The **European Universities initiative** kick-started, with the selection of the first 17 European Universities on 26 June 2019. On 7 November, the European Commission hosted an event ‘European Universities Initiative – Building the Universities of the Future’, where the future of higher education was discussed, the first 17 European Universities were presented, and stakeholders were informed on the second call published on that day. More than 800 people were present, the event was also well followed online and via social media.
- The testing phase to prepare the step by step roll-out of the **European Student Card Initiative** started: 750 universities and Erasmus+ National Agencies took part in an interactive webinar in March to inform on the next steps and collect feedback. The first large-scale live testing is ongoing and the milestone of 1,900 universities participating in this exercise by the end of 2019 was reached. This represents close to

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<sup>18</sup> The [report and the experts' recommendations](#) will inform the upcoming Commission Communication on the European Education Area.

a 50% increase from the start of 2019, demonstrating the impact of the communication activities undertaken by DG EAC.

### **1.1.2. Implementing newly adopted Education and Training policies**

In 2019, DG EAC started the implementation of the Education and Training policies adopted by the Council throughout 2018 and 2019.

- Following the adoption of the **Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning** in May 2018, a conference on 'Learning approaches and Environments in School Education - Supporting Key Competence Development' with over 200 participants was organised in Brussels on 12 and 13 November 2019; tailor-made 'peer counselling' was offered to Lithuania on formative student assessment on 17 and 18 September 2019; and a 'Personal, social and learning to learn' competence framework is being developed in cooperation with JRC.
- Following the adoption in November 2018 of the **Council Recommendation on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods abroad**, DG EAC launched and supported various implementation activities, including through meetings with Member States (in the context of the ET2020 Working Group on Higher Education, the meeting of the Directors General for Higher Education, and the annual meeting of the National Academic Recognition Information Centres network). The Preparatory Action 'Recognition of School Study Periods Abroad', called for by the European Parliament, has started with the publication of a call for tender in June and selection of a contractor in December 2019.
- Following the adoption of the **Council Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages** in May 2019, DG EAC has started to support Member States in implementing the concept of language aware schools and improving the competences of young people in literacy and languages. This has taken the form of exchanging and promoting good practices via seminars and peer learning activities in France and Germany in the second half of 2019, supporting innovative learning methodologies and tools and extending cooperation with the Council of Europe.
- DG EAC has already been supporting Member States through the Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care launched in 2018 and also supports Member States' initiatives following the adoption of the **Council Recommendation on high quality in early childhood education and care systems** on 22 May 2019. In addition to Working Group meetings in Brussels, peer learning activities addressed how to promote inclusion in pre-school education and how to raise the attractiveness and support further professionalisation of staff working in early childhood education and care.
- DG EAC continued its work in 2019 on the implementation of the **Digital Education Action Plan**. Digital transition is a long-term societal challenge for education and training systems in the 21st century. However, persistent low average levels of digital skills and competences are observed in the EU while the digital transformation of our society and economy is accelerating. The Digital Education Action Plan aims at supporting Member States and education institutions in fostering digital change and innovation in their education and training systems. A dedicated Working Group on digital education, under the ET2020 framework on education and training, brought Member States and partner countries together on a regular basis to discuss issues related to digital change in education through face-to-face and online plenary meetings and peer-learning activities.

### **1.1.3. Policy cooperation in education and training**

In 2019, DG EAC stepped up the **preparation of the post-2020 framework for European cooperation in education and training**, building on the multiple consultations carried out among policymakers, stakeholders and experts.

In early 2019, **an independent assessment** of the ongoing Strategic Framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) was completed. Based on surveys and interviews with the Member States and stakeholders, the assessment has found that the ET 2020 successfully supported the modernisation of European education and training systems.

In cooperation with the Member States via the Standing Group on **Indicators and Benchmarks**, DG EAC prepared a set of benchmark notes for the post-2020 period. These notes analyse existing ET 2020 benchmarks and additional indicators, in order to advance technical preparations for the monitoring of the post 2020 cooperation framework in education and training. In addition to the existing ET 2020 indicators (underachievement in basic skills, early childhood education and care, early school leaving, tertiary educational attainment, adult learning, learning mobility, employment of recent graduates), these benchmark notes cover new areas selected for better monitoring (digital skills, multilingualism, VET). The set of quantitative benchmarks to be adopted by the Council is likely to be accompanied by: i) other indicators where there is no common EU target (for example on expenditure in education); ii) a set of qualitative indicators or policy data, to be monitored thanks to the data from the Eurydice network; iii) a yearly publication tracking progress in the EU and in the Member States, the Education and Training Monitor.

Analysing progress against the existing **ET 2020 benchmarks** shows that educational challenges have only been partly addressed. In a nutshell, the EU :

- met its objectives on tertiary educational attainment and participation in early childhood education and care;
- can expect to meet it by 2020 in employability of recent graduates, and reduction of early school leaving;
- is far from meeting them in reducing underperformance in basic skills and increasing participation in adult learning; and
- faces emerging priorities, not currently covered by benchmarks, notably on digital education and vocational education and training

As in previous years, within the **European Semester** process for 2019, DG EAC highlighted education challenges by identifying future investment priority needs. The Semester Country Reports adopted in February contained a very strong focus on education and training issues, in turn reflected in the Country Specific Recommendations adopted in June 2019. For the first time, each Member State received an education-related Country Specific Recommendation, showing the importance of stepping up reforms in this area to boost economic growth and social fairness.

DG EAC also contracted and managed **four prospective studies** with the time horizon 2030 on the future of different aspects in education and training: assessment in primary and secondary education; formal, non-formal and informal learning; transnational collaboration in European higher education; and social innovation in education. These studies outlined possible scenarios concerning the future of the four fields in order to stimulate a debate on the future of education, generate forward-looking policy ideas, and present to Member States possible avenues for future policy development. Presentations of the studies are planned for the first half of 2020.

Further, DG EAC led efforts in key events during the year:

- In September, DG EAC has hosted the second **European Education Summit** to discuss the challenges of the teaching profession, bringing together education ministers, stakeholders and civil society, as well as 150 teachers from Member States Europe.
- On 24 and 25 October, more than 450 people participated to the **8<sup>th</sup> European University-Business Forum** in Brussels on 'Innovation and Sustainable Development'. On 14 and 15 February, a thematic University-Business Forum took place in Lisbon in cooperation with the Portuguese Rectors Conference.
- On 8 November, a **Joint Council meeting with Ministers of Education and Ministers of Finance** took place to discuss the importance of investing in people's competences. Prepared in close cooperation with other Commission services and the Finnish Council Presidency, DG EAC invested to advance discussions on smart investment in education and training.

#### **1.1.4. Moving forward the Investing in Europe's Youth Initiative**

DG EAC started to implement together with the Member States the **new EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027**, along the three key priorities of **Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people**.

The 2019 **European Youth Week** took place just before the European elections and focused, under the theme '*Democracy and me*', on youth participation in decision-making, and young people's participation in society, including changing democratic patterns, access to information and media literacy. This was in line with the 2019 theme for **eTwinning**, which connects school staff across Europe through joint projects.

The week gathered some 120,000 participants to over 1,000 events, carried out in 35 countries and organised by National Agencies, Eurodesks, Commission Representations, youth civil society and other partners. An unprecedented involvement of different Commission services turned the Youth Week into a corporate event, demonstrating a growing interest in youth in the political agenda. Among the young people who attended it, 25% came from a disadvantaged background. A clear focus was the relation between youth and democracy, and more generally youth participation in society.

The **European Youth Week** provided the platform:

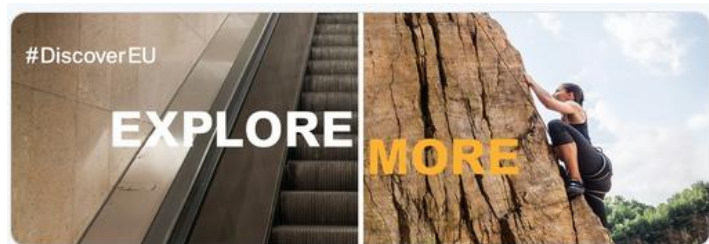
- To promote relevant policies and programmes, such as the new EU Youth Strategy, the European Education Area and the future Erasmus and European Solidarity Corps
- To kick-off of the EU Youth Dialogue and launch a new EU Youth Strategy Platform both as part of the new EU Youth Strategy
- To publish a youth Eurobarometer survey and the upcoming third round of applications for DiscoverEU.



©European Union, 2019

*A concrete demonstration of the successful concept of Youth Dialogue was the 'Young Citizens' Dialogue – Let's shape the future of Europe together!' event, co-organised by DG EAC, DG COMM and DG EMPL in Sibiu. It brought together over 300 committed and motivated young people from all over Europe. They actively participated in workshops focussed on themes of major interest for the young generation, such as democratic and social values, inclusion, climate changes and digitalisation; they reported the relevant conclusions to the Commissioners and interacted with them; they got inspiration from the European Solidarity Corps and #MySocialEurope photo exhibitions; and took an active role during the final Citizens' Dialogue at the presence of the Presidents of the European Commission and Romania, who engaged in a lively Q&A debate with the audience, characterised by pertinent and meaningful questions asked by young people who are eager to actively contribute to shaping the future of Europe.*

The European Parliament Preparatory Action '**DiscoverEU**' is offering 18 years old with a short-term group or individual travel experience. Building on the success of the first year, the focus remains on activities and measures to enhance the learning dimension of the experience, to facilitate the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities and to further develop the local support activities by relevant partners and stakeholders. In January 2019, the second round of the DiscoverEU pilot project was launched, attracting applications from almost 80,000 young people from all EU Member States during a two-week period. 14,536 young Europeans were selected based on the award criteria and taking into account the quota set for each EU Member State. The third round ran from 2 to 16 May 2019 and received 94,093 applications, and all quota for Member States were reached. 20,006 young people were awarded a travel pass to be used between 1 August 2019 and 31 January 2020.



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### **1.1.5. Implementing the EU Work Plan for Sport and the Tartu Call on Healthy Lifestyle**

The **EU Work Plan for Sport** (2017-2020), adopted in May 2017, sets out the policy priorities and main actions for cooperation at EU level: integrity of sport, the economic dimension of sport, and sport and society.

In 2019, DG EAC continued to tackle cross-border challenges that impact the integrity of sport such as anti-doping, match-fixing, and violence in sport. DG EAC also continued to provide expert input on anti-doping issues and match-fixing and made specific contributions on the safeguarding of children in sport and the specificity of sport within the EU. In addition, two peer learning activities on good governance in the context of major sport events and data mining strategies on sport participation took place.



### ***1.1.6. Implementing the New European Agenda for Culture, the Council Work Plan for Culture, and the European Action Plan for Cultural Heritage***

In addition to the ongoing implementation of the actions included in the **New European Agenda for Culture**, the implementation of the **Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022** has started in early 2019. DG EAC has actively supported the Member States in that task, including the preparation, launch and work of new Open Method of Coordination EU Member States Expert Groups. DG EAC continued to contribute to policy making at EU level, notably with regards to the role of culture for social cohesion and well-being, the further development of the cultural and creative industries, cultural heritage, and the EU's developing cultural diplomacy.

In addition, DG EAC has managed a very high number of calls to implement the Preparatory actions and Pilot actions in the field of culture. DG EAC also developed further sector-specific approaches, for instance the Music Moves Europe initiative. It has also invested in the contribution of a call for proposals for cultural projects in the Western Balkan region.

In line with its specific objective, DG EAC has followed up on the **Digital Single Market strategy** and notably the **revision of the copyright rules**. DG EAC actively contributed to the Commission's plans to facilitate national and sectoral implementation of the new Copyright Directive, which was published in May 2019. DG EAC was closely associated in the stakeholder dialogue, which started in October 2019, under Article 17 of the Directive on the use of protected content by online content-sharing service providers.

DG EAC published a report on the implementation, results and overall assessment of the **European Year of Cultural Heritage**. The Report highlights that the European Year of Cultural Heritage has had a positive impact on the perception of Europe's cultural heritage as a powerful resource for Europe.

Building on the momentum created by the European Year and in the framework of the Digital Day held on 9 April 2019, DG EAC and DG CNECT launched a Declaration on the digitalisation of cultural heritage, endorsed by 26 EU Member States.

In this context, several projects were implemented in 2019, including:

- A project implemented jointly with UNESCO, aimed at empowering schools and young professionals for the protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage
- Protecting the Jewish cemeteries of Europe: This pilot project aims at surveying Jewish burial sites in selected European countries, flagging best practices for their preservation and involving teachers and educators in awareness-raising actions
- A call for proposals for a sectorial skills alliances in the field of cultural heritage was launched

In 2019, DG EAC continued to manage the Service Level Agreement between DG EAC and DG COMM of the European Parliament regarding the **House of European History**, including the financial contribution of the Commission to the European Parliament.

Beside the implementation of the three policy frameworks mentioned above and recognising the **international dimension of culture** as a priority, throughout 2019, DG EAC continued its work in this field both by leading on the implementation of initiatives as well as by working in close cooperation with other Commission services:

- Carrying out the implementation of the Preparatory Action 'European Houses of Culture', launched in 2018 with an EU budget of €750,000 for 2018-2020,
- Providing support to the preparation of two major regional programmes for culture in the Southern Mediterranean and Eastern Partnership countries,

- Facilitating the participation of cultural organisations from Eastern Partnership countries, Turkey and Russia in four EU-funded activities for the culture and creative sector,
- Using the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance funds to support cultural cooperation between EU and the Western Balkans through a specific €5 million call to award to 25-35 projects, and for the action 'Fighting illicit trafficking of cultural goods in the Western Balkans'.

### **1.1.7. Providing effective support to EU-wide policy making in the field of Education and Training**

In 2019, DG EAC continued to support the implementation of the **Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020) framework** by facilitating Member States' cooperation in several ways:

- The Community of Practitioners of the **Open Methods of Coordination (OMC CoP)** was launched in 2019 and brings together the coordinators of the OMC working and expert groups in DG EAC and DG EMPL. The OMC CoP met five times in 2019 to exchange ideas on what currently works well as relates to how mutual learning is facilitated and implemented as well as to find synergies across DG EAC's policy areas.

The **ET 2020 Working Groups** are working on the basis of the new mandates adopted for the 2018-2020 period.

- The **Working Group on Promoting Common Values and Inclusive Education (2018-20)** is focusing on how to implement the Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching of 22 May 2018, both at European and national levels, including bringing these common values to the learners in the schools.
- The **Working Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education** followed up in 2019 on the priorities identified in the Communication on 'A renewed EU agenda for higher education'<sup>19</sup>, in the Communication on 'Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture'<sup>20</sup> and in the Paris Communiqué of the Bologna process. Two thematic Peer Learning Activities were organised, one in Brussels on inclusion in higher education, the other in Cyprus on academic integrity.
- Building on the outputs of the previous cycle, the **Working Group Schools (2018-20)** is focusing on coherence in policy action and developing a culture of quality enhancement in the areas of: a) quality assurance: supporting school self-evaluation; and b) supporting teacher and school leader careers. Three Peer Learning Activities (Croatia, Belgium-Flanders, Cyprus) and three Thematic Expert Seminars (Brussels) took place in 2019 to complement the full Group meetings. Final outputs are being developed for publishing in the first half of 2020.
- The **Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care (2018-20)** is focusing its work on strengthening social inclusion, and supporting professionalisation of staff in this sector. Two Peer Learning Activities (Lisbon and Milan) and two Working Group meetings (Brussels) took place in 2019. Final outputs, including an 'inclusion toolkit', are being developed for publishing in the first half of 2020.
- The **Working Group on Digital Education: Learning, Teaching and Assessment (DELTA)** is building on its work in the previous cycle, looking at how education systems and learning are impacted by digital transformation. The group is focusing on a series of themes including monitoring and measuring the impact of learning and teaching with technology, teacher education and practice, organisational

<sup>19</sup> [COM\(2017\)247 final – 30.05.2017](#)

<sup>20</sup> [COM\(2017\)673 final – 14.11.2017](#)

management, digital education supporting lifelong learning and good practice in collaboration and partnerships. The group is also actively supporting the roll-out of the SELFIE<sup>21</sup> self-reflection tool for schools on the use of technologies for teaching and learning, and provides regular updates on the implementation of actions of the Digital Education Action Plan. The first Peer Learning Activity (PLA) of the group in 2019, hosted by the Ministry of Education Luxembourg, focused on the role of digital games in innovating education. The second PLA in Slovenia looked at the topic of Artificial Intelligence in Education, followed by a third one on the topic of grassroots innovation, which took place in Italy in autumn.

The Working Groups and the High Level Group on Education and Training have also provided their inputs into the development of the new education and training cooperation framework, and the future development of the European Education Area.

Further, the Expert group on **graduate tracking**, bringing together 70 participants from European Union and European Economic Area countries is halfway through its mandate, deliberating on the best ways to achieve comparable EU data on the employment and social outcomes of graduates. The pilot European graduate survey has been finalised in eight pilot countries yielding for the first time comparable information on how different higher education systems prepare graduates for the world of work. The reports are due in spring 2020.

DG EAC is working with Member States and the National Academic Recognition Centres (NARICs) on the implementation of the Council Recommendation on promoting automatic recognition of higher education and upper secondary education and training qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods abroad. The ET2020 Working Group on Higher Education, the meeting of Directors-General of Higher Education, and the annual meeting of the ENIC-NARIC networks had dedicated sessions to identify the steps necessary to develop national guidance on automatic recognition and to improve capacity and communication with higher education institutions. A specific restricted call for NARICs was launched under the Erasmus+ Programme to help implementation of this recommendation during the 2020-2022 period.

In 2019 DG EAC facilitated five '**peer counselling**' activities. Peer counselling, part of the Education and Training 2020 toolbox, offers tailor-made support and helps Member States with expertise from other countries and international bodies and associations to prepare a new initiative or reform national policy. During 2019, peer counselling was held in: Slovenia – continuing an earlier activity on a new funding formula for higher education; Cyprus – exploring inclusive educational approaches specifically related to newly arrived migrant children; Denmark – on citizenship education for young people at risk of alienation and radicalisation; Lithuania - on reforming student assessment; and Latvia - on school evaluation and accreditation.

As announced in the Communication on '**A renewed EU agenda for higher education**', DG EAC is supporting three Erasmus+ forward-looking cooperation projects in 2019-2022 on science, technology, engineering and maths education-STEAM<sup>22</sup> approach (interaction between STEM and non-STEM fields of study). DG EAC continued its work on **HEInnovate**, the guiding **framework to help higher education institutions** assess and develop their innovative and entrepreneurial potential. Four HEInnovate country reviews (Austria, Croatia, Italy and Romania) were completed. Work has continued with OECD on supporting efficient and effective higher education systems by a review of higher education resource allocation. And DG EAC reinforced its **cooperation with the Joint Research Centre (JRC)** to better understand and strengthen the role of **higher education institutions** for regional development, in particular in the context of the smart specialisation agenda. Cooperation with JRC on the Knowledge Hub will continue to improve and maximise the effectiveness of DG EAC higher education data tools and to

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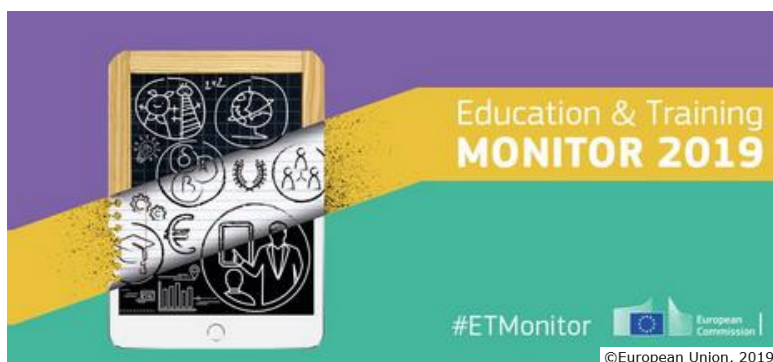
<sup>21</sup> Self-reflection on Effective Learning by Fostering the use of Innovative Educational Technologies

<sup>22</sup> Sciences, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths



carry out research and analysis activities to support policies in the field of higher education.

One key output supporting evidence-based education policies was the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the **Education and Training Monitor**, launched by Commissioner Navracsics during the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Education Summit on 26 September 2019. The lead theme of the



2019 Education and Training Monitor was teachers and teaching careers, a topic drawing on the results of OECD 2018 TALIS<sup>23</sup> survey. Besides TALIS, the Monitor relied on the UOE<sup>24</sup> data on personnel in education, and the Eurydice data on teachers. The 2019 Monitor covered all benchmarks under the strategic cooperation

framework for education and training (ET2020), as well as an analysis of investment in education.

The 2019 edition of the **U-Multirank**, the Commission's benchmarking tool for universities was released on 4 June 2019. It was accompanied with a successful media campaign, resulting in a significant increase of users. New streamlined features of the tool and strong media uptake across Member States, showing good results for universities in Europe, will reach an ever greater number of students. To ensure the continuity of the U-Multirank tool, a grant agreement under the Erasmus+ Programme was signed in December 2019 for a further 3 years.

The **implementation of the 11 actions of the Digital Education Action Plan (DEAP)** continued in partnership with DGs CNECT, RTD, EMPL, JRC and DIGIT. The DEAP was subject to a mid-term review in July 2019.

One of the main initiatives led by DG EAC in this context is the SELFIE self-reflection tool which was further rolled out in the EU and **Western Balkans** and reached more than 500,000 users in the first year since launch. A first European conference bringing together schools using the tool was held in Madrid in April.

The first edition of the Digital Education Hackathon took place on 3 October 2019 in more than 33 locations globally, engaging 1,700 participants from education stakeholders (schools, higher education institutions, research centres, innovation labs, private sector). The first phase of the series of artificial intelligence and analytics to predict future skills and skills shortages pilots was completed in mid- 2019, with the identification of two proofs of concept to be further developed in 2020.

Actions led by other DGs are also on track with implementation: EU Code Week reached the record-breaking 72,432 activities and on Safer Internet Day 2019, over 1 million children, young people, parents and teachers in Europe participated in online safety events.

### **1.1.8. The next long-term budget and the impact of Brexit**

A significant cross-cutting priority for DG EAC continues to be providing support to the ongoing negotiations with the Council and the Parliament regarding the Commission proposal for the **next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and its constituent programmes** (Erasmus, European Solidarity Corps, Creative Europe, MSCA and EIT) which have been tabled by the Commission in May-June 2018.

<sup>23</sup> Teaching and Learning International Survey

<sup>24</sup> UNESCO OECD Eurostat joint data

DG EAC has provided an **effective contribution to the negotiations** based on the Commission's proposal for the next MFF and on positioning its programmes and policy interventions as a major contributor to shaping EU policies that invest in people, in particular in delivering EU priorities under the future MFF Heading on Cohesion and Values, as well as Research and Innovation.

DG EAC worked with other Commission services to **strengthen links with other EU policies and instruments** to enhance the EU added value and impacts of the future budget, and to develop further synergies, complementarities and efficiency gains between the future spending programmes.

DG EAC, in close cooperation with the National Agencies and National Authorities responsible for the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme in the programme countries, prepared the implementation for the future of a **substantially strengthened, inclusive and extended Erasmus programme** after 2020, aimed at equipping young people with relevant skills, improving cultural understanding and strengthening the social fabric of the Union. With a stronger focus on inclusiveness, and on reaching more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, the programme will benefit more people than ever before. Throughout 2019, DG EAC engaged in an intensive process to design the actions and delivery of the new programme with a view to achieving substantial simplification, greater social inclusion and actions that correspond better to identified needs in all sectors covered by the programme.

In 2019, DG EAC continued preparing the implementation for the future of a **reinforced European Solidarity Corps**, with a view to offering a single entry point to high-quality volunteering and occupational solidarity activities for young people across the EU and abroad.

DG EAC is furthermore working on preparations towards the **new Creative Europe** programme, considering the specific features of the different sectors, their different target groups, and their particular needs, as well as economic, technological, and societal developments. This will include work on increasing opportunities of a reinforced cross-sectoral strand delivering value-adding innovative action and experimentation. In parallel, preparatory work on the concrete future implementation instruments has taken up speed.

With regard to the **European Institute of Innovation and Technology** (EIT), DG EAC has been working on the future policy framework of the institute in the context of Horizon Europe programme. This includes revision of the current EIT Regulation and adoption of a new Strategic Innovation Agenda (SIA) for the EIT for the period 2021-2027. This EIT legislative package was adopted by the College on 11 July 2019. Main novelties of the SIA include an improved funding model (with introduction of compulsory co-funding and clarification of the concept of financial sustainability), the strengthening of the regional dimension (with an improved Regional Innovation Scheme), a new action aiming at increasing the entrepreneurial capacity of HEIs (with an ambitious budget of €420 million), and a new Knowledge and Innovation Community in the field of Cultural and Creative Industries to be launched in 2022.

In close cooperation with DG RTD, DG EAC actively shaped the discussions on the next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon Europe. For the **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions** (MSCA), this included successfully defending the MSCA text in the Horizon Europe Framework Programme (FP) and Specific Programme (SP) as well as obtaining a specific clause in the FP to ensure that beneficiaries are reimbursed additional costs related to maternity or parental leave, sick leave, special needs or change of host organisation or family status.

In 2019, DG EAC has contributed to the preparation of all delegated and implementing acts related to the **InvestEU** proposed Regulation that aims at expanding the successful model of the Investment Plan for Europe post-2020. In this context, DG EAC has focused its efforts on technical work ensuring more effective delivery mechanisms and increasing

synergies with the new Erasmus programme and Horizon Europe, in relation to the relevant strands of the programme (Sustainable Infrastructures; Research, Innovation and Digitisation; Small Businesses; and Social Investment and Skills).

Building on the lessons from the Erasmus+ Student Loan Guarantee Facility and guarantee facility for SMEs in the cultural and creative sectors, DG EAC continued to explore ways to attract private financing for education and training projects and cultural and creative sector initiatives through **financial instruments** or **budgetary guarantees**. This requires developing new instruments to expand student loan schemes, piloting social impact investments or better using the European Fund for Strategic Investments in the context of culture, education and skills enhancement, ahead of the proposed InvestEU programme beyond 2020.

DG EAC has continued to raise awareness of the available **EU-level guarantees and financial instruments** among education and culture stakeholders, notably at national level. It has strengthened the cooperation with the European Investment Bank Group, other International Financial Institutions and national promotional banks, in particular by emphasising the 'soft' elements in infrastructure-related projects that contribute to create sound and inspiring learning environments. Also, in the frame of the guarantee facility for SMEs in the cultural and creative sectors, capacity building was reinforced through workshops, risk assessment analysis and a local market study for the benefit of national financial intermediaries.

Discussions with the external family of Directorates-General have started for the **international dimension of both the future Erasmus and the Creative Europe** programmes. The international dimension of the current Erasmus+ programme is seen as a key feature which contributes to internationalisation and modernisation of the education, training and youth sectors. Together with the international dimension of the Creative Europe programme, Erasmus+ also contributes to the implementation of the EU's Global Strategy on foreign and security policy and the EU's external action, as well as the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, particularly relevant in the light of the EU commitment to implement the 2030 Agenda as an overarching priority across all EU policies.

In 2019, important milestones have been achieved on the preparation of the **new EAC IT Landscape** in view of ensuring readiness for the next MFF:

- The high-level business needs and requirements have been identified and agreed, the functional scope and the technical architecture of the new IT Landscape have been presented and approved.
- The budgetary needs for supporting the current set of IT systems while implementing the new IT Landscape in parallel, have been concretised and planned after having received the approval of the Commission corporate services (DG BUDG), and of the Erasmus+ committee.
- The on-boarding of DG EAC within the Compass Corporate Working Group has been ensured and the adaptations of this component to EAC specificities have started.
- Key contracts with external service providers have been signed at the end of 2019 to develop specific new IT modules and IT services.

All these achievements have cleared the way for starting the implementation phase of the new EAC IT Landscape in 2020 with full speed. Risks and uncertainties, however, remain. They stem from the pending finalisation and approval of the new MFF, and the possible changes and delays that this might cause. The concerns include the short implementation period, the technical complexity of the new EAC IT Landscape and the important coordination effort required for deliver on time and up to standard. Mitigation measures are ongoing to minimise the likelihood or the impact of these risks.

## Brexit

All activities of DG EAC for 2019, including technical, administrative, and budgetary measures systematically took into account the uncertainties regarding **Brexit**. Notwithstanding the need to cater for the individual specificities of each Directorate-General, relevant actions were coordinated by the Secretariat-General with a view to ensuring coherence in the design and timing of these measures.

In March 2019, the Council and Parliament adopted an **Erasmus+ contingency regulation**<sup>25</sup> based on input from DG EAC in order to avoid the disruption of learning mobility activities involving the United Kingdom in the event that the UK were to leave the EU without a deal ('no-deal scenario'). This Regulation ensured that people who would be abroad through an Erasmus+ funded learning mobility activity on the day the UK left the European Union, would not see their mobility period interrupted. Other activities funded under Erasmus+ and other programmes involving the UK would fall under horizontal contingency regulations<sup>26</sup> adopted by the Council in July and December under certain specific conditions and in a more restrictive way.

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<sup>25</sup> Regulation laying down provisions for the continuation of ongoing learning mobility activities under the Erasmus+ programme in the context of the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ('United Kingdom') from the European Union - [COM\(2019\) 65 final – 30.01.2019](#).

<sup>26</sup> Regulation on measures concerning the implementation and financing of the general budget of the Union in 2019 and 2020 in relation to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the Union - [COM\(2019\)64](#) and [COM \(2019\)461](#).

## 1.2 Progress on the implementation of programmes and of key activities

### 1.2.1. Erasmus+, the Union Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport



**Erasmus+**  
Enriching lives, opening minds.

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

#### *Education and Training*

##### **School education**

In addition **to mobility of school education staff**, DG EAC and the National Agencies continued to promote mobility of pupils through the specific Erasmus+ format '**school exchange partnerships**'. This format confirmed its attractiveness with a 20% increase of the number of selected projects. The Erasmus+ programme continued to support policy priorities in school education such as strengthening the profiles of the teaching profession and tackling early school leaving. Work has intensified on preparing the programme 2021-27, particularly with regard to pupil mobility.



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The **eTwinning** community has continued to grow with some 125,000 new members registered in 2019, which represents a significant increase by more than 21% in comparison to 2018 and contributes to an overall number of 764,000 registrants since inception. Hence, a new record was achieved for connecting teachers and classrooms across Europe, and to step up support to teachers. In March, the '**eTwinning School**' Label was awarded for the second time, to 1,004 schools<sup>27</sup>. Together with the first 1,211 recipients of this new label, these schools are recognised as leaders in areas such as digital practice, eSafety practice, innovative and creative approaches to pedagogy, promoting continuous professional development of staff, promoting collaborative learning practices with staff and students. The idea is also to help these schools to develop into a network, and to reach out to schools with less experience in eTwinning.

The **annual eTwinning conference** took place from 24 to 26 October 2019 in Mandelieu-la-Napoule, France and brought together more than 500 teachers, school leaders, policy makers and experts from all over Europe. They explored how eTwinning can contribute to fostering a culture of democratic participation in schools and developing students' values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding that will enable them to participate actively in democratic life. They also discussed ways to support teachers to help young people grow into active and responsible citizens. Representatives from Ministries of Education also participated in a session to exchange how eTwinning has progressed in its embedding in national school system.

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<sup>27</sup> [2019-2020 eTwinning School Label awards](#)

## School Education Gateway



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The **School Education Gateway** has continued establishing itself as Europe's main online platform for school education, with key elements such as expert articles and interviews, highlights of European projects, research publications, Erasmus+ Tools for Schools and the **Teacher Academy** – helping to empower teachers with three new Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) and a monthly webinar series to develop their practice with today's more diverse classrooms and challenges and to develop innovative pedagogies in supporting key competence development.

The platform - now with over 70,000 registered users (an increase of 20,000 in one year) – also incorporates the European **Toolkit for Schools**, bringing together examples of policies and practice to support the development of inclusive schools. It is underpinned by the Whole School Approach, which recognises that schools are part of broader communities that need to work together to support all learners. For example, DG EAC offered peer counselling support to Cyprus on the topic of integrating newly arrived migrant students into schools, and supported the Toolkit Project to ensure portability of recognition decisions on migrant's qualifications.

In 2019, DG EAC cooperated with the Council of Europe on human rights and democracy in action and on promoting inclusive education for Roma children through the '**INSCHOOL**' programme. Through another joint programme, 'DISCO' (Democratic and Inclusive School Culture in Operation), DG EAC worked with the Council of Europe on the promotion of citizenship and human rights education based on Council of Europe and European Union standards and strategies in this field.

## Vocational Education and Training (VET)

DG EAC continued supporting policy priorities such as work-based learning, further strengthening key competences in vocational education and training and developing sustainable partnerships to establish and/or further develop skills competitions through Erasmus+. It put particular emphasis on long-term mobility of learners (**ErasmusPro**) in cooperation with the National Agencies under the 2019 Call mobility action.

A specific Key Action 3 call was launched to support the creation of transnational and national **networks and partnerships of VET providers**. Targeting both initial and continuing VET providers, the networks foster policy reflection at a European level, and promote awareness and implementation of European VET policies at national and regional levels.

DG EAC together with the key stakeholders active in VET discussed the future Erasmus+ programme in the context of '*Complementing excellence with inclusion*' within the **European Vocational Skills Week 2019**. The current and possible future programme beneficiaries exchanged views on proposed future actions from multiple perspectives.

## Higher Education

In **higher education**, DG EAC worked on the implementation of the higher education initiatives under the European Education Area and the renewed EU agenda for higher education<sup>28</sup>.

In addition to the work within the ET 2020 Working Group on Higher Education (with focus on the future Erasmus programme, the European Universities initiative, automatic recognition, resourcing higher education, innovative teaching and learning, STEAM

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<sup>28</sup> [COM\(2017\)247 – 30.05.2017](#)

approach, and social inclusion), and the accompanying Peer Learning Activities, the following **concrete actions** were prioritised in 2019 :

- **European Universities:** European Universities share a long-term joint strategy for education with, where possible, links to research and innovation, and have the potential to transform the institutional cooperation between higher education institutions and bring it to the next level. The €85 million first Erasmus+ pilot call closed on 28 February 2019 with 48 eligible applications received, from more than 300 higher education institutions of all types from all parts of Europe, including all Member States. The results were published on 26 June 2019: 17 European Universities involving 114 higher education institutions from 24 Member States were selected and will be awarded up to €5 million each **European Student Card Initiative:** DG EAC ensured that Erasmus+ funded projects deliver technical development to support the European Student Card Initiative, such as the **Erasmus without Paper Network**, which connects universities' information systems, and the **Erasmus+ Mobile App**, the one-stop-shop for students. The Erasmus+ Mobile App has been downloaded more than 73,000 times while more than 1,900 universities are involved in the testing of *Erasmus Without Paper*, with a 30% increase observed between August and December 2019. 750 universities and Erasmus+ National Agencies took part in an interactive webinar organised by the Commission in March. As the European Student Card Initiative moves from testing phase into implementation phase, closer cooperation with the national authorities in Erasmus+ programme countries is necessary. For this reason, a Working Group of European Student Card Initiative Digital Officers has been established, with the first meeting taking place in Brussels in November 2019.
- DG EAC prepared extensively the analysis and communication to stakeholders and the general public of **the results of two new Erasmus+ Impact studies** showing that **Erasmus+ makes students more successful in their personal and professional lives and helps universities to become more innovative.**
- **Erasmus+ Digital Opportunity Traineeships initiative:** Over 9,000 students from a variety of study fields undertook an Erasmus+ traineeship abroad to acquire forward-looking digital skills, 3,000 more than the target set at the start of the initiative.
- **Co-creation of the new Erasmus+ programme:** DG EAC continued close cooperation with several Working Groups in higher education on the future programme. The Working Groups 'Making mobility a reality for all', 'Cooperation projects' and 'Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE)' had regular meetings throughout 2019, bringing together representatives from Erasmus+ National Agencies, higher education institutions and student organisations.
- Under Key Action 3 of the Erasmus+ programme, the results of a restricted call on the improvement of the implementation of the **Bologna Process** led to 13 projects being selected. They cover the majority of the 48 countries of the European Higher Education Area. The projects are based on peer support and multilateral cooperation to improve quality assurance, recognition, learning and teaching, social inclusion and mobility in the countries concerned. A follow-up call was launched in 2019, where results will be published spring 2020.

## **Adult Education**

In line with the European Agenda for Adult learning priorities and the Council Recommendation on Upskilling pathways, the Erasmus+ programme continued to support policy priorities such as the supply of high quality learning opportunities and the development of the competences of educators, with a budgetary increase for both mobility and strategic partnerships actions in 2019. DG EAC together with the National Agencies accentuated the promotion of opportunities in adult education within the Erasmus+ programme with the aim of increasing the demand.



## **Electronic platform for adult learning in Europe**

The collaborative platform **EPALE** (Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe) has developed further the discussion and exchange of good practice between stakeholders involved in areas such as basic skills, outreach and guidance as well as innovative teaching methods. The number of registered EPALE users reached 61,000 by the end of December 2019 after a period of continued growth. Key marketing activities included the work on refreshing the brand, a promotional campaign for the photo competition, marketing support for the conference and the use of social media campaigns to effectively support engagement.



The period under review also saw a new plan for making a more integrated use of ICTs and open educational resources (OER) in education, training and youth systems, including Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Five OERs and three MOOCs were delivered throughout the year. On the technical side, the migration to a new hosting environment in the cloud was completed, and had an immediate and positive effect upon the site speed. Towards the end of the year a new contractor for EPALE's Central Support Service started to prepare for the takeover as from 1 January 2020.

## **International cooperation**

The Erasmus+ programme continued to support President Juncker's priority 'A stronger global Europe', as an integral part of the EU's cooperation with other regions of the world. A particular focus was on the stabilisation and further development of the European Neighbourhood region (Western Balkans, Eastern Partnership and Southern Mediterranean). It also represents a major channel for EU-Africa cooperation under the Africa-Europe Alliance. In practice, the international dimension of Erasmus+ facilitates international cooperation and removes barriers to mobility, fostering university partnerships to increase the relevance and quality of education, as well as support to civil society, active citizenship and youth exchanges.

For **higher education**, the 2019 selection exercise resulted in a record 163 new capacity-building projects, 51 new Erasmus Mundus joint masters, and around 55 000 new short term, academic credit mobilities.

[Factsheets](#) on the Erasmus+ website outline the extent of individual countries' involvement in these international projects – both outside and inside Europe – since the start of the programme.

### Cooperation with Europe's neighbourhood and Africa

The **Western Balkans** and **Africa** were the two regions selected in which to pilot a new vocational education and training mobility scheme. A 2019 call for proposals selected one project for the Western Balkans and two for Africa, designed to involve training organisations from all regions of the continent. EAC is also supporting the empowerment of alumni in these two regions: 2019 saw the first activities of the Western Balkan Student and Alumni association and the setting up of an African Student and Alumni Forum.

Additional funding for African countries launched by President Juncker in 2018 also further boosted opportunities for African student and staff mobility in 2019, focusing on



West Africa and the Horn of Africa. This will result in mobility between the continents for some 5,400 additional people, towards the target of 35,000 exchanges from Africa by 2020.

**Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange** continues to allow young people living in Europe and the Southern Mediterranean to take part in moderated online debates that can form part of a higher education degree or a youth project. More than 17,000 higher education students and other stakeholders have taken part in its first two years.

Besides Erasmus+, higher education cooperation with Africa led by DG EAC also includes the Harmonisation, Quality Assurance and Accreditation initiative (HAQAA).

DG EAC also manages **policy dialogues** with a range of countries and regions. A June ministerial meeting of the Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training in Belgrade discussed early childhood education and care, while education ministers from the Eastern Partnership met their EU counterparts and DG EAC in November to discuss the future of learning and teaching.

DG EAC continues to work with Programme Countries to raise the worldwide visibility and attractiveness of Europe as a study destination, through web and social media activities. Under the 'Study in Europe' banner, face-to-face study fairs were organised in Ukraine, Tunisia and Albania, and a series of webinars was held to reach out to African students.

#### Asia and the Americas

One of the first concrete results of the recently-launched **EU-Japan Policy Dialogue** in education, culture and sport was a co-funded Erasmus+ call with Japan to finance additional EU-Japan joint master programmes, allowing excellent students from Europe and Japan to gain a joint degree from top European and Japanese universities. The three joint master degree programmes selected in July 2019 focus on extended reality imaging, robotics and history.

EAC worked with other stakeholders to organise the 2019 **EU-China Higher Education Platform** in Helsinki. The meeting discussed balanced mobility in higher education: results will feed into the 2020 high-level people-to-people dialogue meeting in Brussels.

With the US, DG EAC continues to co-manage a bilateral scheme for postgraduate exchanges. This year a Young Leaders' seminar brought together young media experts to discuss disinformation and the changing media landscape. DG EAC had a stand at the world's biggest higher education fair and exhibition, **NAFSA**, which took place in Washington DC.

#### International organisations

Education cooperation is increasingly an objective for the **G7** and **G20** groups of countries. DG EAC represented the EU at the G7 education ministerial meeting in Paris, which issued statements on quality early childhood education and care, teacher training and bullying at school. A G20 education meeting in Tokyo was an opportunity to discuss progress on the Mendoza declaration agreed in 2018 under the G20 Argentinian presidency. Saudi Arabia hosts the G20 presidency in 2020 and has prompted a strong education agenda, focusing on access and quality early childhood education and care as well as internationalisation of education. The first meeting of the Education Working Group took place in Riyadh in December 2019.

#### **Social inclusion**

In 2019, a cross-cutting priority was to ensure that the Erasmus+ programme is an important instrument for **inclusion** also highlighting the **key role of formal and non-formal education** in the development of the values and attitudes underlying **active**

**citizenship**, as set in the Paris Declaration<sup>29</sup> and affirmed in the Council Recommendation on Common values, Inclusive Education and the European Dimension of Teaching.

Through specific call under Erasmus+ on '**social inclusion through education and training**' 35 projects from among 80 applications have been selected for a total budget of some €16 million. A new call launched in November also integrates **adult education** for a total amount of some €20 million.

The **Role Models** initiative, aiming to create a pool of positive role models to promote social inclusion, prevent exclusion and radicalisation as well as encourage active citizenship and commitment to European values was further implemented by Erasmus+ National agencies (NAs) themselves or in cooperation with local partners.

PISA results and early school leaving data show that students with **migrant backgrounds** face significant challenges, both in terms of educational attainment and sense of well-being. Education thus continues to play a key role in their integration. The European Commission is supporting Member States in the development of policies to improve integration through education via a variety of instruments and actions.

The **Sirius 2.0 policy network** on migrant education (co-funded by Erasmus+) supports co-operation, policy development and implementation at different levels of governance. In 2019, the network organised national and regional round tables, peer learning activities and produced research to support countries' integration efforts.

### **Learning about the European Union**

The Jean Monnet Activities (JMA) under Erasmus+ stimulate teaching and research on the European Union and foster dialogue between academics, decision makers and civil society actors in the EU and around the world. Being the major EU programme supporting studies on the European integration process and EU policies, its outputs will meaningfully contribute to the reflections on the future of Europe.

This **30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Jean Monnet Activities** in 2019 was an opportunity to increase the visibility and impact of the achievements, to celebrate the success of the programme and to prepare stakeholders for the extension of the actions beyond higher education institutions. DG EAC organised a high-level conference in June as the key event of the anniversary. The conference focused on the history and the future of Jean Monnet Activities and their contribution to EU studies. Among the participants, special tribute was made to the pioneers of Jean Monnet Activities and their founding mother Ms Jacqueline Lastenouse, Jean Monnet Professors, students, National Agencies, journalists and other stakeholders. This event attracted good attention on social media too. The closing conference of the anniversary took place in November 2019 and coincided with the Biennial Jean Monnet Conference organised back to back with the kick-off of new beneficiaries of the Jean Monnet Activities, selected in 2019.

The 2019 annual call for proposals for Jean Monnet grants saw a new record number of 1,315 applications. 284 proposals were selected, supporting 217 universities, organisations and associations in 45 countries worldwide. They will implement EU studies-related activities during three years through 92 Modules, 74 Chairs, 29 Centers of Excellence, 10 'Supports-to-Associations', 21 networks and 58 specific projects. The budget available for this call for proposals was €18.2 million.

DG EAC also organised a side event on the challenges of EU studies in the framework of the State of the Union Conference in Florence in May 2019, and two Seminars (US/Canada Excellence Centers in March, and the 15<sup>th</sup> European Seminar on EU foreign policy in September). Approximately 100 decentralised events were organised by Jean

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<sup>29</sup> [Overview of education policy developments in Europe following the Paris Declaration of 17 March 2015](#)

Monnet Professors and coordinators around the world during the anniversary on a broad range of topics of EU policy. More than 12,000 participants were reported to DG EAC by the organisers.



SPREADING  
KNOWLEDGE  
ABOUT EUROPE  
#SPINELLIPRIZE

In April 2019, the Commission awarded for the second time the **Altiero Spinelli Prize for Outreach** in the framework of the European Youth Week. Six Prizes were awarded to innovative projects which contributed to enhance young people's

understanding of the European project and their participation in its democratic processes. The third edition of the Altiero Spinelli Prize was launched in July 2019.



DG EAC also launched a pilot project for a new award, the **Jan Amos Comenius Prize** to award high-quality innovative and inspiring teaching about the European Union in secondary schools. The call for applications was published in November 2019.

## Youth

The **EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027** reinforces the support to Member States in developing youth policies, including by gathering evidence, in particular through Youth wiki, Youth partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe, studies, and Eurobarometer surveys.

- The Youth wiki is being expanded to new countries and includes a new chapter on youth work as of end 2019.
- Two studies were launched and finalised during the reporting period: one on the landscape of youth representation in the EU and one on removing obstacles to cross-border solidarity activities.
- A Eurobarometer survey 'How do we build a stronger, more united Europe? The views of young people' was released in April 2019.

As far as mutual learning is concerned, two new **expert groups** were launched in 2019: on youth policy indicators and on cross-border volunteering. The Commission invited Member States to prepare Future National Activities Planners every three years, where they will identify targeted actions for youth translating EU priorities into the national context and will commit to implement them.

A first meeting of the **Youth Strategy platform** took place on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2019 and a Yammer Group was launched to maintain the virtual platform in between meetings. The platform gives all stakeholders a greater role in coordinating the implementation of the strategy, offering opportunities to exchange information on activities and results.



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The **Erasmus+ programme** continued to support the youth sector by promoting quality youth work, by stimulating young people's empowerment, by developing structured cooperation between different youth organisations to build or strengthen partnerships and by promoting entrepreneurship education, social entrepreneurship and not-for-profit activities among young people. Specific attention continued to be paid to young people with fewer opportunities and with a disadvantaged background.

In line with the **EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027**, under the Erasmus+ Key Action promoting **learning mobility** for individuals, priority was given to:

- Reaching out to marginalised young people, promoting diversity, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, common values of freedom, tolerance and respect of human rights as well as on projects enhancing media literacy, critical thinking and sense of initiative of young people.

- Equipping youth workers with competences and methods for their professional development, including for digital youth work, needed for transferring the common fundamental values of our society, particularly to the hard to reach young people and preventing violent radicalisation of young people as well.

In this regard, taking into account the critical context in Europe - and considering the fact that youth work, non-formal learning activities can significantly contribute to address the needs of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants and/or increase awareness about this issue within local communities – particular attention will also be given to support youth mobility projects involving or focussing on the refugees/asylum seekers and migrants.

Under the Erasmus+ Key Action 2, **Strategic partnerships** in the field of youth, emphasis was put on:

- Projects contributing to the EU Youth Work Agenda, by promoting quality, innovation and recognition of youth work.
- Promoting projects aiming at engaging, connecting and empowering young people. Within these focus will be put on projects that strengthen cross-sectorial cooperation, allowing for greater synergies across all fields of action concerning young people, with a special focus on access to rights, autonomy, participation – including e-participation – and the active citizenship of young people, notably those at risk of social exclusion.
- Promoting entrepreneurship education, social entrepreneurship and not-for-profit activities among young people. Within these focus will be put on projects in the form of transnational youth initiatives that allow groups of young people to put ideas into practice, including through social enterprises, tackling challenges and identified problems in their daily lives.

In addition to three core areas for action, whereby all actors are invited to mobilise their efforts about Engaging, Connecting and Empowering via participation, EU programmes and youth work, the new EU Youth Strategy also endorsed **11 European Youth Goals**, conceived by young people themselves through the EU's Youth Structured Dialogue process. The Strategy calls for the mobilisation of youth policy instruments to achieve these goals. The current trio of Presidencies (Romania, Finland and Croatia) has committed to focus on three of them: quality employment for all, quality learning and moving rural youth forward.

## **Sport**

In 2019, in the **Sport** chapter, priority was given to grassroots sport, increased participation in sport and awareness of the importance of health-enhancing physical activity in line with the Tartu call for a healthy lifestyle. The Sport chapter continued to support initiatives that tackle cross-border threats to the integrity of sport, such as doping, match fixing and violence, as well as all kinds of intolerance and discrimination. It also promoted and supported good governance in sport and dual careers of athletes, and voluntary activities in sport, together with social inclusion, including refugees and migrants.

The **Tartu Call** for a Healthy Lifestyle launched in 2017, included a list of joint actions to promote healthy lifestyles and a roadmap, with a seminar to take stock of the progress made 2 years after the Tartu Call. On 19 June 2019, around 200 participants took part in the Closing Seminar of the Tartu Call for a Healthy Lifestyle, including key organisations involved in the success of the Tartu Call, Member States' representatives and experts.

The **EU Sport Forum** that took place on 8 and 9 April 2019 in Bucharest and focused on *'The future of EU sport: challenges and perspectives?'* was a central meeting for the European and international sport family.

**Cooperation with international organisations** active in the field of sport continued in 2019. In particular, DG EAC further developed partnerships with the United Nations

Office on Drugs and Crime, and continued its cooperation with the World Health Organization and the Council of Europe. The Commission continued supporting the implementation of the Council Recommendation on promoting health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA) across sectors, in cooperation with the World Health Organization and the network of national HEPA Focal Points. A [second progress report](#) on the implementation of the Council Recommendation was adopted in 2019.



The annual **EU Sport Forum** took place on 8 and 9 April 2019. DG EAC continued to use it as a unique opportunity for sport organisations to meet and discuss key topics in the field of sport with policy makers, representatives of EU institutions, and Member States.

Two pilot projects in the field of **social inclusion of refugees** and the monitoring and coaching, through sports, of youngsters at risk of radicalisation, are being implemented as a continuation of actions started in previous years.

Furthermore, a preparatory action also held in previous years continues to be implemented, namely the **Exchanges and Mobility in sport**. It includes a new lot of cooperation with Africa. The pilot projects and preparatory action were implemented through the launch of 3 calls for proposals published in May and June 2019.

In 2019, the **#Beinclusive EU sport awards** once again recognised sport organisations working with ethnic minorities, refugees, people with disabilities, youth groups at risk, or other groups that face challenging social circumstances. The three #Beinclusive winners were announced at a special awards ceremony on 21 November 2019 in Brussels.

**KICKEN OHNE GRENZEN,  
AUSTRIA 2019 #BEINCLUSIVE EU SPORT AWARDS WINNER**



»When I play football it is like my mind empties and I forget all my problems. I feel light, free.«

– Saleha (16), player at Kicken ohne Grenzen

*'Kicken ohne Grenzen' is a football project working for young people from vulnerable communities, mainly people who have been forced to flee their homes. 'Kicken ohne Grenzen' coaches and more than 120 adolescents (one men's, one mixed, one women's and one mixed kid's team) from 12 different nations in weekly training units supported by 25 volunteers. The project enables young people to take part in regular football training sessions for free. It also facilitates their participation in additional educational programs like the #BeASkillCoach skill academy, the Job Goals programme and chess lessons to build their soft skills. The project sees itself as a platform that is using the integrative power of football to enable disadvantaged people to grow into society and actively shape their future. Empowering young women involved in the organisation's projects is another key priority.*

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For five years **the European Week of Sport** has tackled the inactivity crisis by encouraging Europeans to embrace a healthy and active lifestyle. The 2019 edition saw a new record with the participation of over 14.6 million citizens in more than 23,000 events in 42 countries and regions in Europe. The European Week of Sport embraced for the second time Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership countries and regions, including through a dedicated seminar organised on 28 October, in Kiev, Ukraine. The event gathered around 80 participants from the EU Member States, other Erasmus+ Programme countries, Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership as well as from sport



organisations. The seminar aimed at sharing good practices but also initiating discussions regarding EU funding opportunities and different ways of practicing sport.

The **#Beactive awards** support projects and individuals dedicated to promoting sport and physical activity across Europe. On 18 October 2019, #BeActive nominees, ambassadors and supporters gathered in Budapest to recognise outstanding commitments to the #BeActive campaign.

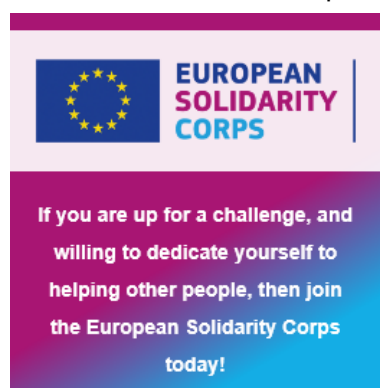


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### 1.2.2. European Solidarity Corps

The **European Solidarity Corps** (ESC) Regulation entered into force on 4 October 2018, and establishes the Corps as a fully-fledged programme for the period 2018-2020.



The aim of the European Solidarity Corps is to give young people the chance to take part in a range of **solidarity activities** that address challenging situations across the EU, such as rebuilding communities following natural disasters and addressing social challenges such as social exclusion, poverty, health and demographic challenges. Taking part in solidarity activities not only benefits young people's personal development, active involvement in society and employability, but also assists non-governmental organisations, public bodies and companies in their **efforts to cope with societal and other challenges.**

The Corps supports **volunteering, traineeship and job placements** in a wide range of sectors engaged in solidarity and will provide young people with opportunities to set up their own solidarity projects or volunteer as a group. These actions aim to enable young people across Europe to engage in solidarity activities addressing societal challenges and strengthening communities. At the same time, they help **improve the skills and competences young people** need for their personal and professional development at the beginning of their careers.

Since the launch of its pilot phase in December 2016, more than 191,000 young people have signed up and about 34,500 deployed, showing their great interest in getting involved in solidarity work across Europe. The [European Youth Portal](#) provides, among others, a single, easily accessible entry point for young people to register to and engage with the European Solidarity Corps. In March 2019, DG EAC launched the European Solidarity Network and will continue to expand and develop tools to help create a **network of communities** around the European Solidarity Corps. To increase the benefits to young people, the Commission will widen its training offers before and during placements and improve the measures to enhance the recognition of learning outcomes.



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

Research and innovation (R&I) are cornerstones of EU policies to boost jobs, growth and investment and the White Paper on the Future of Europe explicitly refers to their importance for the future of the Union. Innovation plays a key role in modern economies and there is a clear need and potential to further improve Europe's overall innovation 'ecosystem' in order to be able to respond to the challenges our society will face in the coming years and to build the needed resilience.

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

### Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)

The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions contribute to the political priorities by **strengthening Europe's human capital base in R&I**. The MSCA are a key part of the Excellence-pillar of Horizon 2020. As an entirely 'bottom-up' programme, they allow researchers to choose their research fields freely. They are therefore open to all domains, from basic research up to market take-up and innovation services. **The programme equips researchers with the right international and intersectoral knowledge, skills, and exposure.** Researchers develop resilience in order to adapt to the changing global environment and seize new opportunities. They are empowered to fill the top research positions of tomorrow, to address global societal challenges, and to co-operate with international partners.



Over the past 20 years, the MSCA have supported the careers of more than 100,000 excellent scientists, and have set new standards in terms of training and working conditions for researchers in Europe. In 2019, around **10,200 researchers** have benefitted from MSCA fellowships and exchanges which foster international, inter-sectoral and inter-disciplinary mobility. The MSCA continued to have a pronounced structuring effect on universities and other stakeholders, through the development of excellent doctoral programmes and training of postdoctoral researchers and research staff. The programme is well on track to meet its target of 65,000 researchers over the course of Horizon 2020.

Under a new pilot action in Horizon 2020, a series of '**widening fellowships**', modelled on the MSCA individual fellowships were awarded for the first time in 2019. By the end of Horizon 2020, they will have provided additional opportunities to around 120 researchers of any nationality to undertake a fellowship in a widening country.

Another new feature of the MSCA was introduced in 2019: for the first time ever, a call to financially support **MSCA fellows with special needs** was launched and led to 23 researchers obtaining assistance in overcoming obstacles to mobility.

The MSCA have an **important international dimension** and continue to account for more than half of all third-country participations in Horizon 2020, while 37% of all researchers involved in the programme are nationals from non-EU countries. A study was conducted to assess and review the international cooperation achieved through the MSCA and explore ways to make it more strategic and more consistent with EU external policies in the fields of education, research and innovation. For this objective and in line with the study recommendations, DG EAC participated and contributed to a number of Joint Science and Technology meetings and policy dialogues with third countries.

Throughout 2019, DG EAC organised and participated in a series of **high-impact outreach events** to support and promote the MSCA:



- Under the Romanian Presidency, a conference was held in Bucharest on 4 and 5 June entitled '**MSCA to foster scientific excellence**' with dedicated sessions on widening, synergies, careers and intersectoral mobility.
- The MSCA played a leading role in the **High-level Policy Conference of the EU R&I Days**, held from 24 to 26 September. This event brings together world leaders from industry, finance, academia and the entrepreneurial community, high-level policymakers and stakeholders at European and national levels to debate and shape the future research and innovation landscape.
- On 26 September, the MSCA participated in the **Education Summit**, with one workshop on Bioplastics and one masterclass on 'Neurosciences, brain based learning: the next evolution in education?'
- For the fifth time, MSCA organised the **Science is Wonderful event** on 25 and 26 September 2019, and the **MSCA Falling Walls Lab competition** on 26 September 2019.
- The annual **European Researchers' Night 2019** took place on 27 September 2019. This Europe-wide public event attracted more than 1.65 million visitors and showcased what researchers do for society in interactive and engaging ways, thus promoting research careers to young people.
- In the framework of the 5<sup>th</sup> EU-Africa High-Level Policy Dialogue on Research and Innovation (R&I), the MSCA organised an information seminar in Addis Ababa on 6 and 7 November 2019 entitled 'Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions: **fostering EU-Africa cooperation in researchers' training and mobility**', with a view to increase the participation of African researchers and research organisations in MSCA.
- DG EAC organised an **MSCA Stakeholders Consultation Conference event** on 3 and 4 December 2019. The aim was to present the European Commission's ideas on the future actions, to spread information on new features regarding researchers' training, career development, and doctoral training programmes, and to consult stakeholders on outstanding implementation issues, in particular on the difficult issue of oversubscription of some MSCA actions.

Furthermore, together with the Research Executive Agency (REA), DG EAC piloted approximately 15 MSCA **cluster events** for individual MSC Actions to allow for focussed project management, to enable MSCA fellows to network with each other and also to link MSCA expertise in specific domains with European Commission policy makers and innovation experts from the private sector. The final pilot event was a comprehensive MSCA clustering event on **Artificial Intelligence** in December 2019, feeding project results in the preparation of the EU's Artificial Intelligence Strategy.

The **MSCA specific programme for Horizon Europe was adopted** as part of the Council's partial general agreement in March 2019. This ensures that MSCA will continue to support and train a new generation of researchers, equipping them with the skills needed to pursue a research career in any setting, including beyond academia and developing excellent doctoral programmes. The MSCA will continue to apply their core values: including excellence, a bottom-up approach, mobility, career development and the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion. They will continue to offer co-funded programmes for doctoral and postdoctoral education, and science outreach activities. In so doing, the programme will aim to deliver excellent value to the broader framework programme and to the European economy and society at large.

In this respect, DG EAC developed in 2019, in close cooperation with its stakeholders, the Research Executive Agency and DG RTD, detailed proposals for the specific funding schemes to be integrated in the **MSCA Work Programme 2021**. It also conducted a study to update the unit costs system that will be applied to the various MSCA actions under Horizon Europe.



The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)



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

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

In 2019, DG EAC continued to support the EIT in delivering on its mission of integrating higher education, research and business. Although EIT has its own Regulation and Strategic Innovation Agenda, it is part of Horizon Europe and was included in the Common Understanding on the new programme reached on 27 March 2019. It includes the main rationale and areas of intervention of the EIT that were further developed in the EIT legislative package.

In compliance with the Commission's Horizon Europe proposal DG EAC developed the Commission proposals for a **Strategic Innovation Agenda (SIA) 2021-2027** of the EIT and for revisions of the **EIT Regulation**, both adopted on 11 July 2019. The recast of the EIT Regulation addresses recommendations from the independent evaluation of the EIT, the High-Level Group set-up by the Commission in 2016, the Court of Auditors report and the necessary improvements and modifications needed to continue delivering on the EIT objectives. The SIA outlines the EIT's main strategic directions, intervention logic and the new themes for Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) for the period 2021-2027. The Commission proposal is underpinned by an impact assessment that has been prepared in 2018 and 2019.

The key aspects of the EIT package include:

- Revision of EIT KIC's funding model
- Launch of 2 new KICs (the first one in the field of Cultural and Creative Industries)
- Stronger support to increasing the innovation and entrepreneurial capacity of Higher Education Institutions
- Reinforced regional dimension of the EIT and of the widening aspect
- Several improvements resulting from the evaluations, reviews and audits of the EIT over the last years

After designating two new Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) in the fields of **'Added-value Manufacturing'** and **'Urban mobility'** at the end of 2018, the EIT accompanied them through start-up grant agreements and oversaw the setting up of their structure and organisation, and the preparation of their firsts Business Plans 2020.

In 2019, the EIT community has grown to a **trusted network of around 1.650 partners** with 51 co-location centres/hubs spread in 16 Member States, making it one of the largest networked innovation community in Europe. Since its establishment, the EIT supported over 1,250 start-ups and scale-ups, created more than 6,100 high-skilled jobs and brought over 600 new products and services to the market.

More than 2,300 students have already graduated from EIT-labelled education programmes at Master and PhD level and this figure is expected to grow to 4300 graduates by 2020.

In the last four years 43 entrepreneurs from the EIT Community were included in the **Forbes Magazine 30 under 30 lists**, with 11 entrepreneurs across four categories on the 2019 list, affirming the excellence of the EIT programmes.

DG EAC, as the EIT's parent DG, has a supervisory and support role. As in previous years, the EIT submitted to the Commission its **Draft Single Programming Document** laying down the financing decision for the following year.

DG EAC organised an event in Brussels on 12 September to raise awareness on the EIT towards stakeholders of the EU landscape. Moreover, DG EAC followed the preparatory steps and the Strategic Planning Process leading to the elaboration of the first Work Programme of Horizon Europe in order to ensure that the EIT and KICs fit perfectly in the overall architecture and create synergies with other parts of the programme. This also includes administrative and IT aspects, such as the integration in the common dissemination platform or the adoption of the corporate model grant agreement.

#### **1.2.4. Creative Europe, the EU framework programme for support to the culture and audiovisual sectors**



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

our shared European values. During the reporting period, Creative Europe continued to play a direct role in supporting the **New Agenda for Culture** and its implementation, and to address challenges facing the cultural and creative sectors and the administrative functioning of the supported schemes and actions.

DG EAC ensured the general coordination and supervision of the implementation of the programme. Through the **Culture sub-programme**, for which DG EAC has full responsibility, 934 projects have been funded since 2014, out of them 501 cooperation projects.

In 2019, the testing of the **mobility scheme for artists and culture and creative professionals** has been put in place with a view to contribute to the design of such a scheme in the post-2020 programme. Between April and September 2019, i-portunus issued three calls attracting 3,173 applications. As a result, 348 people active in the fields of the performing or visual arts received support for cross-border mobility.

The preparatory action '**Europe for Festivals, Festivals for Europe**' has successfully introduced its 'festivalfinder.eu' tool, allowing decision-makers, audiences and festival makers to have an overview of the prestigious festival scene across Europe.

Following the decision by the European Parliament end 2018 for an extension of the preparatory Action '**Music Moves Europe**', with its budget doubled to € 3 million. DG EAC has launched five out of the six calls in 2019:

- 'Professionalisation and training'
- 'Cooperation of small music venues'
- 'Co-creation and co-production'
- 'Music education and learning'
- 'Study on the health and wellbeing of music creators'

These projects and study will feed into an integrated strategy for music in the next generation of programmes. The objective is to support European diversity and talent, the competitiveness of the sector as well as increased access of citizens to music in all its diversity. For 2020, the European Parliament suggested another extension of this Preparatory Action, earmarking a budget of €2.5 million for it.

In addition to financing from the Creative Europe Programme, **European Parliament pilot projects** also play an important role supporting policy-making with Cultural and Creative Sectors.

The pilot project **'Finance, Learning, Innovation and Patenting' for Cultural and Creative Industries** (CCI) continued with its activities in 2019 with a €1 million budget. Its objectives are to define and test policies and actions for sustaining and developing CCIs, generate cross-sectoral benefits and spill-overs in the different areas and sectors that CCIs interface with.

- The pilot project **'Makers' Mobility'**, with a budget of €350,000 was launched in 2019. Its aim is to define and test policies and actions supporting the mobility and exchanges of experience between the cultural and creative industries, creative hubs, maker-spaces, fab-labs and formal and non-formal learning and skills development systems in a cross-sectoral way.
- The pilot project **'Measuring the cultural and creative sectors in the EU'** is under preparation. The project intends to fill the gaps at Eurostat level on the Finance, Learning, Innovation and Patenting and consider the feasibility of creating a statistical framework that would enable regular statistical analysis of the economic, cultural and social potential of the Cultural and Creative Sector in Europe.

As part of the support for Special Actions, the Culture Sub-programme supported the organisation of **four European prizes** in the areas of music, literature, architecture and cultural heritage. All Prizes organised award ceremonies together with side events to celebrate their winners, gather stakeholders and attract media attention:

- The first edition of the **Music Moves Europe Talent Awards**, the new European Union Prize for popular and contemporary music on 17 January 2019 at Eurosonic Festival in Groningen
- The biennial **European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture** on 7 May 2019 at the Mies van der Rohe Pavilion in Barcelona
- The **European Union Prize for Literature and of the European Heritage Awards 2019** was given out in Bozar on 2 October 2019 in Brussels
- The **European Heritage/Europa Nostra Awards** was given out in a ceremony on 29 October 2019 in Paris



For all the prizes, much more focus is being put on the support to the prize winners during the year, helping them to professionalise, access markets and raise visibility.

While the award ceremonies remain an important milestone to attract visibility, efforts were made to increase their attractiveness and relevance within the respective creative sector even further.



The policy project funded under Creative Europe's **cross-sectoral Strand, 'Cultural and Creative Spaces and Cities'** (€1.5 million) entered into the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of its implementation. The project aims at bringing closer cultural and creative spaces and local decision-makers, to help to better use public spaces for social and urban regeneration through culture, to share best practices concerning social inclusion and the relations of cultural and creative

spaces with their neighbourhoods and to explore and share best practices of cultural and creative spaces with aspects of the collaborative economy and innovative models for the delivery of public services. A conference in Brussels took place in 2019, as well as different participatory labs at cities level. Within the cross-sectoral strand DG EAC has also managed the network of 41 Creative Europe Desks.

Jointly with DG CONNECT, DG EAC has supervised the implementation of the **Guarantee Facility** available for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the cultural and the creative sectors, and the new initiative bridging cultural and audiovisual content through digital, contributing to taking forward the #Digital4Culture strategy for harnessing digital to empower the positive economic and societal effects of culture. The Guarantee Facility continued to provide guarantees to lending and credit institutions to encourage them to offer loans or guarantees and provide finance for cultural and creative sector initiatives. This enhances access to finance of SMEs in the cultural and the creative sectors, strengthen their financial capacity and reinforce their competitiveness.

### 1.2.5. Corporate services

#### EC Library and e-Resources



The EC Library and e-Resources centre aims to develop and deliver high quality and **innovative information services** to support Commission staff in their evidence-based policy development and decision making processes.

Throughout the year, and in addition to its traditional activities, the Commission Library and e-Resources team has focused on the implementation of its Action Plan 2017–2020. The main items foreseen for 2019 have been delivered:

- The Library significantly improved access to its electronic collections by implementing the 'e-Journals on the Go' project, allowing Commission staff to access thousands of specialised, peer-reviewed e-Journals inside and outside of Commission premises (using EU login, e.g. on mobile devices);
- User-driven acquisition has significantly improved, as the eBooks platform – which was introduced at the end of November 2017 - was used more than 155,000 times (number of successful section requests), which represents an increase of 40% compared with 2018;
- The initial idea of developing a corporate App for Library Services was abandoned, for a combination of budgetary and technical reasons. Instead, a shortcut icon associated with the Library's website, was created;
- A new inter-institutional Framework Contract for the provision of daily press subscriptions was signed in August. It entered into force in November;
- In December, a call for tenders for an inter-institutional Framework Contract for the provision of books, yearbooks, updates and monographic series was published. Offers are expected in January 2020;
- In order to keep its print collection 'fit' and relevant, the Library continued the weeding of its printed resource collections, both in Brussels and Luxembourg. In total, more than 32,000 outdated items have been withdrawn from the Library Management System in 2019.

Despite a significant increase in the use of its online information sources, the number of

searches in the Library's search and discovery tool Find-eR went down for the second consecutive year (172,000 searches in 2019, against 194,000 in 2018 and 210,000 in 2017). This is linked to the fact that Library users can go directly to the eBooks platform or download e-Journals directly without going through Find-eR.

In 2019, the Library and e-Resources further promoted its services, with a particular focus on online information sources and the new, appreciated online service 'e-Journals on the Go'. In order to facilitate access to the Library's services, the Commission's internal Library Homepage was completely revamped and simplified. The promotion activities carried out during the year included a series of news items on the corporate EC MyIntraComm page and on DGs' local IntraComm pages, regular hands-on training courses, presentations of Library services and book presentations of general interest to Commission staff.

### ***EC Corporate traineeship programme***

The **Bluebook traineeship programme** continues to be very well-received by both trainees and Commission services. According to a survey conducted after the March 2019 session, more than 98% of trainees said they would recommend the programme and 96% of advisors reported their trainee made a useful contribution to the work of their Unit.

In order to keep its recognised quality standards, DG EAC continued to pursue a thorough reform process, underpinned by a major migration, currently underway, to modernise its IT tools.

Based on a political agreement and preceded by an intense preparation process, during the reporting period the number of trainees was increased by 200 per session. Although slower than planned, progress was made in particular on the configuration and rolling out of a new module to handle trainees' legal entities, bank accounts and grant payments, and also in kicking off the contracting process for a new IT system to run selections.



## 2. ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROL

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

The first subsection reports on the control results and other relevant information that support management's assurance on the achievement of the financial management and internal control objectives<sup>30</sup>. It includes any additional information necessary to establish that the available evidence is reliable, complete and comprehensive. It covers all activities, programmes and management modes relevant to the DG.

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

The table below shows an analysis of the payments made in 2019:

Payments 2019	Direct	Entrusted	Proportion
EACEA	-	46.819.710	1,45%
EIT	-	415.988.884	12,91%
Erasmus+ handled by National Agencies	-	2.572.555.025	79,84%
European Solidarity Corps handled by National Agencies	-	103.493.519	3,21%
Creative Europe	9.239.395	-	0,29%
Traineeships	9.185.394	-	0,29%
Library	2.525.424	-	0,08%
MSCA and H2020 & FP7	3.339.066	-	0,10%
Erasmus+ direct	38.701.195	-	1,20%
European Solidarity Corps direct	50.000	-	0,00%
Pilot projects	16.544.030	-	0,51%
House of European History managed by European Parliament	-	3.000.000	0,09%
Other	724.238	-	0,02%
<b>Total (includes EFTA, third country contributions (R0), etc.)</b>	<b>80.308.741</b>	<b>3.141.857.139</b>	<b>3.222.165.879</b>
	2,5%	97,5%	100,00%

DG EAC and EACEA have also managed a small proportion of payments from the European Development Fund (EDF). The total EDF budget allocated in 2019 amounts to €18 million and was implemented through the National Agencies (€6.35 million for Mobility projects) and the EACEA (€5.30 million for Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees and €6.35 million for Capacity Building). 60% of the total allocated budget was paid in 2019. These amounts are not material in the context of DG EAC's overall activity and are thus not reported on separately.

<sup>30</sup> Art 36.2 FR: a) effectiveness, efficiency and economy of operations; b) reliability of reporting; c) safeguarding of assets and information; d) prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities; and e) adequate management of risks relating to the legality and regularity of underlying transactions

## 2.1 Financial management and internal control

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

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

These reports result from a systematic analysis of the evidence available. This approach provides sufficient guarantees as to the completeness and reliability of the information reported and results in a complete coverage of the budget delegated to the Director-General of DG EAC. Further information on the key sources relied on are provided in Annex 10.

**This section is for reporting the control results and other relevant elements that support management's assurance. It is structured into (a) Control results, (b) Audit observations and recommendations, (c) Effectiveness of internal control systems, and resulting in (d) Conclusions on the assurance.**

### 2.1.1. Control results

**This section reports and assesses the elements identified by management which support the assurance on the achievement of the internal control objectives<sup>31</sup>. The DG's assurance building and materiality criteria are outlined in AAR Annex 4. Annex 5 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. Annex 10 provides further details.**

#### 1. Effectiveness = the control results and benefits

In order to be considered effective, controls are expected to meet the internal control objectives (to be detailed hereafter) and for each of those control objectives, the controls should result in identifiable benefits. The manner in which those control objectives have been met is detailed in **Annex 10 section 1.2**, together with an overview of the relevant appropriations managed by programme and entrusted entity

Legality and regularity of the transactions

**DG EAC is using internal control processes to ensure the adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions it is responsible for, taking into account the multiannual character of programmes and the nature of the payments concerned.**

### National Agencies (Erasmus+ and European Solidarity corps)

Following the control results described in detail in Annex 10, DG EAC considers it has a sufficiently complete knowledge of the way in which its programmes are implemented by NAs. The management information reported by the NAUs and NAs for the year 2018, which was received in 2019, is sufficient for the relevant AOSD to draw reasonable

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<sup>31</sup> 1) Effectiveness, efficiency and economy of operations; 2) *reliability of reporting*; 3) *safeguarding of assets and information*; 4) prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities; and 5) adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, taking into account the multiannual character of programmes as well as the nature of the payments (FR Art 36.2). The 2<sup>nd</sup> and/or 3<sup>rd</sup> Internal Control Objective(s) (ICO) only when applicable, given the DG's activities.

assurance conclusions, with some exceptions relating to the National Agency in Bulgaria where weaknesses in the internal control system, particularly regarding selection, have been identified and are being rectified.

- The aggregate 2014-2019 residual error rate for the implementation through NAs is estimated to be 0.82% (0.76% over 2014-2018).

- As this is below the 2% threshold, there is **no need to make a reservation for this management mode**.

## Supervision of entrusted bodies: EACEA, REA, EIT and EIF

DG EAC considers that its supervision of the EACEA and REA, whose Authorising Officer receives delegation directly from the Commission, has been effective and sufficient in 2019.

All the reports foreseen in the Memorandum of Understanding between EACEA and its parent DGs, as well as the reinforced measures, were provided and enabled DG EAC to closely monitor the implementation of Erasmus+ and Creative Europe by this Executive Agency. Based on the results of controls as presented in REA's AAR, DG EAC considers to have reasonable assurance regarding Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions (MSCA).

In view of the positive declaration of assurance from the European Court of Auditors on the entirety of its budget, no assurance issues are noted regarding the EIT.

Based on the management declaration and the report of the Independent Audit Body as regards the Erasmus+ Student Loan Guarantee Fund, DG EAC does not consider there is any significant reasonable assurance risk for EIF relating to 2019 or arising from its supervisory activities as member of the Steering Committee and designated service for the instrument during the year. For further information see Annex 10.

## Direct management

**Authorising Officers by sub-delegation** have reported no issues that would put into doubt the reasonable assurance on this management mode, and previous accounting controls indicate the regularity and legality of transactions introduced in ABAC are reliable. However, due to reinforced monitoring during 2019, in particular regarding exceptions and non-compliances, the capacity of operational initiating officers needs to be addressed. This is how we will ensure better quality of financial management on this small percentage of transactions, which are nevertheless increasing in complexity and quantity.

As the issues identified above are not material with respect to the budget as a whole, it is considered that **DG EAC has reasonable assurance on direct management for 2019**.

## Risk at closure

**In the context of the protection of the EU budget, the DGs' estimated overall risk at payment, estimated future corrections and risk at closure are consolidated at Commission level. For DG EAC, the situation has remained stable.**

DG EAC estimates the amount at risk on a conservative and prudent basis. Error rate information on a multi-annual basis from a variety of sources is used. This evidence shows an error rate that is between 0.5% and 1% (see Annex 10), and therefore a global 1% is used to estimate the amount at risk for programmes outside EIT. For EIT itself, the most recent reported error rate is 1.82%, so a conservative rate of 2% is chosen for the amount at risk.



DG EAC's data is shown in the table and its accompanying notes below. The estimated overall risk at payment for 2019 expenditure is €24.88 million. This is the AOD's best, conservative estimation of the amount of *relevant expenditure* during the year (€2,147.18 million) 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 successive years. The conservatively estimated future corrections for 2019 expenditure are €0.2 million. This is the amount of errors that the DG conservatively estimates will be identified and corrected by controls planned to be carried out in succeeding years. The difference between those two amounts leads to the estimated overall risk at closure for the 2019 expenditure of €24.68 million.

Estimated overall risk at closure

DG EAC	'payments made' (FY; m€)	minus new prefinancing [plus retentions made*] (in FY; m€)	plus cleared prefinancing [minus retentions released* and deductions of expenditure made by MS] (in FY; m€)	relevant expenditure (for the FY; m€)	Average Error Rate (weighted AER; %)	estimated overall amount at risk at payment (FY; m€)	Average Recoveries and Corrections (adjusted ARC; %)	estimated future corrections [and deductions] (for FY; m€)	estimated overall amount at risk at closure (m€)
-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7	-8	-9	-10
Programme,	as per AAR annex 3, table 2	as per ABAC DWH BO report on prefinancing	as per ABAC DWH BO report on prefinancing	= (2) -/+ (3) +/- (4)	Detected error rates, or equivalent estimates	= (5) x (6)	H-ARC (as per ABAC DWH BO report on corrective capacity), but adjusted	= (5) x (8)	= (7) - (9)
All EAC programmes and activities except EIT	2.806,18	- 2.743,69	1.743,79	1.806,27	1%	18,06	0,2	0	17,86
EIT	415,99	- 415,99	340,91	340,91	2%	6,82	0	0	6,82
EDF	2,45	2,45	-	0	2%	-	0	0	-
Overall, total	3.224,62	- 3.157,23	2.084,70	2.147,18	1,2%	24,88	0,20	-	24,68

- Fraud prevention, detection and correction

**DG EAC has developed and implemented its own anti-fraud strategy since 2015, on the basis of the methodology provided by OLAF. It is updated every 2-3 years. It was last updated in 2017 and will be updated in line with the risk assessment adopted in early 2020.**

Considering the level of fraud impact faced by the DG, in particular the financial prejudice recorded by the European Anti-fraud Office in the remit of DG EAC, **the residual risk of fraud does not justify additional measures**. DG EAC maintains close cooperation with OLAF and follows the small number of ongoing cases closely. In addition, the follow-up of OLAF's financial recommendations is being undertaken in cooperation with NAs.

Suspected irregularities or fraud and ongoing investigations of the European Antifraud Office (OLAF) were taken into account in assessing the reasonable assurance assigned to the NAs over the reporting period.

- Other control objectives: safeguarding of assets and information, reliability of reporting

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

Pre-financing is also managed and controlled mainly in the context of Delegation Agreements with National Agencies. No issues have been identified as regards the reasonable assurance on safeguarding of assets, and NAs take measures on limitation of negative interest appropriate to their circumstances.

## Accounting controls

In the context of the accounts quality exercise, DG EAC has established a work programme for accounting controls in 2019, based on the risk assessment carried out at the beginning of the year. This work programme, which contributes to the quality of the final financial data, includes regular controls to verify the correctness and completeness of the accounting registrations in the DG.

The controls carried out in 2019 do not show significant or systematic errors, which confirm the accuracy of the central financial cell.

## Budget execution

The total available budget including all types of appropriations in DG EAC's 'domain' (including amounts implemented by Executive agencies) amounted to €5.663 billion in (CA) and €5.471 billion in payment appropriations (PA). Overall execution (all appropriations) end of December reached 95% in commitments

(same as in 2018) and 89% in payments (88% in 2018).

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

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

Payment appropriations: The overall execution rate reached 99.6% of available appropriations. The operational credits have been fully executed. The overall execution rate for administrative expenditures reached 80% which was in line with the overall forecast (81%).

## Cross-sub-delegations

Cross-subdelegations received represent €8.850 million in CA. These CA were still open at end 2019 and will be executed in 2020.

### 1. Efficiency = the Time-to-... indicators and other efficiency indicators

As outlined in section 1.4 of Annex 10, the high-volume, low-value nature of EAC's actions means that there are inherent limitations to achieving control efficiency while achieving programme objectives. NAs have also improved their payment times due to increased experience and more efficient monitoring tools being available. On the basis of this continually improving performance, DG EAC concludes that transactions are handled in an efficient manner given the context of the programmes.

### 2. Economy = the cost of controls

Where indirect management is concerned, the cost of controls borne by the Commission, the Member States and the Entrusted Entities<sup>32</sup> needs to be reported separately. The sources of these figures and how they were estimated are to be reported together with the assessment of their completeness and reliability. As set out below, DG EAC concludes that the structures in place are considered to be cost effective.

Overall, the revised global DG EAC cost of control for **NAs** including an estimate of entrusted entity costs for 2019 is 7.58% of the budget managed (see table in annex 10) and is a prudent and conservative estimate. The structures in place are considered to be cost-effective.

Overall, the revised global DG EAC cost of control for **EIT** including an estimate of entrusted entity costs for 2019 is 2.21% of the budget managed (see table in annex 10) and is a prudent and conservative estimate. The structures in place are considered to be cost-effective.

<sup>32</sup> For indirect management with Entrusted Entities: any types of management, administrative or other remuneration fees paid to them by the Commission (even though it is acknowledged that those contributions cover broader elements than only control costs in the strict sense) are to be reported separately from the DG's supervision or monitoring costs. (Fees 'paid' can also be a % withheld on the gross amount of funds transferred.)

### **3. Conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of controls**

**Based on the most relevant key indicators and control results as outlined in section 1.6 of Annex 10, DG EAC 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.**

### **2.1.2. Audit observations and recommendations**

**This section sets out the observations, opinions and conclusions reported by auditors – including the limited conclusion of the Internal Auditor on the state of internal control. Summaries of the management measures taken in response to the audit recommendations are also included, together with an assessment of the likely material impact of the findings on the achievement of the internal control objectives, and therefore on management's assurance.**

#### **Audits by the Internal Audit Service (IAS)**

The IAS has concluded that the internal control systems in place for the audited processes are effective<sup>33</sup>.

DG EAC has **significantly reduced the number of outstanding audit recommendations during the last years**. There were no IAS open recommendations at the end of 2019, compared to six end 2017 and two at mid-term 2018. There were four new open recommendations in January 2020 from the 'IAS audit on IT governance and project management in DG EAC' launched in 2019. The report resulted in four recommendations rated 'important'. DG EAC is preparing an action plan for the implementation of the recommendations.

More detail is provided in section 1.1 of Annex 11.

#### **Audits by the Court of Auditors**

For its **2018 Declaration of Assurance (DAS)** the Court observed a decrease of errors in the area of Competitiveness for growth and jobs (Chapter 5 of the Court's Annual Report) from the previous year, which also includes the education and culture policy area. For 2018, the estimated level of error communicated by the Court for **Chapter 5 is 2%, decreasing from 4.2%** in 2017 and 4.6% in 2016. This error rate is not broken down by policy area, so there is no 'DG EAC' rate from the ECA, but the multi-annual rate suggested by the ECA's result year-on-year is coherent with the results found by DG EAC and presented in this AAR.

More detail is provided in section 1.1 of Annex 11.

As a result of the assessment of the risks underlying the observations made together with the management measures taken in response, described in section 1.1 of Annex 11, **the management of DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture considers that the recommendations issued do not raise any material reasonable assurance implications**. The recommendations are being implemented as part of on-going continuous efforts in terms of further improvements.

### **2.1.3. Assessment of the effectiveness of internal control systems**

**The Commission has adopted an Internal Control Framework based on international good practice, to ensure the achievement of its policy and management objectives. Compliance with the internal control framework is compulsory.**

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<sup>33</sup> [Ares\(2020\)958232](#)

**DG EAC's organisational structure and the internal control systems are suited to achieving its policy and internal control objectives, in accordance with the internal control principles. DG EAC pays due regard to the risks associated with the environment in which it operates.**

**DG EAC has assessed its internal control system during the reporting year and, as outlined in section 1.8 of Annex 11, has concluded that it is effective. The components and principles are present and functioning well overall, but some improvements are needed as minor deficiencies were identified. The deficiencies relate to the availability of human resources adapted to the changing needs of the Directorate-General, the update of the anti-fraud strategy and fraud-related risk assessment, and the roles related to IT governance, IT security updates as identified in the recommendations from the 2019 IAS audit on information technology governance and project management.**

**As regards HR, the improvements and remedial measures implemented or envisaged are a combination of internal reallocation of resources and active measures in the discussions on the next multi-annual financial framework, with the aim to obtain a reinforcement so that the DG can meet its new challenges.**

#### ***2.1.4. Conclusions on the assurance***

**This section reviews the assessment of the elements already reported above (in Sections 2, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3), and the sub-conclusions already reached. It draws an overall conclusion to support the declaration of assurance and whether it should be qualified with reservations.**

The information reported in Section 2.1 is comprehensive and complete as regards the coverage of the budget delegated to the AOD, and information has been reported for all significant budget areas. The reliability of the information is supported by the building blocks of assurance as described in Annex 10 and 11, including supervision and monitoring, independent audits and regular review and assessment.

The true and fair view is supported by the testing and retesting of the error rates calculated by entrusted bodies. The regular reporting on all aspects of the programmes (especially the yearly management declarations) ensures that resources are used for the intended purpose. The programme design, its rules, and its implementation ensure sound financial management, legality and regularity, non-omission of significant information, as well as the other internal control objectives (safeguarding of assets and information; and the prevention, detection and correction of fraud and irregularities).

#### **Overall Conclusion**

**In conclusion, the management has reasonable assurance that, overall, suitable controls are in place and working as intended; risks are being appropriately monitored and mitigated; and necessary improvements and reinforcements are being implemented. The Director-General, in her capacity as Authorising Officer by Delegation has signed the Declaration of Assurance without making a reservation.**

#### ***2.1.5. Declaration of Assurance***



# DECLARATION OF ASSURANCE

*I, the undersigned,*

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

***In my capacity as authorising officer by delegation, declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view<sup>34</sup>.***

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

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

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

***Brussels, 31 March 2020***

***(Signed)***

***Themis Christophidou***

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<sup>34</sup> True and fair in this context means a reliable, complete and correct view on the state of affairs in the DG/Executive Agency.

## 2.2 Other organisational management dimensions

### 2.2.1. Human resource management

By end 2019, the selection process for two **first-time appointments of female middle managers** was finalised, leaving DG EAC one appointment short of reaching the target.

In 2019, the Human Resource Business Correspondent team focused on the follow up actions of the 2018 **Staff Opinion Survey**. Compared to 2016, the survey showed that:

- The staff engagement index went up by 2 percentage points in DG EAC, coming close to the Commission average of 69%.
- 15% more staff felt that their opinion is valued, reaching a total of 73%.
- 9% more staff felt that the Commission cares about their wellbeing.

78% of EAC staff were proud to work for the Commission and believe that their work makes a difference to EU citizens. This was higher than the Commission average of 77%.

As a follow up to the Staff Survey results, and with the support of the internal Working Group on **Well-being**, the HRBC team also:

- drafted the DG EAC **Learning and Development Strategy 2020-2023**,
- proposed a **new project team approach**, to break silos and bring colleagues from different units across the DG together. This laid the ground for a pilot project team updating the Digital Education Action Plan set up in January 2020,
- launched the successful **internal communication initiative** to have colleagues from all Member States present what DG EAC had done for their countries. Identified as best practice, this initiative will feature in a future edition of the corporate online magazine,
- set up a **one-stop shop for newcomers**, including a handbook, a checklist and guidelines for mentoring,
- redesigned the **welcome sessions for newcomers** and trainees to become more interactive and focused on content ,
- revamped the DG EAC **intranet** content on HR matters.

Finally, DG EAC provided administrative HR support to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency to prepare for a smooth large-scale reorganisation.

### 2.2.2. Better regulation (only for DGs managing regulatory acquis)

In 2019, the DG finalised two evaluations<sup>35</sup>, continued working on two ongoing evaluations<sup>36</sup> and launched one new evaluation<sup>37</sup>. In addition, the DG prepared

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<sup>35</sup> Ex Post evaluation of the 2017 European Capitals of Culture, Evaluation of EACEA for the period 2015-2017

<sup>36</sup> Ex Post evaluation of the 2018 European Capitals of Culture, Evaluation of European Heritage Label

one impact assessment on the European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT). The results of evaluations, studies and projects developed under DG EAC's programmes continued to be used as sources of evidence for future policy making. See Annex 9 for more details.

### **2.2.3. Information management aspects**

#### **Document management**

In 2019, the management of official files and the filing plan of the DG improved consistently with systematic training delivered to the units based on the new guidelines on creation of files. Quality control is provided by the Document Management Officer unit by unit. This will be ongoing in 2020.

Significant improvements have been made concerning shared files with the Commission services (from 5% to 11%). A workshop on 'Security and visibility in Ares' was held for all DMO correspondents and core users of Ares.

A new training was designed in order to encourage the proper use of Ares and Areslook '*How to register emails using Areslook?*': six in-house trainings were held and will continue to be organised on a regular basis. The team has also made seven presentations on Document management during unit meetings. A Newcomer presentation on Document management and Ares has been designed and kicked off at the end of the year. This will be organised every two months in the future.

DG EAC has integrated in ARES documents linked to the Stages application, and European Solidarity Corps, in compliance with 'e-Domec' rules.

As regards Central Archives of EAC the main figures are the following: 24 linear metres of paper files were transferred from the units to Archives, and 148 linear metres were released in Central Archive, of which 132 eliminated and 16 transferred to the Historical Archives. 85% Archive shelves are now occupied in the Central Archive.

#### **Data Protection**

During the year 2019 the inventory of ongoing data processing activities has been further investigated and cleansed - in line with the Commission's Data Protection Action Plan (C(2018)7432) - mainly but not only through the direct contacts with the EAC units concerned. Discussions on the existence and implementation of a few cases of possible Joint Controllership are ongoing.

In order to raise all-round data protection compliance, numerous actions have been undertaken such as dissemination of the information and awareness raising through lunch time conference, explanatory meetings and topical meetings. During all of these meetings emphasis was laid on the integration of the principles of the data protection legislation.

Updating the privacy statements according to the new rules and principles was a parallel priority, which included adapting their legibility to their target public and maximising their visibility for the data subjects.

DG EAC did not identify the need for restrictions of data subjects rights but

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<sup>37</sup> Ex Post evaluation of the 2019 European Capitals of Culture

managed to convert all existing and convertible Notifications into Data Protection Records in due time.

## **Knowledge Management**

In 2019, EAC activities were in line with the priorities of the corporate work programme published in November 2019 and the EAC strategy for Knowledge Management (KM) was implemented based on an Action Plan. Main achievements were:

- Content Reorganisation introducing a shifting in collaboration towards a thematic approach: a new set of workspace and feature templates was offered to satisfy users' needs and provide consistency.
- Unit Workspace Optimisation Project: Unit landing pages were designed as a central hub to ease orientation and availabilities of common sources and tools. Directorate B and R participated to the pilot phase.
- Rationalisation of documents libraries within the collaborative spaces. Work still on-going.
- 15 in-house training workshops (KM Ateliers) took place with 87 participants. Four workshops were specifically addressed to trainees.

The EAC community of practice of 34 KM Correspondents was very active, communicating via blog post and intranet news and held two conferences in 2019.

### **2.2.4. External communication activities**

This was a landmark year for DG EAC's external communication with the transition from President Juncker's to President von der Leyen's Commission. Efforts remained focused on harnessing communication on 'Jobs, Growth and Investment' and 'Strengthening the European identity through education and culture' in order to get the news out effectively and inform citizens and stakeholders about policy developments, opportunities of the funding programmes, and their results. DG EAC continued working on improving citizens' awareness and understanding of what the EU does for its citizens through its considerable contributions to the 'EU and ME', 'EU Protects' and 'EU Invest' corporate communication campaigns.

DG EAC continued to promote its policies and programmes to its diverse range of stakeholders through multiple dedicated platforms and websites. In 2019, in particular efforts were geared toward the European Solidarity Corps programme and the discover EU pilot project.

DG EAC's communication events (e.g. Second Education Summit, European Week of Sport, Science Is Wonderful!, 30 year anniversary of Jean Monnet) also helped put our initiatives in the spotlight. Moreover, DG EAC co-organised the 'Young Citizens' Dialogue – Let's shape the future of Europe together!' in Sibiu, Romania, involving young people from all over Europe. The event included discussions with Commissioners Navracsics and Thyssen, as well as a final Citizens' Dialogue in the presence of Commission President Juncker and Romanian President Iohannis.

DG EAC continued using social media to reach, interact with and engage with stakeholders, programme beneficiaries and citizens, particularly young people.