



Erasmus+ Handbook for individual pupil mobility in school education

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ABOUT THE HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to help schools, teachers, pupils, parents and everyone else involved in organising individual pupil mobility activities under **Erasmus+, the European Union's programme for education, training, youth and sport**.

The handbook provides step-by-step advice on how to prepare, carry out and follow up Erasmus+ mobility activities for school pupils, which are just one of the many different activity formats available in Erasmus+. This handbook is not a rulebook, but a collection of recommendations and tips for project managers, teachers, and other practitioners. The handbook is primarily aimed at schools involved in Erasmus+ mobility projects, however it can also serve to inform host schools, parents, policymakers and everyone else involved or interested in Erasmus+.

The guidance in this handbook is addressed to Erasmus+ practitioners all over Europe, which means that not all recommendations and examples will apply in every context. You should read this book as inspiration, not as instructions or additional requirements.

If you are not yet familiar with Erasmus+ and wish to read the rules of the programme, you should look at the [Erasmus+ Programme Guide](#). The Programme Guide is published every year as part of the general Erasmus+ call for proposals. It sets submission deadlines, eligibility conditions, participating countries, the minimum and maximum duration of activities, level of funding support, and all other details.

This handbook is not a legal document. If you are unsure whether some of the principles or practices discussed in it are obligatory or not, you should check the rules in the Programme Guide. If you already have a project running, you should also know very well the rules defined in your project's grant agreement. Reading this handbook cannot be a replacement for those important documents. In case of any conflicting information, the rules presented in the Programme Guide, your grant agreement and other legal documents take precedence over the explanations offered in this handbook.

For further information, you can visit the website of the Erasmus+ National Agency in your country. For their contact information, you may consult the list of [Erasmus+ National Agencies](#).

All the advice in this handbook should be read and understood in the context of the national legal framework in your country and it should always be implemented in full respect of those rules. If you have any questions or doubts, you should discuss them with your National Agency.

Legal note on data protection: this handbook does not grant any rights or impose any obligations concerning data controllership, specifically regarding the role of the European Commission as a data controller for any personal data processing activities outlined herein. Additionally, this handbook should not be interpreted as a set of data controller instructions for processors (as per Art.29(3)(a) of Regulation 2018/1725).

USEFUL LINKS

Erasmus+

Erasmus+ Programme Guide

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/erasmusplus-programme-guide>

Erasmus quality standards for Key Action 1 projects in school education

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/document/erasmus-quality-standards-mobility-projects-vet-adults-schools>

Website of the Erasmus+ programme at Europa.eu

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu>

List of Erasmus+ National Agencies

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/national-agencies>

European School Education Platform

- Main website: <https://school-education.ec.europa.eu>
- Partner finding: <https://school-education.ec.europa.eu/networking/partner-finding>
- eTwinning: <https://school-education.ec.europa.eu/etwinning>

Online language support

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/resources-and-tools/online-language-support>

Training and Cooperation Activities Resource Centre (SALTO)

<https://salto-et.net>

Other web links used in the handbook +

Europass Mobility

<https://europa.eu/europass/en/europass-mobility>

European Framework for Key Competences

<https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/improving-quality/key-competences>

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/level-descriptions>

Eurydice: information about education systems in Europe

<http://www.eurydice.org/>

European Health Insurance Card

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=559>

INTRODUCTION

1. PUPIL MOBILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN EDUCATION POLICY

Pupils who take part in learning mobility activities benefit from improvements in their personal independence, communication skills, critical thinking, creativity, and other skills and attitudes. Spending a period abroad helps pupils with language learning and gives them a chance to experience Europe's cultural diversity first hand.

One of the major goals of the Erasmus+ programme is to give more young people the experience of studying in another country. Expanding mobility opportunities for school pupils is a part of achieving this goal, leading to a more accessible and more inclusive Erasmus+.

In its communication on the achievement of the **European Education Area**¹, the European Commission has proposed a set of policies that recognise the important role of education and training in building an inclusive and participatory society. Similarly, the 2024 **Europe on the Move**² recommendation by the Council of the European Union calls for 'building a lifelong learning mobility culture at all learning stages of education and training'.

The Erasmus+ programme forms a part of these efforts, recognising that high quality education from the earliest age is the basis for personal fulfilment, finding a job and becoming an active and responsible citizen.

As part of the European Education Area framework, the European Commission promotes mobility opportunities for learners and teachers, and cooperation opportunities for institutions. The goal is to **make learning mobility a reality for all** and improve the quality of education and training at all levels. Erasmus+ is the main instrument for making these policy goals a reality for European citizens.



This programme opened opportunities to meet new people and taught our children not to be afraid of change. I believe that in the future, going abroad to study or pursue a career will not be just a dream, but a realistic idea. It is an enlightening, inspiring experience that will leave an indelible impression on our hearts.

**Parent of a pupil in long-term mobility organised by
Santakos educational centre, Šiauliai, Lithuania**

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/default/files/document-library-docs/communication-european-education-area.pdf>

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/3364/oj>

2. MOBILITY PROJECTS AND PUPIL MOBILITY IN ERASMUS+: HOW DO THEY WORK?

Erasmus+ provides funding for mobility opportunities as part of **Key Action 1: Learning mobility for individuals**. However, Erasmus+ is not just a scholarship scheme for stays abroad. Its purpose and ambition are to benefit not only the participating pupils and teachers, but also schools as institutions.

Accordingly, a key principle of Erasmus+ is that applications can only be made by organisations: pre-primary, primary and secondary schools, school authorities, coordination bodies and similar institutions. As private individuals, pupils or their parents cannot apply for an Erasmus+ grant directly. Rather, pupils are offered mobility opportunities by their school, which receives a grant from Erasmus+. Therefore, the first step in organising a mobility activity for pupils is for their school to apply an Erasmus+ project. The school does this by submitting an application to the Erasmus+ National Agency in their country.

Under Key Action 1, schools can apply for an accreditation that will give them permanent access to funding through yearly accredited mobility projects, or they can apply for a one-off non-accredited mobility project. Accredited and non-accredited projects include the same range of mobility opportunities for pupils and staff, so the guidance in this handbook applies equally to both.

Whether you are applying for an accreditation or for a non-accredited project, the questions in your application will focus on defining your school's institutional objectives, which will frame and direct your future mobility activities. Relatively few details about actual activities are asked in the application. By focusing on wider objectives, we want to make sure that your mobility activities do not happen in isolation from each other. Rather, they must be organised as part of the school's wider plan.

When it comes to pupil mobility, this also means that a mobility project doesn't begin on the day that the pupils go abroad, and it doesn't end on the day they come back. The time they spend abroad is the most important period for the pupils individually; however, preparation and follow-up for each activity will play a major role in creating wider benefits for your school as an institution.

On the next page you will find a list of key Erasmus+ terms used in the handbook, such as 'mobility project', 'mobility consortium', 'accreditation'. These are short essential definitions. If you are not yet familiar with the Erasmus+ they may raise more questions for you. In that case, you should start by reading the description of Key Action 1 for school education in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide, before returning to this handbook.



The most important thing about experiencing an Erasmus+ activity is how it makes you change, how it makes you grow. In my case, it has made me see that I could trust myself and made me realise how much I could progress in my studies, which I did by improving my grades a lot upon returning. This experience also made me more mature, made me see things differently and discover a new world full of opportunities.

***A pupil in a long-term mobility organised by
IES Hermanos Machado, Dos Hermanas, Spain***

Erasmus+ mobility opportunities: key terms

Key Action 1

Key Action 1 is the first of three large parts (Key Actions) of the Erasmus+ programme.

It provides mobility opportunities for individuals: learners and staff.

Mobility activities are organised within a frame of a mobility project ran by a school or another education organisation.

Mobility project

An Erasmus+ mobility project is composed of one or more mobility activities which are carried out as part of a broader plan to improve the quality of teaching and learning at the school running the project.

A typical Erasmus+ mobility project combines multiple activities for pupils and teachers, often involving several destination countries.

Existence of an overarching set of institutional objectives is the defining feature of a mobility project. The different mobility activities within the project all contribute to those overarching objectives.

Mobility activity

An Erasmus+ mobility activity is a learning period that participants spend abroad, individually or in a group. All Erasmus+ mobility activities must be:

- ✓ **Learning activities:** intended for participants to improve or gain new knowledge, skills, competences and attitudes.
- ✓ **Transnational:** learning happens through interaction with persons from another country, whether peers, colleagues or others.
- ✓ **Structured:** learning follows a clear methodology, learning programme and planned learning outcomes.
- ✓ **Strategic:** contributing to a wider set of project objectives.

Mobility consortium

A mobility consortium project is a specific form of a mobility project, where the coordinator organisation can use the project funds to provide mobility opportunities to several schools in their country that share similar institutional objectives.

Mobility consortium projects are often coordinated by local or regional school authorities or other coordination bodies that wish to use mobility activities as an instrument for strategic development of school education in their area of responsibility.

Accreditation

Erasmus accreditation is one way to access funds under Erasmus+ Key Action 1 (the other being non-accredited mobility projects). It is intended for schools and other education organisations that want to organise Erasmus+ mobility activities on a continuous basis. To be accredited, schools need to write an application describing how they will use mobility activities to improve their learning and teaching offer.

3. OBJECTIVES OF PUPIL MOBILITY ACTIVITIES: PERSONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Erasmus+ gives grants to schools and not to individuals because the goal is for both pupils and schools to learn from the experience. The logic is simple: a mobility grant for one pupil benefits just one person, but improving a school benefits all of its current and future pupils.

This means that each mobility project and all mobility activities have a double objective:

1. To benefit the participating pupils;
2. To benefit the sending school as the 'owner' of the mobility project, and the host school as their partner.

The benefits that mobility projects bring to the organisations taking part are one of the main reasons for the existence of Erasmus+. This is reflected in the programme's policy objectives and rules, and is a principle that everyone participating in Erasmus+ should know and embrace.

The secret to an excellent Erasmus+ mobility project is to strike the right balance between personal and institutional benefits. Make the well-being of your pupils your top priority and achieve it by challenging your school and your staff to learn, innovate, evolve, and become the very best versions of themselves.

Benefits for the participating pupils

Pupils who go abroad with Erasmus+ will benefit directly by acquiring new knowledge, skills, experiences, perspectives and personal connections. Learning mobility is a practical way to trigger pupils' social and personal development, boost their academic achievements and increase their awareness and understanding of Europe's diversity.

Immersion in the host country's education system is a unique experience that can only be acquired through mobility activities. It enables pupils to learn through personal experience and engagement, by witnessing and personally participating in new ways of learning and thinking. They will be constantly encountering new situations, they will be using a foreign language, and they will need to take more responsibility for themselves. Living abroad will also give pupils a new perspective on their own country.

Mobility activities are particularly helpful in improving pupils' transversal skills such as critical thinking, creativity and entrepreneurship. The learning period abroad is also likely to reinforce pupils' values of tolerance, democracy, civic engagement and inclusion.

Benefits for the participating schools

It is easy to understand how a study period abroad brings benefits to pupils, but it is perhaps less obvious how such an activity can benefit the schools involved.

To understand the organisational impact of mobility activities, we should try to imagine the close cooperation of school leaders³, teachers and administrative staff in the sending and host schools that is needed to set up an Erasmus+ mobility activity. In their 'normal' work, schools do not regularly perform tasks such as preparing a learning programme to be carried out abroad or setting up joint monitoring arrangements with teachers in another country.

³ 'School leaders' is a collective term for persons who exercise managerial and decision-making duties in a school. Depending on the country and type of school, school leaders will include principals, directors, their deputies, school board members, or other persons with similar roles.

For pupils, Erasmus+ is beneficial because it brings them into novel situations and teaches them about different ways of doing things. It is the same for schools: Erasmus+ challenges schools to think strategically, to try new things, and to learn from others. Schools can use mobility activities to develop their institutional culture towards a more open, international way of working.

Overcoming practical challenges creates the institutional impact and builds the schools' capacity to work in new ways. The long-term goal of Erasmus+ is to change the definition of 'normal' so that exchanging pupils, staff and good practices between schools in different countries becomes a standard, rather than an exception.

Talking and collaborating with partner schools abroad brings new ideas into the school, with plenty of opportunities to improve the methods of learning, teaching and managing the school. Erasmus+ can create lasting partnerships between the sending and host school, where one mobility activity leads to another, and one project leads to another, permanently enriching both institutions.

On your school's path to success in Erasmus+, it's extremely important to think about mobility activities as part of wider cooperation with partner schools abroad. You should always remember that individual mobility activities are not the final purpose of your project. They are building blocks that together form a bigger structure.

If you are just starting your first project, these objectives may seem distant and challenging. The solution is simple: do not rush. This chapter invites you to imagine ambitious goals to help you understand the Erasmus+ context and find your way in it. However, you should not feel pressured to immediately reach those bigger goals. On the contrary, Erasmus+ is carefully designed to give your school plenty of time to learn by starting slowly and then gradually gaining experience and moving towards your objectives.

To join Erasmus+ you don't have to know exactly how to carry out a cross-border mobility activity. Rather, Erasmus+ exists so that you and your school can learn how to do it.



We became more credible by offering good quality education at European standards. The insight into the other European educational systems developed our teachers' competences, gave them multiple perspectives on various topics, made them all very involved in their professional careers.

The students experienced beautiful and interesting periods of intensive learning by doing, which made them more open to learning and improving their skills, more responsible, more appreciative of their own culture, but also very open to learning about European countries' culture, more tolerant and more willing to accept new challenges.

Erasmus coordinator, Voltaire High School, Craiova, Romania

4. STRUCTURE OF MOBILITY PROJECTS: ONE-WAY, TWO-WAY AND MULTILATERAL EXCHANGES

This chapter explains the formal structure of Erasmus+ grant agreements, presents the main information about financing arrangements, and introduces the different ways to set up mobility activities for pupils.

An Erasmus+ mobility project is created through a grant agreement (a contract) between an Erasmus+ National Agency and the organisation that has applied for funding and successfully passed the selection process.

In terms of financing arrangements, Erasmus+ funds are always provided to the school that is sending their pupils abroad (the '**sending school**'), rather than to the school receiving the pupils (the '**host school**'). From a formal point of view, this means that all pupil mobility activities go in the same direction: from the sending school who 'owns' the project to a host school chosen by that sending school.

At first sight, this format may seem 'incomplete': it includes activities that go in only one direction, even though Erasmus+ is very much about mutual exchanges! Shouldn't it be possible for the host school to return the visit by sending their pupils in the other direction?

Of course, it should, and it is. But the Erasmus+ rules that make it possible are designed for the whole of Europe, not just for one pair of sending and host schools.

To understand this idea, you should imagine that every school with an Erasmus+ mobility project is a member of a large network of many such schools across Europe. In that network, each Erasmus+ school is a potential partner to every other school.

If both the sending and the host school would be included into a single project, then that pairing would become a fixed part of their project contract. On the contrary, the network structure gives the schools much more flexibility and infinite opportunities to meet and work with new partners.

Each sending school can add, replace or remove host partners in their project at any time while the project is running and without needing to make a formal modification to their project contract. New contacts can become project partners easily and new ideas can be implemented quickly.

Most importantly, this flexibility means that schools from different countries can combine their projects by deciding to work together on a particular theme and through **two-way exchanges**. Even schools that do not yet have their own Erasmus+ mobility project can get involved as host schools. This way they can gain experience that will help them apply for Erasmus+ funding in the future.

When a partnership between two schools 'clicks', the first mobility activity is just the beginning. It can lead to years of fruitful exchanges of pupils and teachers, online cooperation, joint applications for other types of projects, and essentially anything else your creativity allows you to imagine.

What's more, there is no limit to how many schools can work together in this way! By receiving an Erasmus+ grant, your school has become a member of a **European community of thousands of Erasmus+ schools**. The size and diversity of this community gives you endless possibilities for finding new partners to work together on any topic. By doing so, you will be gradually building your school's international network and making Erasmus+ an integral part of your school's activities.

Basic model: one-way mobility



- ✓ Only the sending school needs to have an Erasmus+ mobility project
- ✓ The simplest model: an excellent first experience

Bilateral model: a two-way exchange



- ✓ Both schools must have Erasmus+ or other funds
- ✓ A well-balanced model that puts the partners on an equal footing, allows for deeper cooperation and is easy to manage
- ✓ Pupils can form tandems and can be staying at each other's families

Multilateral model: unlimited possibilities



- ✓ All sending schools must have Erasmus+ or other funds
- ✓ Schools without funding can take part as host schools
- ✓ There is no limit on the number of schools that can take part

5. STRUCTURE OF MOBILITY PROJECTS: COMBINING DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES

In the previous chapter we introduced the idea of mobility projects which include multiple mobility activities and can be adjusted flexibly and on the go. In this chapter, we explore this further to see how you can combine different activities within your project.

This handbook is written specifically for **individual pupil mobility activities**, including short-term and long-term stays. Apart from individual pupil mobility activities, Erasmus+ mobility projects can also include **group mobility** of pupils and **mobility activities for teachers** and other school education staff. All of these activity formats can be combined within the same mobility project.

If we think of individual mobility activities as building blocks of your project, then different activity formats can be imagined like blocks of different shapes. Putting them together in the right way can produce new and interesting results. The diversity of Erasmus+ activity formats lets you put into practice your school's objectives for the project in a creative and multi-faceted way.

Below are only a few ideas to serve as inspiration. The list is by no means exhaustive. As your experience grows, your own ideas and creativity will surely go beyond the limits of this handbook!

Concurrent activities: sending more than one pupil to the same host school at the same time

Your work on preparation, monitoring and follow-up can be more efficient if you organise mobility activities for more than one pupil at the same time⁴. This way of working also allows you to create a 'mobility window' at your school – a specific period of the year when you know some of your pupils will be abroad and you can prepare for it more efficiently than if different pupils are away at different periods of the year.

For the pupils themselves, being accompanied by their classmates or peers can provide academic and psychological support. Ideally, two or just a few pupils of the same age should take part in a stay at the same time (a 'concurrent stay'). Otherwise, there is a risk that the mobile pupils stay within their own group, rather than socialising with their peers in the host country and immersing themselves in the hosting environment.

Combining group and individual mobility of pupils

Group mobility of pupils is typically a short activity, which is focused on a particular theme. Within the broader scope of your mobility project, this type of activity can be useful both before and after an individual mobility activity at the same host school.

Instead of going to the host school alone, a pupil who has been selected (or who is being considered for selection) to take part in an individual mobility can first visit the host school together with other pupils and teachers, as part of a group activity. The group activity can take place immediately before the individual mobility, or there can be a time gap in-between (this is a good option if the selection process has not yet been finalised).

For the supervising teachers, the group activity can be useful for observing how the visiting pupil interacts with peers from the host school. It can help them to assess the pupil's adaptability to a new

⁴ There is an important difference between concurrent activities for individual pupils and a group mobility of pupils. In individual mobility activities, each pupil must have a learning agreement made for them personally, even if several pupils are staying at the same host school at the same time. After the mobility activity, each pupil needs to undergo individual evaluation and their learning outcomes need to be individually recognised. Concurrent stays are practical and they are a common practice in Erasmus+, however the organisational convenience must not reduce the quality of those activities. Each pupil must receive appropriate individual attention from both the sending school and the host school. For a full definition of a group mobility and individual mobility, please consult the Erasmus+ Programme Guide. For a detailed explanation of what is a learning agreement, please see the dedicated chapters of this handbook.

environment and to see their language skills in practice. It will also be easier to recruit a host family if the pupil has already made friends at the host school during the group visit.

As regards content, group and individual activities can have a common theme. For example, the pupil participating in an individual activity can be assigned project work that builds on the theme of a previous group activity. With the help of online tools, the pupil can complete their task by working together with pupils from both the sending and host school. It is also possible to make similar thematic links if the group activity takes place after the individual activity.

Combining activities for pupils and staff

Organising pupil mobility activities is a joint effort of the sending and the host schools. For the two organisations to enter this joint endeavour together, they first need to reach a certain level of mutual understanding and trust. Staff mobility activities can be an excellent catalyst for this process.

The best way for a member of staff from your school to become familiar with the host school's internal organisation and curriculum is by spending some time there on a job-shadowing or teaching assignment. Their insight and contacts with colleagues at the host school will be truly valuable if they later help prepare mobility activities for your pupils.

A note of caution here: staff mobility activities cannot be organised solely as preparation for another activity. According to the rules for staff mobility activities, staff members participating in a job-shadowing or a teaching assignment must have their own expected learning outcomes. The existence of these learning outcomes differentiates a 'staff mobility activity' from a 'preparatory visit' (which is a different option explained in more detail in the chapter on 'Preparatory visits to the host school'). Nevertheless, it is clear that a job-shadowing or a teaching assignment at the host school is highly compatible with preparation for a pupil mobility activity. It is an opportunity to create synergies within your mobility project. For example, a teacher on a job shadowing can carry out a comparative analysis of curricula in the two schools. This would be both a legitimate learning assignment for the teacher personally, and a useful contribution to the overall objectives of the mobility project and to preparing future activities.

Furthermore, you may also consider organising a concurrent stay of pupils and staff at the host school. The presence of a teacher from the sending school can be reassuring for everyone involved, including the pupils and their parents. As always, caution should be applied when making the exact arrangements. The teacher's involvement should be limited, so that it does not get in the way of the pupils' full immersion in the host school. For example, a mentor from the host school must still be assigned to the pupils; the teacher from the sending school cannot take that role.

Finally, it is also important to understand the difference between a teacher in a concurrent staff mobility and an accompanying person. A teacher taking part in staff mobility has their own learning objectives, while an accompanying person does not – the formal role of the accompanying person is simply to accompany the pupils on a mobility activity. The concept of an accompanying person is explained in Chapter 12.

6. TRAINEESHIPS FOR PUPILS IN GENERAL EDUCATION

A school abroad is the most common and simplest choice for hosting pupils in mobility activities. However, the Erasmus+ Programme Guide permits other types of organisations to act as hosts when the mobility activity is a 'traineeship'.

A traineeship means that pupils learn **by observing and performing tasks in a workplace environment**. For example, pupils can learn in cultural institutions (such as museums, libraries, theatres or cultural centres), non-governmental and civil society organisations, media organisations, public service providers, administrative institutions, or in companies.

To keep the explanations straightforward, we simply talk about ‘host schools’ in the other chapters of this handbook. However, all the advice in the handbook applies equally to traineeships, even if they are not explicitly mentioned every time.

The main condition for a non-school organisation to act as a host is that they can offer a suitable learning experience to the pupil, given the pupil’s learning requirements at their sending school. Common examples of learning outcomes that could be expected in a traineeship include improvement of communication and digital skills, entrepreneurial skills, financial literacy, media literacy, active citizenship, cultural awareness and interpersonal skills.

It is also possible for a mobility activity to combine different learning environments. For example, a host school can act as the main host, but the pupil can spend part of their learning time at another organisation who is collaborating with the host school by providing a complementary practical learning experience.

Educators working in both general education and vocational education and training may wonder about the difference between traineeships in the two fields. Of course, the general concept is the same: learning at a workplace by simultaneously getting training and performing practical tasks. After that, there are two differences: formal eligibility and learning outcomes.

In terms of formal eligibility, all learning programmes in your country (with very rare exceptions) will be sorted into either school education or vocational education and training. Based on the programme in which the learner is enrolled at the sending school, they will be eligible for funding under either school education or vocational education and training part of Erasmus+. The sorting of vocational and general programmes is decided by the relevant ministries in your country, and information about it is published on the website of your National Agency. If your school is carrying out multiple learning programmes, make sure that you are well informed about their formal classification in the context of Erasmus+. Your National Agency can help to resolve any doubts.

Secondly, in terms of learning outcomes, the key question is how the learning content of the traineeship fits with the pupil’s curriculum requirements at the sending school. In vocational education and training, this is usually a straightforward matter since work-based learning is part of the curriculum. This is not the case in general education, so the sending school and the host organisation need to come up with potential learning outcomes that can fit with the pupil’s curriculum requirements. Identifying such learning opportunities is a matter of creativity and innovation. If you are thinking of parts of your curriculum that could be best taught ‘out in the world’, then a traineeship for pupils in general education is an opportunity you may wish to explore.

7. PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN MOBILITY ACTIVITIES FOR PUPILS

The main people and organisations involved are the sending school, the host school, the pupil, and their parents or guardians. If the pupil is housed with a host family, they become important contributors as well. Your National Agency are involved as the supervisor of your project. This section presents these different actors and explains their roles.

Sending side	Host side
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sending school- The pupil and their parents- The National Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Host school- Host family

Sending school

The sending school is the ‘owner’ of the Erasmus+ mobility project. It means that the sending school has signed a grant agreement with the Erasmus+ National Agency in their country, it receives and manages the project funds, and it will eventually report to the National Agency on the results achieved. The sending school is ultimately responsible for the success of the mobility activity, and it has the most important role in setting it up.

The sending school chooses a suitable host school abroad based on shared interests, the age and profile of the pupils involved, and practical considerations. Together, the two schools will prepare a learning agreement to define the expected learning outcomes of the mobility activity and what they will do to achieve them (you can find more information about learning agreements in chapters 14 to 16). After the pupil’s return to the home country, the sending school is responsible for the recognition of the pupil’s learning outcomes and reintegrating the pupil back into their education programme.

Host school

The host school is chosen by the sending school to be their partner for one or several mobility activities. In the Erasmus+ Key Action 1, there are no applications or other procedures necessary to become a host school. Therefore, any school can become a host school simply by being chosen by another school running an Erasmus+ project.

The main task of the host school is to welcome the pupil and carry out the learning programme as defined in the learning agreement. The host school will also have a major role in monitoring and evaluating the learning activities. It will support the sending school in follow-up tasks, such as recognition of learning outcomes.

If you have an Erasmus+ project and are looking for partners, the best advice is: to find a host, become a host! Offering to host pupils is the best way to have your pupils hosted in exchange.

If you do not yet have your own Erasmus+ project, becoming a host school is an excellent first step. It is the easiest and most concrete way to gain experience before applying for your own project. If you are interested in becoming a host school, you post an announcement in the European School Education Platform’s partner finding tool: <https://school-education.ec.europa.eu/networking/partner-finding>

The pupil and their parents

Participating pupils are selected by the sending school and must be formally enrolled in that school. Their role in the activity is to make the best of their Erasmus+ experience with the help of their sending school, the host school, their parents, and teachers.

The main role of parents (or guardians) is to provide support before the departure and during the pupil's stay abroad. The parents' role is also legally important, since the schools must make sure that they follow all the national regulations on parental consent and on the safety and well-being of minors, both in the sending and the host country. For example, Erasmus+ rules do not define a minimum age of participating pupils, however the sending and hosting country laws may include such limits.

Host families

Accommodating pupils in a host family during their stay abroad is one of the most common ways of providing them with a safe and supportive place to live.

Staying with a host family can be an important part of the learning experience for the pupil. It helps with language learning and immerses them in the local environment and culture. It is also a way to give pupils a head start in building their social contacts in the host country, and can help protect them from loneliness or isolation. The adults in the host family can help the pupil to adapt to the new situation, support them in completing learning assignments and provide valuable information (including feedback on their progress and well-being) to the pupil's mentors and parents.

You are not obliged to accommodate pupils in a host family. It is one of the decisions to be made by the sending and host school, based on the different options available, and several considerations, such as the age of the pupil, how well they speak the language, their previous experience of travelling abroad, the planned length of stay, etc. This topic is further discussed in Chapter 18 on 'Accommodation and host families'.

The Erasmus+ National Agency

In each Erasmus+ country, there is a National Agency in charge of selecting and managing projects funded by Erasmus+. If your school is awarded funding for an Erasmus+ project, the National Agency in your country will give you your grant through a dedicated contract. The agency will act as your main advisor and supervisor for the duration of your project.

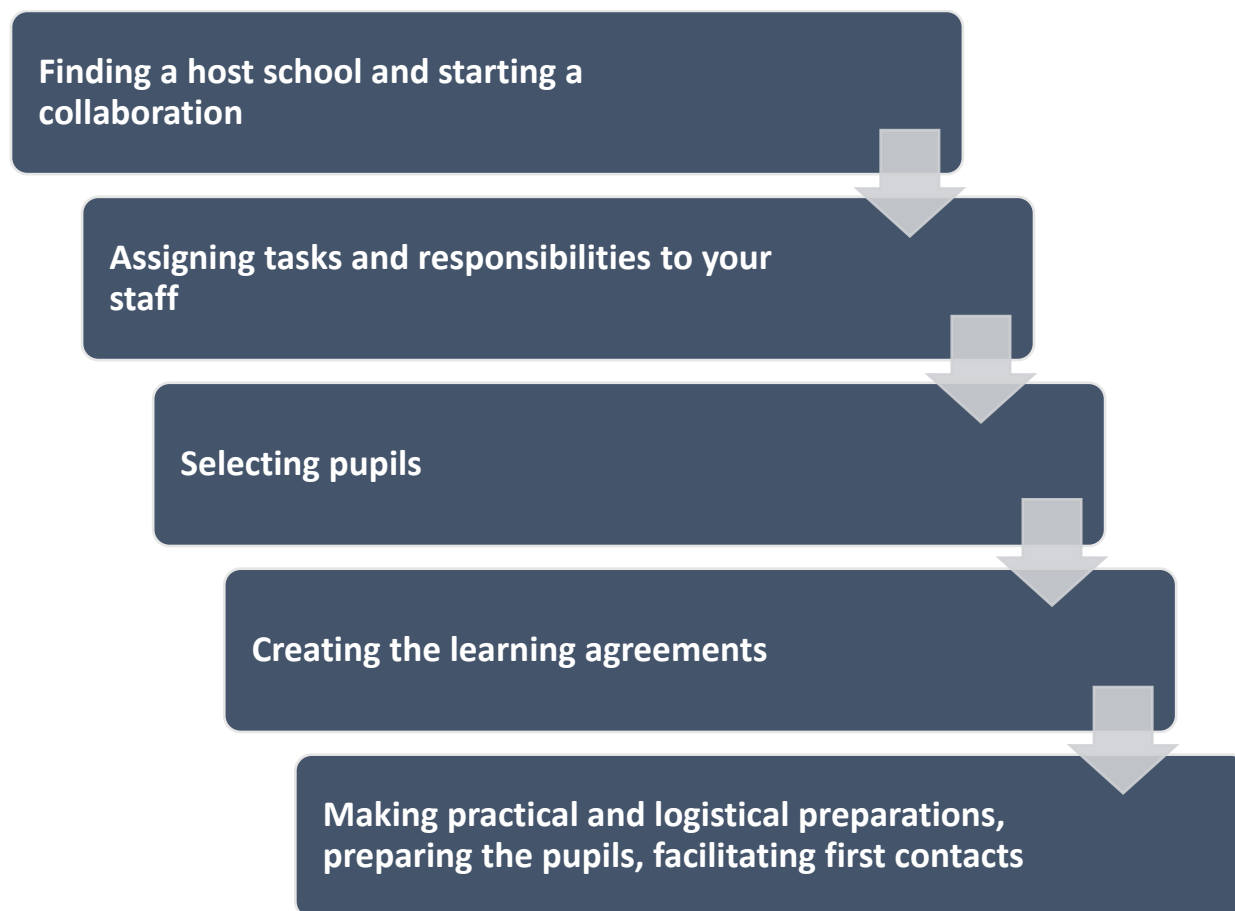
At the end of the project, the National Agency will receive and evaluate your project report, which will include information on all the activities that took place within the scope of the project.

PREPARATION PHASE

In broad terms, during the **preparation phase** you will begin by finding a suitable host school abroad, then you will select pupils to take part in mobility activities, you will develop a learning programme for them, and you will prepare the logistics of their stay abroad. Their arrival at the host country will mark the start of the **implementation phase**.

As the organisation managing the Erasmus+ mobility project and its funds, the sending school plays the main role in the preparation phase. At the start, the sending school is in fact the only actor, the one that will assemble all the others. For this reason, the guidance in this part of the handbook is aimed at the sending school.

Preparation is the most important stage of any mobility activity. Good preparation will make it much easier to carry out the activity and do the follow-up. Investing time and effort at this stage is the recipe for success.



8. FINDING HOST SCHOOLS FOR YOUR PUPILS

Starting the search for suitable host schools will be one of the first steps the sending school needs to take. Finding potential host partners can take time, especially if you are working on your first project and you don't have existing contacts abroad. Therefore, as a sending school, you should start this process as soon as possible, even if your Erasmus+ project is not yet approved.

If looking for partners around Europe appears difficult, you should know that many other schools are also looking for someone to work with. To help you find each other, Erasmus+ provides an online partner finding tool and other possibilities: see the next page for all the details.

Erasmus+ also offers a lot of flexibility when it comes choosing the host partners. Applications for Erasmus+ mobility projects do not require a definitive list of host schools that you plan to work with. This means that as the sending school, you can add or change your host partners at any time during the project.

The number of host partners is also your choice. You can organise all your activities with the same partner school, or you can work with several partner schools. Having fewer partners is usually a good strategy for your first project, to make it easier to manage. As you gain more experience in Erasmus+, you will probably want to start working with more schools and countries. A larger network of partners will increase the quality and diversity of opportunities that you are able to offer your pupils, and it will bring more benefits for your school in terms of inter-institutional learning and exchange of ideas.

Having partners that share some of your own objectives and thematic interests will always make it easier to develop joint ideas and to make good progress on your objectives.

Finding partner schools that have access to Erasmus+ or other funds is an advantage because it makes it possible to set up bilateral or multilateral exchanges. At the same time, there is great value in working with schools that do not yet have funds of their own but are willing to host participants. They may be on their way to becoming Erasmus+ schools themselves and helping them get started in this way is a great investment in building up your Erasmus+ network.

eTwinning

eTwinning is an online community of schools and teachers that offers a variety of tools to work together. It is hosted on the European School Education Platform and is part of the Erasmus+ programme. eTwinning includes opportunities for continuous professional development and possibility to meet potential partners during workshops, seminars and online training modules. It also allows schools to set up joint virtual classrooms.

Teachers who register on eTwinning are verified by a national eTwinning office to make sure the platform is a safe environment populated by real teachers and school staff.

Schools taking part in Erasmus+ projects are strongly encouraged to complement their in-person project activities with an online eTwinning component. eTwinning is useful for finding partners and as a practical tool in all project phases: preparation, implementation and follow-up.

How to find partner schools for your mobility activities?

European School Education Platform (ESEP)

The platform is the online meeting point where you can find like-minded colleagues and build your network of contacts. It includes a dedicated partner finding tool for schools in Erasmus+ projects:

<https://school-education.ec.europa.eu/networking/partner-finding>

Training and Cooperation Activities (TCAs)

TCAs are contact seminars, online events and other partner-finding opportunities organised by Erasmus+ National Agencies. Visit the website of your National Agency regularly to find out about upcoming activities. Europe-wide publication of available TCAs can be found here: <https://salto-et.net>

Upgrade your existing partnerships

If this is not your first project and you have already worked with schools abroad, then organising individual pupil mobility can be an excellent way to bring those existing partnerships to a new level.

Ask colleagues for help

You can ask for advice and contacts from colleagues in other schools in your area that you know have been active in Erasmus+ or another kind of international cooperation.

Contact your school authority

Your local or regional authority may already be involved in other types of cross-border cooperation and their contacts could help you identify potential partner schools.

The Erasmus+ Project Results Platform

This is a repository of all Erasmus+ projects and results. It allows you to search for ongoing projects and accredited organisations:

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects>

9. FORGING A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE SENDING AND THE HOST SCHOOL

Once you have found a potential partner for hosting your pupils, your two organisations will need to invest time and work into getting to know each other's expectations, interests, curricula and governing rules. It is important to share as much information as possible to prepare the content of the mobility activities and to deal with any logistical challenges or administrative procedures that must be followed.

The two schools should first nominate the members of staff responsible for liaising between the schools on these issues, so that regular contact can begin. Agreeing on the key principles for your cooperation and putting them down on paper is a useful way to structure the partnership and clarify the expectations on each side.

You and your partner school will need to agree on a number of different issues. We can divide these into two broad categories: content-related questions (comparing the curricula, agreeing on the expected learning outcomes, monitoring methods, evaluation methods, etc.) and organisational questions, including travel, accommodation, finances, administrative and legal matters).

To ensure that you are covering all these aspects correctly, you should involve staff members with different profiles in the discussions with the host school. For example, you will need teachers to review curriculum requirements, but you will also need the advice and support of your administrative staff. For procedures for recognition of learning outcomes and legal issues (such as data protection), you may also need to seek advice from outside your school, for example from your supervising school authority.

Even though it is not mandatory in Erasmus+, we highly recommend that you draw up a **school-to-school agreement**: a written agreement between two schools that defines the scope and objectives of their planned cooperation, together with the rights and responsibilities of each partner.

Key topics to discuss with your project partners

Content

- Comparing the curricula and grading systems
- Defining the expected learning outcomes
- Monitoring methods
- Evaluation methods

Organisational arrangements

- Travel and accommodation
- Finances
- Administration (e.g. residency, visa, enrolment)
- Legal matters (e.g. parental consent, insurance)

School-to-school agreements – Frequently asked questions

What is a school-to-school agreement?

A school-to-school agreement is a written agreement between two schools that defines the scope and objectives of their planned cooperation, together with the rights and responsibilities of each partner. It is also known as 'inter-institutional agreement' or 'memorandum of understanding'.

What is the purpose of the school-to-school agreement?

The agreement ensures that there is commitment at the level of the schools, independent of any future changes in their leadership or staff. It formalises the partnership, builds trust and makes cooperation predictable and long lasting. It lets you avoid repetitive work, for example by standardising evaluation and recognition procedures that can then be easily added into individual learning agreements for each pupil.

What content should be included?

Content is decided by the two partner schools. It should cover pedagogical and administrative arrangements that apply to all or multiple mobility activities. For example, the agreement can include a comparison of grading systems in the two schools, a list of documents that need to be exchanged for each activity, arrangements for regular contacts etc.

A reference to Erasmus quality standards should always be included in the agreement since the quality standards already define many of the key rights and obligations of the sending and host schools.

When to update the school-to-school agreements?

After you have tried it out in one or more mobility activities, you may wish to update your school-to-school agreement to reflect the lessons learned.

For example, if experience shows that there are some curriculum requirements that you and your host partner can automatically recognise and transfer after the mobility activity, then you can formalise this observation in the school-to-school agreement. That will shorten the procedures you have to perform for each individual pupil in the future.

Is it obligatory?

A school-to-school agreement is not obligatory in Erasmus+. That means that your National Agency will not ask for it as part of obligatory supporting documentation for payment of the grant.

Rather than an obligation, a school-to-school agreement is an instrument of quality assurance and precaution. You do not have to have it, but you probably want to. By fixing the rights and obligations of the two schools, the agreement reduces the risk of things going wrong in your project, and therefore helps you comply with other programme rules.

Is there a template I can use?

Because the school-to-school agreement is not obligatory, there is also no obligatory template. However, recommended European and national templates do exist. You can ask your National Agency for help.

10. SHARING THE ERASMUS+ GRANT BETWEEN THE SENDING AND HOST SCHOOL

As explained in Chapter 4 about the structure of Erasmus+ mobility projects, the sending school is the only one receiving an Erasmus+ grant for mobility activities. However, the host school will certainly bear some of the organisational costs. Therefore, it is necessary for you and your host partner to agree how you will use your Erasmus+ grant to help cover the costs on the hosting side. As with any partnership, a clear and fair agreement on finances is key to long and productive cooperation.

Erasmus+ funding covers the cost of travel, accommodation, food, language learning, and other expenses linked to the mobility activity. Detailed funding rules are set out in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide and you should become familiar with them before starting any activities. If your host partner has no experience in Erasmus+, it is very important to inform them about these rules and conditions.

Among the different costs, Erasmus+ includes a general category called 'organisational support'. It is paid in the form of a fixed amount per pupil. Its purpose is to cover 'any other expenses', i.e. various administrative and miscellaneous costs that are not covered by any of the other standard categories. The Erasmus+ Programme Guide stipulates that the organisational support must be used to cover the organisational expenses of both the sending and the host school. Therefore, the two schools need to agree how the funding will be used.

Various arrangements can be made for sharing organisational support, as well as other parts of the Erasmus+ grant. The sending school can transfer part of the money to the host school for the expenses they incur, or the two schools can agree that some of the expenses on the hosting side are paid directly by the sending school. Erasmus+ does not impose limitations in this regard, however additional national rules may apply.

To avoid discussing sensitive financial issues while the mobility activity is taking place, it is important to tackle them in advance by creating a list of the expected expenses and by agreeing explicitly on who will pay for what. To serve as a clear reference during implementation of the activities, what you agree should be put in writing, either as part of the school-to-school agreement, or in another document of your preference.

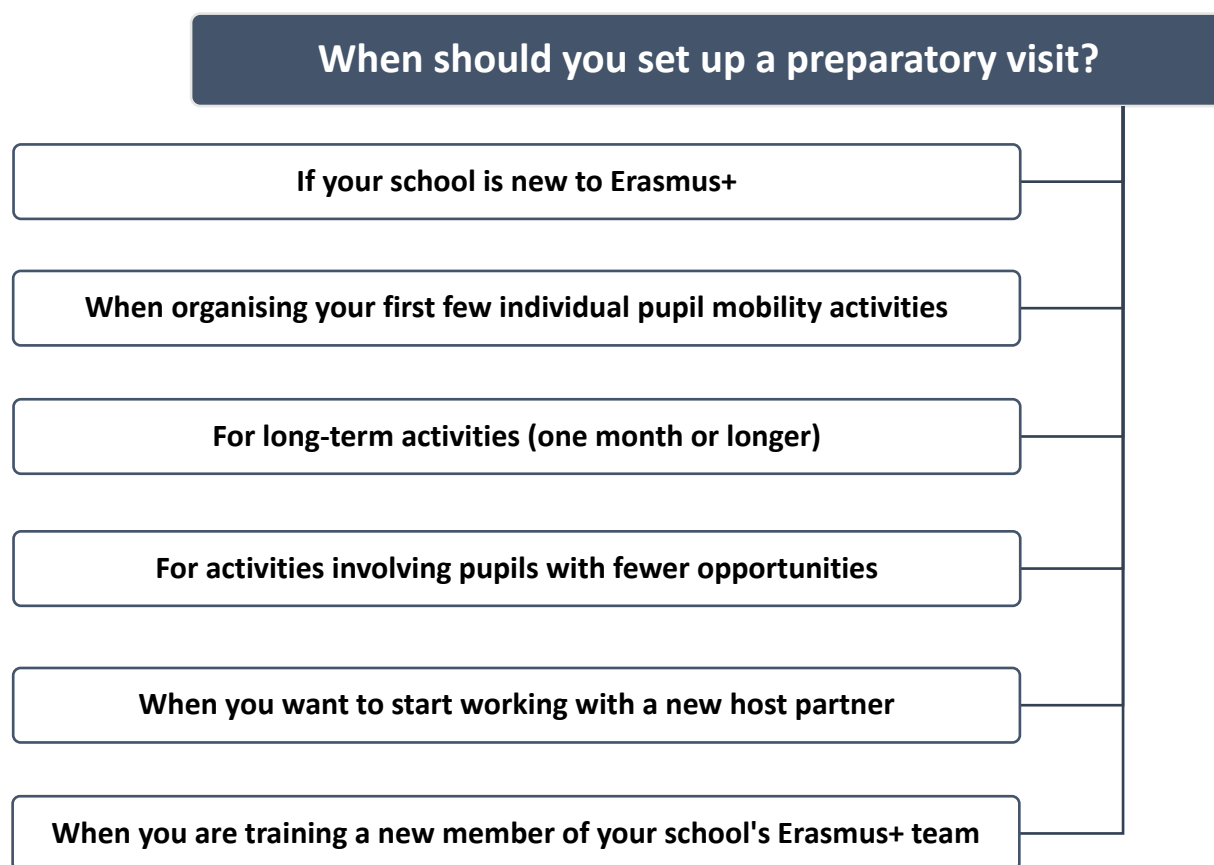
11. PREPARATORY VISITS TO THE HOST SCHOOL

In Erasmus+, sending schools can organise a short preparatory visit to the host school before the mobility activity takes place. Staff from the sending school make the visit so they can finalise plans with their colleagues on the host side and get a first-hand impression of the learning environment where the pupil will spend their mobility activity.

Preparatory visits are not a standard part of every mobility activity. Rather, you should organise one when there is a specific purpose to it.

The graphic below suggests some of the typical situations where a preparatory visit is recommended. However, this list is not exhaustive. The Erasmus+ Programme Guide allows for a preparatory visit whenever it will improve the inclusiveness, scope and quality of the project's mobility activities.

For mobility activities that last at least one month, or which include participants with fewer opportunities⁵, the rules of Erasmus+ offer the possibility of including pupils in a preparatory visit together with their teachers. This early contact with their host school and country can help reassure the pupils, allow them to make first contact with future classmates, and to better understand the practicalities of their stay.



⁵ A broad definition of participants with 'fewer opportunities' is included in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide. If you need detailed information about what this term means in your national context, please consult the website of the National Agency in your country.

12. IDENTIFYING MENTORS AND OTHER RESPONSIBLE PERSONS IN THE SENDING AND HOST SCHOOL

Organising a mobility activity is a team task that involves school leaders (principals), teachers and administrative staff in both the sending and the host school.

The key principle of allocating responsibilities to teachers and other members of staff is that the participating pupils must have more than one adult person that they can ask for help in case of need. The host school will need to set up day-to-day mentorship for the pupil, but the sending school must also remain involved and ensure contact persons are available for the pupil during their mobility activity.

This section lists the main roles that staff play in preparing and carrying out pupil mobility activities. Before assigning specific roles, you should identify all staff members who are available and willing to be involved in Erasmus+ activities in one role or another. That way, you can divide the work in the most efficient way. For best results, it is always better to involve as many members of staff as possible.

School leaders

The school leaders (the principal and other management staff) of the sending school are responsible for the overall implementation of the school's Erasmus+ mobility project. Their role is to supervise how the project is carried out, which means making sure that the Erasmus quality standards are respected and that the implemented mobility activities are contributing to the objectives the school has defined for its participation in Erasmus+.

The school leaders of the sending and host schools are also responsible for creating a firm partnership between the two institutions, and for representing their schools in any administrative procedures that are necessary for the mobility activity to take place.

In the case of accredited projects (see Chapter 2 for an explanation of accredited projects), the school's Erasmus coordinator effectively becomes a part of the project leadership team, even if their formal title does not involve managerial duties.

Mentors

The Erasmus quality standards make it mandatory to have mentors for individual pupil mobility activities. The role of the mentor is defined in the Erasmus quality standards:



Erasmus quality standards

Monitoring and mentoring: where relevant based on the format of the activity, the sending and hosting organisations must identify a mentor or a similar key person who will be following the participant during their stay at the hosting organisation and who will help them achieve the desired learning outcomes. Particular attention should be given to the introduction and integration of the participants at the hosting organisation, and to the monitoring of the learning process.

This definition is broad enough to allow for a variety of different ways of putting mentoring into practice. As a minimum, it is necessary to name at least one mentor at the host school, and one at the sending school (a sort of ‘remote mentor’ who will follow the pupil’s learning progress from back home). At either of the schools, mentoring duties can also be shared between two or more teachers. The practicalities are up to the schools to decide based on their preferred way of working, the number and profile of available members of staff, the pupil’s length of stay, etc.

The mentor at the host school and their counterpart at the sending school should be in regular contact to ensure the best possible learning outcomes and the smooth reintegration of the pupil when they return to the sending school.

The role of the mentors is primarily linked with content: that is the learning aspect of the mobility. ‘Learning’ in this situation should be understood broadly. It includes academic learning, as well as informal learning and personal development. In this sense, a mentor should also be a facilitator who helps the pupil to integrate into the daily routines and the social life of the host school. A mentor is usually a teacher, but staff with other roles (such as specialised pedagogical advisors) can also be mentors or co-mentors if that makes sense in a given situation.

Of course, the key task of mentors at the sending and host schools is to monitor the pupil’s academic progress and make sure that the learning programme is being followed. The mentors are also likely to have a role in the evaluation and recognition procedures at the end of the activity.

Mentoring is therefore a rather demanding task. Potential mentors should be aware that a certain amount of extra work is involved and should only accept this role if they are sure that they are able to give the pupil the necessary time and support. The mentors should have an open-minded personality and be ready to deal with the non-academic aspects of the pupil’s stay in the host school. Most of the mentor’s tasks arise during the pupil’s stay, but important tasks will also be carried out before and after the exchange. Other teachers and staff should be ready to help and advise the mentors on specific tasks, where necessary.

At the level of the two schools, it is very important that the work of mentors and other staff involved be recognised as a part of their workload and in accordance with the applicable national legislation (e.g. through financial compensation, their quota of working hours, performance reviews).



Taking part in exchanges and working on agreements with partner schools has greatly increased my self-confidence as a teacher. Engaging with colleagues from host institutions and other accompanying teachers expanded my professional network. Building these connections led to future collaborations, exchanges of ideas, and opportunities for professional development. Observing and participating in a different educational system gave me valuable insights into teaching methodologies, classroom dynamics, and student-teacher interactions. I learned new approaches that I integrated into my own teaching practice.

Erasmus coordinator, Bursa Anadolu High School, Bursa, Türkiye

Contact persons for administrative matters and emergencies

Apart from mentors, who will deal primarily with the learning and personal development aspects of the mobility activity, the Erasmus quality standards also require that the schools ensure that there are contact persons for other logistical, administrative and practical matters, as well as emergency situations. The Erasmus quality standards state the following requirement:



Erasmus quality standards

Support during the activity: *participants must be able to request and receive support from their hosting and sending organisations at any time during their mobility. Contact persons in both organisations, means of contact, and protocols in case of exceptional circumstances must be defined before the mobility takes place. All participants must be informed about these arrangements.*

It is possible for one staff member to take on more than one type of role or responsibility. However, we strongly recommend that you spread the different tasks between several staff members working together as a team. This will reduce the workload on each person and at the same time provide learning opportunities to more of your staff. As a result, the school as whole will improve its knowledge of how to work with partners in another country, which is an important objective for all Erasmus+ mobility projects. Finally, spreading the tasks between different colleagues will ensure continuity and avoid any problems if someone becomes unavailable.

Accompanying persons

When needed, Erasmus+ provides funds for ‘accompanying persons’: adults that accompany pupils during their mobility activity, or a part of it.

Erasmus+ funds can support the cost of accompanying persons if it is justified in terms of the pupil’s needs and quality of the activities.

In practice, the two most typical types of accompaniment are:

- assistance for pupils with fewer opportunities during the entire duration of the mobility activity (or a large part of it, depending on the pupil’s needs);
- a short stay by the pupil’s mentor from the sending school at the beginning of a longer mobility activity, to help the pupil integrate in the host school.

When using accompanying arrangements, you have the responsibility to use Erasmus+ funds efficiently. Funds spent on accompaniment cannot be used for additional mobility activities, so it is important to have a clear reasoning when setting up such arrangements. You may be asked to explain your budgeting decisions when reporting on your project.

In the context of responsible budgeting, the two cases above should be treated differently.

Pupils with fewer opportunities (e.g. emotional vulnerability, medical disability, or similar) may only be able to take part in Erasmus+ if they are accompanied for the entire duration of the stay, or a large part

of it. In some cases, it can be necessary to hire a professional assistant to act as an accompanying person. Such arrangements can be costly, but they serve the purpose of inclusion and therefore are well justified. Erasmus+ funding rules are designed specifically to support participation of persons with fewer opportunities. 'Inclusion support for participants' is a specific type of grant that can cover any inclusion-related cost at 100% rate. You can request additional funds for this purpose at any time during the project, meaning that even if there is a large cost that needs to be covered, it will not reduce your possibility to offer mobility opportunities to other pupils as well.

In contrast to inclusion, accompaniment as a form of integration support should be used more sparingly. In principle, it should be organised only if there is a clear need for additional supervision or support. Generally, it should be limited to only the first few days of a longer stay. This type of accompaniment should be carefully balanced against the goal of fostering independence and self-confidence.

Whenever possible, accompanying persons should be professionals: mentors, other school staff or specifically hired assistants. Exceptionally, parents can be accompanying persons if they are acting as carers for a pupil with disability or other medical condition where such an approach is recommended by a doctor, psychologist or another specialist.

13. SELECTING PUPILS

The sending school decides on criteria and procedures for selecting pupils who will participate in the school's Erasmus+ mobility activities.

Two main elements to consider are the school's own objectives (e.g., specific target group or age group) and the general principles of Erasmus+. This chapter explains these principles and gives some advice on making your own selection process.

Erasmus+ promotes **inclusion and diversity** in everything that it does. This basic principle is reflected in the Erasmus quality standards:



Erasmus quality standards

Inclusion and diversity: the beneficiary organisations must respect the principles of inclusion and diversity in all aspects of their activities. The beneficiary organisations must ensure fair and equal conditions for all participants.

Whenever possible, the beneficiary organisations should actively engage and involve participants with fewer opportunities in their activities. The beneficiary organisations should make maximum use of the tools and funding provided by the Programme for this purpose.

Selection of participants: participants must be selected through a transparent, fair and inclusive selection procedure.

Publicising and promoting Erasmus+ opportunities in your school

As a matter of transparency and fairness, planned Erasmus+ activities should be announced publicly in the school and on its website.

At the sending school, you should actively promote the mobility opportunities to pupils to whom it may not immediately occur to apply, for example those who are less academically successful or with socio-economic disadvantages. Including participants with fewer opportunities is a key objective of the programme and building this idea into your project from the start will help improve its quality.

Keep in mind that recruiting pupils for stays abroad can be challenging, especially if you are planning to organise longer activities for the first time. To ensure a positive reaction when you inform pupils and parents, you could organise a presentation by former or current participants from your school (or a neighbouring one, if this is your first project). First-hand experiences from peers have the biggest impact on pupils and can do a lot to reassure parents about the safety and benefits of mobility activities.

Key recommendations for the selection process

The selection process can be a sensitive matter because it is likely that due to limited places and funds not all the pupils who are interested in taking part will be given the chance to participate in Erasmus+.

Here are some key recommendations to ensure that the process runs smoothly:

- The selection process and especially the final decision should not be the responsibility of one person, but of several people (a committee).
- The rules of the selection process must be published before the selection starts. That includes obligatory preconditions for participation, exercises or phases of the selection, criteria and scoring (if applicable) that will be used to rank the candidates, documents that candidates must submit with their application.
- You should document the key steps of the process in writing. That includes publication of the announcement, the receipt of applications, assessment of the applications, preparation of the ranking list and the selection decision.
- You must remove any possibility of a conflict of interest. Persons related to candidate pupils cannot take part in the selection. Similarly, whenever a teacher or another staff member is asked for their professional opinion on a pupil, that person should not also be making or contributing to a decision on selecting the same pupil – other teachers or committee members should evaluate the opinion and make the decision. Teachers involved in managing the project are most likely to encounter this situation. It does not mean that they cannot take part in the overall selection process, but they should exclude themselves from assessing candidate pupils for whom they have provided recommendations, character assessments or similar opinions.
- If you can, involve one or more ‘outsiders’ in your selection committee to increase the objectivity of the process. You can involve a person from the host school – this will have a positive side effect of better preparing the host school for receiving your pupils. You can also involve a person from your local school authority, from a neighbouring school, or another external expert with relevant experience. Former Erasmus+ participants can be involved if they are of an appropriate age.
- You can simplify your selection process if you can guarantee that the simpler format won’t affect the equal treatment of applicants. For example, if the funds available are sufficient to cover all the pupils who have applied, then you will only need an assessment of each candidate’s basic ability to participate, rather than a scored ranking list.

Defining the selection criteria

To structure the selection process, you should establish a set of selection criteria - the elements that will be evaluated for each candidate. It is a good idea to combine general criteria (relevant in any context) with specific criteria (relevant to your project). If you expect to have many applications, you can apply the criteria in two stages, with simpler elements assessed first to create a shortlist of applications that will enter the second stage where a more detailed analysis or additional exercises take place. Having such a ‘pre-selection’ stage helps reduce the total workload on your staff.

To arrive to a robust decision, you should choose a diverse set of selection criteria. You should also think about the method of scoring: some criteria are best evaluated with a numerical score, while others are more like preconditions, where the evaluation is a 'yes' or 'no'. When it comes to numerical scores, assigning a different percentage of the total score to different criteria can be used to modify their influence over the outcome.

Overall, you should look for a balance between criteria that acknowledge and reward current performance and those that consider the potential for growth. Pupils with an excellent academic record and good knowledge of foreign languages will likely do very well in a purely performance-based selection. However, you may also receive applications from pupils who are not yet performing to their full potential in their current situation. For them, a mobility experience would be a once in a lifetime chance to break through and grow personally and academically.

Given the emphasis that Erasmus+ puts on inclusion, making sure that participants with different learning needs are given fair consideration and a chance to participate is very important for the quality of your project.

Adapting the selection process to your context

There are many equally valid ways to set up the selection process. You have the possibility to adapt the selection rules to the planned duration of your activities, your project's objectives and structure, the age and profile of the target group of pupils, the host school and country, the number of project participants, the level of interest in the project, etc.

The practical proposals in this chapter are most useful if you will invite a relatively large target population to participate, e.g. all pupils in your school of a certain age. In other situations, some of these suggestions may not be applicable. As with the rest of the handbook, these suggestions should be used creatively and responsibly, but they are not formal requirements.

For example, for some projects the selection can also be made within a smaller group of pupils who were involved in the previous project activities and are therefore familiar with the context. This is acceptable in situations where a sudden increase in the potential number of participants would not fit in with your overall project plans (especially if there are very few spots available). Nevertheless, openness and transparency remain paramount, even for a smaller selection of pupils.

14. SELECTION CRITERIA – PRACTICAL ADVICE

Elements to consider	What should you look for?	How to gather the information and assess it?
Motivation	<p>Candidate pupils who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Show an understanding that the mobility activity means not just exciting personal experiences, but also a lot of work and responsibility. - Demonstrate readiness to face challenges or difficult periods. - Are thinking about what they would like to get out of the mobility activity. 	<p>Use an exercise that requires pupils to autonomously invest their own time and effort.</p> <p>Motivation letters are a ‘classic’ way of doing this, however they are quite standard, predictable and provide limited possibilities to distinguish between applicants.</p> <p>It can be more informative to use an exercise that offers larger variation. For example, the pupils can present their motivation for applying through a video, a presentation, a poster, a performance, etc.</p> <p>You can also combine more than one format, or you can offer multiple options and allow the pupils to select one or two that they prefer. By not making all the decisions for them, you allow the pupils to express themselves creatively and on their own terms, which will in turn give you a better idea of their abilities, affinities, and motivation.</p>
Resourcefulness, adaptability, and resilience to stress	<p>Personal characteristics such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Readiness to ask for help and advice from others. - Ability to deal with change, new situations and breaking of routine. - Capacity to function well outside the known circle of family and friends. - Cooperativeness - ability to work with others. - Ability to deal with stress, pressure, and negative emotions. - Confidence in their own strengths and awareness of possible weaknesses. 	<p>An interview is always a good idea, and especially so for of long-term activities. If there are too many candidates, you can first establish a shortlist and then interview only those candidates.</p> <p>To ensure fairness, it is best to have a structured interview where every pupil is asked the same or a very similar set of questions.</p> <p>Use questions that set a fictional but realistic scenario that could happen during a mobility activity. These are questions such as ‘What would you do in the following situation...’. Such questions do not have a right or wrong answer but are designed rather to give the pupil a chance to show their way of thinking.</p> <p>Apart from the interview, you can also consider the pupil’s involvement in extracurricular activities, such as music, drama, sports, hobby clubs, volunteering etc.</p> <p>To assess elements that are best witnessed in real situations, you can ask input from the pupils’ teachers, sports coaches and other or qualified adults that work with the pupils regularly.</p>
Academic ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A solid overall academic performance with absence of major academic weaknesses or recent issues that could worsen in a more challenging learning environment. - Sufficient ability to learn and use a foreign language (if it is needed) 	<p>Use the pupil’s academic record. To increase the relevance of the assessment, you can define a limited period to be considered and a subset of most relevant subjects.</p> <p>Test the pupils’ language skills in a real-world situation. For example, you can have them conduct a short video call with a teacher (or a pupil) from the host school.</p>
Pupils’ needs and potential for growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balance between past academic performance and the candidates’ needs and potential for growth. - Every pupil should have a chance of being selected, even if they are not already top of their class. 	<p>Ask a professional opinion of one or more teachers who can offer a first-hand insight into the pupil’s abilities, behaviour, learning potential, responsiveness, and habits in the learning setting.</p> <p>You should assess the positive effect that the mobility activity could have on the pupil’s personal and academic development. An Erasmus+ activity can be a life-changing experience for some or just another item in the CV for others. The best projects are those that manage to create a real difference for their participants.</p>
Parents’ support and cooperativeness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The parents (or legal guardians) must agree to their child going to another country, as well as with the topics of the wider project the school is implementing. - The parents need to understand that extra effort may be needed to coordinate between them, the sending school, and the host school during the activity. - They need to show cooperativeness, calmness, patience, and the ability to deal with a reduced level of control. 	<p>A talk with the candidates’ parents should be a part of your selection process, especially for long-term activities. You can limit the workload by inviting only the parents of shortlisted candidates. Use the opportunity to inform the parents that entrance to another country may be subject to specific requirements, such as obligatory vaccinations or visa conditions. Their agreement will be necessary in such cases.</p> <p>Additionally, you can ask a supporting statement from the parents. The statement can have an open format, or you can define a few questions that you wish them to address – for example about their expectations and priorities. Predefining the structure of the supporting statement will make it easier for parents to complete it and it will also make the comparison of different statements simpler and fairer. This step can serve as the basis for the talk with the parents.</p>



The biggest impact was witnessed on our special needs' students. They all come from disadvantaged families, they had never travelled to another country before, and they were quite anxious at the beginning, yet very willing to join in.

We have seen a huge change in their behaviour. They became happier, more curious and willing to try new things, significantly more confident and skilled in everyday things that we take for granted but they would have never experienced otherwise, like navigating through an airport or ordering food by themselves in a foreign country.

**Erasmus coordinator at EEEK Kalamatas,
Special Education Secondary Vocational School, Akovitika, Greece**

Inclusion of pupils with fewer opportunities

Inclusion is one of the overarching priorities of the Erasmus+ programme, important at every step of your project, and especially when selecting participants. To achieve an inclusive selection, you should avoid that one factor, such as academic success, overshadows all the others. There are several mechanisms you can use to prevent this:

- Assign weighting to the different criteria, making sure that none is dominant over the others
- Assess some elements as simple yes/no criteria. For example, you can set a minimum level of language competence instead of grading it on a scale. Setting just a minimum will allow other factors to decide the final ranking of candidates. This approach gives better chances to pupils that do not already excel at foreign languages, but who are highly motivated and could benefit more from practising their language skills abroad.
- Use stratified selection: separate candidates into two or more groups based on their academic performance or another factor that you believe could become overly dominant. Then apply the other criteria to select the top candidates from each group.
- If necessary, use quotas or reserved spots. For example, they can help ensure gender balance or guarantee involvement of participants with fewer opportunities.

Remember that sometimes you may need to make exceptions to certain requirements to improve inclusiveness. This can concern administrative requirements and the practical ways in which information is submitted. For example, parents of pupils coming from a disadvantaged background may not be able to provide a written supporting statement. Think about such possible barriers in advance and make sure to leave space for alternatives where needed.

Finally, keep in mind that Erasmus+ offers some specific instruments to support inclusion: dedicated inclusion support funds, the possibility to ask additional inclusion support funds during the project, funds for accompanying persons, preparatory visits, as well as some exceptions to rules – for example when it comes to minimum duration of stay. You should make these possibilities known in the call for applications to avoid that potential participants decide not to apply out of belief that it would be too difficult or costly for them to participate.

15. DEFINING THE CONTENT AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF MOBILITY ACTIVITIES

Erasmus+ is a programme supporting learning mobility activities: ‘learning’ being the key word. Learning content gives substance and purpose to Erasmus+ mobility activities and makes them different from a simple visit to a foreign country. The requirement to pre-define the expected learning outcomes is therefore included in the Erasmus quality standards:



Erasmus quality standards

Definition of learning outcomes: *the expected learning outcomes of the mobility period must be agreed for each participant or group of participants. The learning outcomes must be agreed between the sending and hosting organisations, as well as the participant (in case of individual activities). The form of the agreement will depend on the type of the activity.*

When managing your Erasmus+ project in the role of the sending school, your most important task will be to collaborate with your hosting partner in order to prepare a useful and realistic learning programme for your pupils.

In order to be useful and realistic, the learning programme will need to be relevant for the pupil’s curriculum requirements at your school. Different European countries have very different education systems with their own structure, curricula, priorities and philosophies. This makes it challenging to organise learning activities across borders. However, despite the differences, much of the essential content learned by pupils of a similar age in different countries is very similar. This helps matters when organising Erasmus+ mobility activities between schools in different countries.

While common points always exist at the broader level, hands-on work is needed to identify the exact similarities and differences between a concrete pair of sending and host schools that wish to organise a pupil mobility activity. This is why within Erasmus+ framework, the two schools are responsible for comparing their curricula and requirements, and agreeing on a learning programme that makes the best use of their similarities and at the same time manages to bridge the differences.

The end goal of this analysis and exchange is to use your conclusions to write down a set of expected learning outcomes: the knowledge, skills, competences and attitudes that each pupil should acquire or improve during their mobility activity.



After participating in mobility activities, the pupils’ language skills and their application in real life improve. We have observed that the range of pupils’ interests is expanding, an understanding of the principles of equality and the importance of inclusion is developing. Importantly, their ability to take responsibility increases. Young people become group leaders who are able to express their opinion, take responsibility, and build collegial relationships.

**School director at Zenta Mauriņa Grobiņa Secondary School,
Grobiņa, Latvia**

16. LEARNING AGREEMENT CONTENT AND TEMPLATE

In Erasmus+, the document that describes the learning outcomes and the way they will be achieved in an individual mobility activity is called the 'learning agreement'. Even if several pupils are taking part in mobility activities with the same host school and at the same time, each pupil must have their own learning agreement as a personal guarantee of quality.⁶

The European Commission provides a standard template for learning agreements in Erasmus+. You can find the newest version of the standard template on your Erasmus+ National Agency's website.

If you are encountering the concept of a learning agreement for the first time, we strongly advise that you download the template. Reading through it will give you a concrete idea of what a learning agreement contains and how to fill it in.

Given the diversity of educational systems and contexts in Europe, modifications or alternatives to the standard learning agreement template can be used when needed. If you think that the standard template is not the best for your situation, you should consult your National Agency to find out about possible solutions.

What is a learning agreement?

Learning agreement is a document describing the expected learning outcomes and the way they will be achieved in an individual mobility activity. It is produced before the mobility activity starts.

A complete learning agreement contains:

- A list and description of the pupil's expected learning outcomes;
- A list of learning activities and tasks that the pupil will complete at the host school;
- Monitoring, mentoring and support arrangements, and the people responsible for the pupil at the sending and host schools;
- The method, criteria and procedures for assessing the achieved learning outcomes after the activity;
- The process for recognising and documenting the achieved learning outcomes;
- The plan for how the pupil will be reintegrated into their sending school after the activity;
- Contextual and practical information, such as start and end dates of the activity, whether there is a virtual component included, and the learning programme the pupil is currently enrolled in at the sending school;
- Signatures of the involved parties.

⁶ The requirement for personal learning agreements is a defining difference between individual and group mobility activities, as explained in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide and referenced earlier in this handbook, under Chapter 5.

17. IMPORTANCE OF THE LEARNING AGREEMENT

The learning agreement is your plan for the mobility activity – it describes what will happen during the activity, who will take on specific tasks, what obligations the pupils have, what the goals are and what will follow after the activity. These matters are too important to be left to chance and goodwill. They need to be discussed in advance and the conclusions written down.

A well-drafted learning agreement is a recipe for success. Preparing it can be a challenging task, but it is well worth investing time in it. For pupils, a good learning agreement will minimise double coursework and the amount of catching up they need to do after the mobility activity. This will in turn ensure that their participation in Erasmus+ is a positive experience, not an additional burden.

A good learning agreement will also lighten the workload of the pupils' mentors and everyone else involved. Once the mobility activity is over, important tasks, such as the evaluation and recognition of learning outcomes, will be made much easier if the learning agreement has been drafted well.

The learning agreement is agreed between three parties: the sending school, the host school, and the pupil with their parents. This is because the agreed learning outcomes must be:

- compatible with the sending school's requirements;
- achievable by the host school, given the content of its curriculum and teaching methods;
- relevant for the pupil's learning needs and appropriate given their abilities.

Because they are written documents and not always easy to produce, there is sometimes a risk that learning agreements are seen as another part of Erasmus+ paperwork. This is not true: while there is admittedly quite some paperwork in Erasmus+, in the case of learning agreements the paper serves only to write down the results of a deeply creative and collaborative process. This process not only prepares the learning experience of pupils, but also represents a rich learning experience for the involved schools.

Fine-tuning the learning agreements by discussing curricula and teaching practices with colleagues from the host country is a valuable hands-on exercise for all the teachers involved, immensely beneficial for them personally and professionally. Over time, these new experiences and skills that your staff will acquire have the power to transform your school from 'just a school' into an '**Erasmus+ school**' in which international projects, contacts and exchanges are part of the school's identity and day-to-day life.

During the preparation of the learning agreement, discussions between the two schools, the pupil and their parents serve to generate trust, mutual understanding and realistic expectations. Mentors from the host school will become familiar with the pupil's needs during this part of the preparation, and getting parents involved will give them an understanding of the rules and the limitations that the sending and host school must respect. For school principals, these discussions will clarify what sort of responsibilities they are taking on and what they must pay close attention to. In this sense, the writing process is as important as the resulting document.

By applying for an Erasmus+ project, you have taken the initiative and demonstrated your motivation to provide excellent education for your pupils. Careful preparation of the learning agreement is at the heart of that. **In many ways, a learning agreement is an embodiment of the Erasmus+ programme: created through cooperation of educators from different countries, bridging over differences in order to provide the best possible education for their pupils.**

18. HOW TO PREPARE A LEARNING AGREEMENT – PRACTICAL ADVICE

Managing the drafting process

The sending school must lead the drafting of the learning agreement

The sending school is the owner of the project and the one responsible for the Erasmus+ funds. If your host partner is more experienced, this can make the process easier, but as the sending school you should keep in mind that you have the final responsibility for the outcome of the mobility activities in your project.

Choose mentors that are up to the task and trust them

The mentors at the sending and the host school should take the lead in determining the content of the activities for the pupil they will supervise. Make sure that they feel empowered, supported and recognised for their work. Their involvement at this stage will guarantee that they are able to effectively perform their monitoring and mentoring tasks, and that they have the confidence to modify the plan set out in the learning agreement, if it becomes necessary or beneficial during implementation.

Involve subject teachers

Involvement of subject teachers is necessary to create a realistic learning agreement and to avoid duplicating coursework for the pupils.

As a minimum, subject teachers need to provide a list of requirements (e.g. exams, essays, projects) necessary to complete their subject. These requirements must be written down, so that they can be revisited later when the pupil is back from their mobility activity.

Subject teachers can work directly with their counterparts in the host school to prepare content and tasks in their area of competence. As experts in their subjects, they are best placed to analyse similarities and differences between the two schools' curricula. The result of their work can then be integrated into the learning agreement by the mentors.

Subject teachers can also act as critical reviewers of the draft learning agreement, helping mentors to get the details right.

Having more teachers on board from this early stage will make evaluation and recognition stage easier after the mobility activity.

At school level, involving a wider team of teachers means that the benefits of the Erasmus+ project are more likely to be felt throughout the school – a key aspect for the overall success of your project.

Be careful to keep the learning requirements realistic and balanced

Apart from the learning requirements, during their stay abroad pupils will need to face many challenges such as the new language, new classmates, new surroundings, homesickness, etc.

In the learning agreement, you should deliberately leave space and time for resting, as well as informal, extracurricular, social and leisure activities to help pupils integrate and benefit at a personal level.

Defining the learning content

Gather background information before you start

Before starting to draft the text, you should organise exchanges between staff members from the sending and the host school to determine the key features of the curricula, clear compatibilities and incompatibilities, typical evaluation methods, etc.

Your host partner will always be your first reference point and most reliable source of information in the process of creating the learning agreement.

Integrate project work, mobility journal or similar assignments

Including a project, mobility journal, research assignment, thematic presentation, essay or other similarly concrete tasks in the pupil's learning programme can improve the quality of the activity in many ways:

- by supporting the pupil's acquisition of skills and competences;
- by filling gaps in the pupil's school schedule;
- by creating materials the pupil can use to present their experience when they return to the sending school;
- by connecting your project's different activities via a common topic;
- by allowing the pupil to 'carry back' the work and have it recognised for requirements at the sending school.

Writing a mobility journal is one of the most common tasks given to pupils in mobility activities because it allows them to better process the intensive and numerous events happening during their stay. The journal can be started before the activity and extended after it in order to cover the full process, including the impact after the activity.

Be careful that any such assignments do not force the pupil to spend too much time alone. Collaborative tasks can help the pupil integrate socially and improve their language skills.

Think beyond formal content of school subjects

Make sure that you give appropriate value to the various forms of informal and non-formal learning that the pupils will surely experience during their stay. These should be included in the learning agreement and recognised as part of the learning outcomes.

Identify and address requirement gaps

Addressing all of the sending country's curriculum requirements during the mobility activity may prove to be impossible in practice. It is important to identify such gaps in advance and to prepare strategies to bridge them.

While at the host school, the pupil may need to be working in parallel to meet key requirements of the sending school. This approach is acceptable provided that the amount of extra work is reasonable, the pupil has the support of their mentors and teachers from both schools, and the extra workload is included in the learning agreement.

Getting advice and support

Use the experience and expertise of your colleagues

Other schools in your area may have already implemented Erasmus+ projects and colleagues there could be a valuable source of advice for your own work.

You can also look for host partners with more experience than your own, in order to benefit from their knowledge.

Your local, regional and national school authorities may be a good source of advice and guidance on curriculum or administrative questions that might arise during the drafting process.

Use the resources of your National Agency

Explore the website of your National Agency or send them a question to find out if they are organising workshops for preparation of learning agreements. They may also have training materials and example agreements that can help you get started.

Use European frameworks and information

Various EU frameworks have been put together bearing in mind that education systems differ from one country to another, so they can be very useful in the Erasmus+ context.

Here are some sources that we recommend:

- [European Framework for Key Competences](#)
- [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#)
- [Eurydice](#) (information about education systems in Europe)

Reusing parts of previous learning agreements is acceptable, but must not reduce quality

If this is not your first mobility activity, you can reuse parts of previous learning agreements as long as you respect the quality standards of Erasmus+. It makes sense to use a tried and tested piece of work when the context is similar.

However, do not forget that the process of creating a learning agreement is important, not just the end result. Preparation of the learning agreement includes comparative analysis and self-reflection that ensure impact and good results for both the pupil and your school. These steps should never be skipped.

Take seriously the Erasmus+ requirement that there must be a personal learning agreement for each pupil. That does not mean starting from scratch each time. However, even if your previous agreement has been excellent, there is always something to be adapted or fine-tuned. In all cases, the content needs to be talked over between the involved pupil, parents and mentors.

A learning agreement should be specific and highly operational. If it is too generic, it will be difficult to put its provisions into action. Vague, copy-pasted learning agreement provisions that are not tailored to your school's or pupil's circumstances can lead to problems during and after the mobility activity, making you waste time instead of saving it.

Other tips

Pupils should be familiar and comfortable with their learning agreement

Involve the pupils in the preparation of the learning agreement. Even if their influence on the agreement's content is limited, they should still be able to express their ideas and concerns. This is part of a pedagogical strategy aimed at increasing their feeling of ownership and confidence. Having clear ideas of what they will do and learn during their stay abroad will mentally prepare the pupils for the obligations they will have.

Reflect on the possibility that some or all of the planned learning outcomes might not be achieved

Mobility activities demand a lot of both the pupil and the two schools involved. You need to be prepared for the possibility that sometimes these demands are too much, despite the best efforts of everyone involved.

For example, the pupil can experience an unexpectedly strong negative emotional reaction to being separated from their parents. The language barrier may prove too much for the pupil to handle on a daily basis. In some cases, these issues will result in an early return to the sending school. In others, the mobility activity will be completed, but not all planned learning outcomes will be achieved.

You should reflect on these possible situations when putting the learning agreement together. Mentors and parents need to be mentally prepared to recognise and accept when things are not going according to the plan. Discussing this possibility in advance will help everyone accept it as a possibility, which will in turn make it easier for them to react appropriately if issues arise.

Don't be afraid to change the plan

Planning is important, but so are flexibility and adaptability. In the real world, not everything goes as planned.

The plan in the learning agreement can and should be modified if new and better learning opportunities arise, or if some aspects prove too difficult to implement. These are not issues, but normal situations. Good project management adapting to changing circumstances and new information.

Besides, the most creative ideas will often appear once the activity has already started. The learning agreement should guide implementation, but it must not get in the way of improving it.

In terms of formalities, most changes can be documented at the end of the mobility activity when you will produce a final document to certify the pupil's achievements. If you make major changes to the initial plan, you can consider creating a new version of the learning agreement. In either case, it is important to make sure that all parties agree with the changes.

Use simple language and be specific

The learning agreement's content needs to be operational in order to be useful. The language used in it should be straightforward, focusing on specific goals the pupil can understand. Straightforward, clear and concise language will also make the mentors' and teachers' job easier, and simplify the evaluation process after the mobility activity.

19. INSURANCE, SAFETY OF MINORS AND OTHER LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Apart from preparing the pupils, the sending and the host school will need to collaborate to set up all the logistical, practical and legal aspects.

The Erasmus quality standards define the following requirements:



Erasmus quality standards

Practical arrangements: *the beneficiary organisations must ensure the quality of practical and logistic arrangements (travel, accommodation, visa applications, social security, etc.). If these tasks are delegated to the participant or a service provider, the beneficiary organisation will remain ultimately responsible for verifying their provision and quality.*

Health, safety and respect of applicable regulation: *all activities must be organised with a high standard of safety and protection for involved participants and must respect all applicable regulation (for example regarding parental consent, minimum age of participants, etc.). The beneficiary organisations must ensure that their participants have appropriate insurance coverage, as defined by the general rules of the Programme and the applicable regulation.*

As the sending school, you should be aware that the final responsibility for fulfilling these requirements lies with you in all cases, even if the practicalities are handled by the host school or a service provider. Your job is to act as a quality controller for everyone else involved in the project. If you delegate any tasks, you should think about how you are going to supervise the quality of implementation, especially when it comes to safety and well-being of your pupils.

National laws on the safety of minors differ from country to country and may include stringent restrictions or rules. The safety of minors is not part of the EU's legal competences, so there is no Europe-wide common legal framework that could be directly applied to Erasmus+ activities. This also means that the Erasmus+ programme does not have any exceptional legal status in the national laws of EU countries. It is therefore imperative for you to research and know very well your legal obligations when working with minors.

Schools deal with children and minors every day, so your school will already have a certain level of competence in this area. Therefore, as a first step in mapping the applicable rules, you can ask advice of your most experienced colleagues. Of course, a learning mobility activity will differ from the usual school trips or similar activities, so you should in any case review the written regulations.

You will be collecting and working with personal data while working on Erasmus+ activities, so this is another legal topic to have in mind. For these and other legal aspects, you may want to ask advice and guidance of your supervising authority, and get information from any other schools in your area that have completed Erasmus+ activities.

Insurance

All pupils taking part in individual learning mobility activities must be insured during their stay abroad.

You should consider the following types of coverage:

- travel insurance (including damage to or loss of luggage)
- third party liability
- health insurance
- accidents, serious illness and life insurance (including permanent or temporary incapacity and repatriation)

Some of these elements may be covered by an existing insurance policy belonging to the sending school, the hosting school or the pupil. Therefore, you should first identify existing insurance policies that might be applicable. Next, you can then look for options to cover the types of insurance that are not already accounted for.

When it comes to health insurance, you should get yourself well informed about the [European Health Insurance Card \(EHIC\)](#) which allows EU citizens to use their home country's health insurance in other EU countries.

Make sure that all your pupils have their EHIC card when departing and include information about the card in their pre-departure info pack. Any details that you can include about the procedures to submit potential claims (where to submit, which documentation to prepare, etc.) will be especially useful to the pupil, their mentors and parents.



20. ACCOMMODATION AND HOST FAMILIES

In terms of logistics of pupil mobility activities, accommodation is one of the most important choices to be made, as it will have a big impact on the pupil's personal comfort and possibilities to socialise during their stay in the host country.

You should agree on type of accommodation with your host school partner well in advance. The details of the accommodation must be known to the pupil and their parents before departure.

Your two schools should also agree how accommodation costs and other daily expenses (such as food and transport from accommodation to school) will be covered. The role of the host school will be to check the different accommodation options and prepare other logistic and administrative details in the host country. On the other hand, as the receiver of the Erasmus+ grant, the sending school will be the one taking responsibility for finances (see also 'Dealing with the organisational costs of mobility activities').

Depending on the options available to the host school and the agreement made with the sending school, accommodation can be organised at a dormitory, a commercial provider (hotel, hostel or rental accommodation) or in a host family. The duration of the mobility activity determines a lot in this regard. Accommodating pupils in a hotel may be a practical solution for relatively short stays, while school dormitories and host families are generally a better option for longer stays as they make for better integration. For pupils, being hosted by a family can help them get more out of their experience by making it more immersive.

If you decide to work with host families, the process of finding suitable families should be led by the host school, based on instructions from the sending school on the needed requirements and the profile of the pupils who will be participating. Preliminary recruitment of host families should start in parallel with the selection of pupils, and then be finalised by matching the selected pupils with one of the available host families. In the next pages you will find some practical advice on how to recruit and work with host families.



It is very important to say that Erasmus+ experience transforms not only the participating pupils, but also the parents and siblings. Hosting a pupil from Germany at our home for three months has been a wonderful adventure that we are grateful for and would recommend to others. A very strong family bond has been created between us and our exchange pupil, with a lot of affection, understanding and empathy. In the same way, the German family has welcomed our child into their home in a wonderful way. We are very proud to have made the decision to participate in this fantastic project.

***Mother of a pupil from IES Las Maretas, Lanzarote, Spain
in exchange with Hebbelschule Kiel, Germany***

21. WORKING WITH HOST FAMILIES – PRACTICAL ADVICE

Start looking for host families well in advance	As soon as you have agreed with the host school that accommodation will be provided by host families, you should ask the host school to make announcements looking for families willing to volunteer to host pupils.
Establish transparent requirements and checks	<p>To satisfy safety regulations and reassure the pupil's parents, the vetting process for host families must be strict and sufficiently detailed.</p> <p>The rules on what type of documentation and questions you are allowed to ask (or must ask) the candidate families are defined at national level. If you are uncertain, the best is to ask legal advice locally. Your National Agency can let you know if other schools in your country or region are implementing similar activities and if they would be able to advise you about verified practices.</p> <p>If the national regulation permits it, you can ask host families to show specific proof, e.g. recent criminal records of household members.</p> <p>All such requirements and checks should be indicated in the call for volunteer host families. The first point of the application to host should be the applicant family's explicit agreement to the conditions you have defined.</p>
Check the accommodation conditions	<p>Staff from the hosting and/or sending school should visit the potential host family's home to confirm that it is suitable for the pupil.</p> <p>The pupil should have their own room, or at most share a room with a child of a similar age (and usually the same gender, especially if the pupil or their parents request it).</p>
Assess the motivation of the host family and explain the importance of their role	<p>Apart from formal requirements, the host families should be aware of their role in helping the pupil staying with them to integrate and learn. They need to be ready to treat the pupil as they would wish their own child to be treated in another home.</p> <p>During the selection process, the host school should dedicate time to briefing the candidate families in detail about these responsibilities and expectations.</p> <p>The selection process should include an interview with the adult members of the host family to assess their motivation and ability to play this role. To make it easier for all household members to attend, the interview can take place at their home.</p>
Classmates' families are an optimal choice	Whenever possible, candidate host families should be the families of mobile pupils' future classmates at the host school. This will help the coming pupils with orientation and integration in the host country and school.

Arrange two-way exchanges if possible	<p>If two schools are arranging pupil exchanges with each other, the best accommodation arrangement is usually to make ‘pairs’ or ‘tandems’ of pupils who will stay with each other’s families.</p> <p>To facilitate this approach, you can define that agreement to host a pupil from the partner school is one of the selection criteria for your own pupils.</p> <p>If you decide to implement such rule, stay mindful of its implications in terms of inclusion. You need to leave space for exceptions to ensure that pupils with fewer opportunities are not excluded.</p>
Pre-select more families than the number of mobile pupils and keep back-ups	<p>Selecting a larger pool of potential host families will allow for better matching of pupils to families. It will also let you identify back-ups if any of the host families withdraw, if a pupil needs to change host family, or if the number of pupils going to the host school increases.</p>
Be the matchmaker	<p>Once the final list of pupils and host families is defined, you should think about what the best matches are. The matching should be deliberate, not decided by chance.</p> <p>If there are existing connections between any of the pupils and the host families (e.g. a friendship formed in previous activities), you can use them for matching. If there are no such obvious choices, you can optimise matches based the age of the host family’s own children or host family members’ language competences. You can also use short questionnaires to identify common interests between pairs of pupils.</p>
Facilitate first contact	<p>The pupil, their parents and the host family should meet online before the activity starts. The sending and host schools should help with this step and offer advice on what sort of information to exchange (e.g. the pupil’s and the host family’s typical routines, dietary habits or special requirements, pets, the clothing needed in the host country, etc.). Talking about and jointly establishing basic house rules can be very useful to know in advance if there are any cultural differences to be aware and respectful of.</p>
Inform host families about plans for emergencies	<p>The role of host families in unexpected situations is very important. The host family should therefore be familiar with and if relevant contribute to the preparation of plans for emergencies, as explained in the handbook chapter on ‘Exceptional circumstances and emergencies during the mobility activity’.</p>
Apply fair and transparent financial arrangements	<p>As a principle, host families’ participation is voluntary and they should not make a profit from hosting pupils.</p> <p>At the same time, an appropriate allowance for food and other daily expenses can be provided and specific bills can be covered from the project grant to avoid disproportional costs for the host family.</p> <p>The project grant can also be used to give the pupil an appropriate amount of pocket money that has been agreed with their parents.</p>

22. PREPARING PUPILS BEFORE DEPARTURE

For many pupils their Erasmus+ experience will be the first time they spend an extended period of time abroad, the first time away from their parents, the first time they go about their daily life communicating in another language, and the first time for many other things. Giving them a comprehensive preparation before departure will help them cope with these new situations.

The Erasmus quality standards set out the following principles for pre-departure preparation:



Erasmus quality standards

Preparation: *participants must receive appropriate preparation in terms of practical, professional and cultural aspects of their stay in the host country. The preparation should be organised in collaboration with the hosting organisation (and the hosting families, where relevant).*

Practical and cultural preparation is essential for pupils (while professional preparation is more relevant for staff mobility activities to which the same standards apply).

Preparation includes providing information and arranging first contacts between participants, mentors and other people involved in the mobility activity on the sending and hosting sides.

The sending school should take the lead on this by structuring the preparation arrangements, making sure they are well adapted to the pupil's age, the host country, the duration of their stay, planned monitoring arrangements, etc.

Together with the pupil's parents, the sending school should prepare and share with the host school relevant information from the pupil's selection process (academic performance, language competences, motivation), as well as necessary medical information (e.g. medication, allergies, dietary restrictions) and other personal needs or preferences (e.g. diet choices). It is a good idea to **get the pupil involved**: they can prepare their own introduction in written or video form talking about topics such as their hobbies, habits, hopes or fears about the mobility activity.

As highlighted in the handbook chapters about learning agreements, an especially important part of preparation is reading through the **learning agreement** together with the pupil to make sure they understand the rules, as well as their rights and obligations during their stay at the host school.

The role of the host school is to share as much information as possible about the destination and to facilitate first contacts with key people in the host country. By being involved in pre-departure preparations, the staff at the host school will themselves be better informed and able to prepare for pupils' arrival.

The pupils can also be involved by **researching their host country and city** to prepare their own info pack or give a presentation to their class before leaving. This kind of hands-on approach is more effective than asking the pupil to memorise information that has already been put together by someone else.

Practical and cultural preparation

A **digital info pack** with information needed for practical and cultural preparation should be available to the pupil and their parents in a digital form that they can reference as needed.

As a minimum, practical and cultural preparation should include information about:

- the host school itself (name, location, type of programmes it offers, age of pupils in the school)
- the host family, if there is one (members of the family, information about the space the pupil will use, food and other habits, house rules, pets, etc.)
- the essential features of the host country's education system (e.g. grading system, names of subjects, type of examinations) and how they compare to those of the sending country
- travel arrangements
- accommodation
- the pupil's school schedule
- the practicalities of the daily commute to school
- national holidays and school holidays (if relevant during the pupil's stay)
- essential services that the pupils will need, such as internet access, canteens, student offices, the library, etc.
- social customs in the host country and city (e.g. typical foods)
- climate and clothing that may be needed during the stay.

The need for cultural preparation should not be underestimated, even in the case of countries that are geographically very close to each other and have similar cultures. The pupil will not be visiting the host country as a tourist. Rather, they will need to integrate into and complete tasks in the host country's education system – a specific environment with a culture of its own. Above all, the pupil needs to understand that what they consider to be normal and obvious at home may be different in the other country, school or host family.

Pre-departure training

Structured pre-departure training is an obligatory part of preparation for individual pupil mobility activities longer than a month.

The exact form obligatory pre-departure training takes differs from country to country. To receive more information, you should contact your National Agency as soon as you know that you will be organising long-term pupil mobility.

If needed, Erasmus+ funds can be used to cover the cost of travel from your school to the pre-departure training.

Personal and emotional preparation

Apart from factual information, pupils leaving their school and home country to do a mobility activity need reassurance and a sense of connection with the place they are going to. This is why preparation of every mobility activity should include contacts between the pupil and people in the host country, including their mentors, teachers, peers and the host family (if this is how they will be accommodated).

Online tools such as eTwinning can be used for this purpose. If appropriate for the project, the pupil's classmates can take part in joint virtual activities with their future classmates on the hosting side.

Parents, teachers and other staff members (e.g. the school psychologist) should help prepare pupils by discussing positive and negative feelings they may experience before departure and during their stay abroad. Pupils should understand that feelings of homesickness, insecurity and other emotional responses are normal and expected. Above all, they should be aware that talking about negative feelings is not a problem, and that asking for help or advice during their stay abroad is the correct and responsible thing to do whenever they feel uneasy about their academic or personal situation.

Linguistic preparation

For pupils staying in a country where a different language is used to the ones they are fluent in, linguistic preparation (and continuous support during their stay) is crucial.

Your own and the host school's staff will surely be your best support when it comes to linguistic preparation (and language teachers in particular).

In addition, Erasmus+ also provides two kinds of linguistic support: the free Online Language Support (OLS) platform, as well as dedicated funds. Whether you will have access to one or both forms of support will depend on the format of the activity and the language and level needed: for detailed rules, you should consult the Erasmus+ Programme Guide and the Online Language Support platform itself. If support includes funding, you can use it to purchase additional language learning materials and services.

Regardless of the format, language learning should be guided and supervised. As with other forms of preparation, eTwinning or other online tools can enable the pupil to take part in learning activities with their future classmates on the hosting side. This is an excellent way to start their linguistic and social integration at the same time. Tandem learning with a 'buddy' on the hosting side (e.g. from their host family, if there is one) is another way to enrich the preparation phase and make the pupil's arrival smoother.



Erasmus quality standards

Linguistic support: *the beneficiary organisation must ensure appropriate language training, adapted to the personal and occupational needs of the participants. Where appropriate, the beneficiary organisation should make maximum use of the specific tools and funding provided by the Programme for this purpose.*

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

The implementation phase starts once the pupil has arrived in the host country. It covers the period during which the pupil is staying and learning abroad.

From a project management perspective, the most important task in this phase for the sending school is to stay up to date with developments at the host school, seeking information regularly and proactively. The sending school must also always be available for the pupil and the host school when needed, especially if any unexpected event occurs.



23. INTRODUCING THE PUPIL TO THE HOST COUNTRY AND THE HOST SCHOOL

The pupil's journey to the host country should be organised in a way that makes the start of their mobility experience comfortable and reassuring.

Representative(s) of the host school should greet the pupil on arrival, so that the process of familiarisation can start straightaway. This is best done by the pupil's mentor. If the pupil is travelling alone, a person from the host school should bring them safely to their accommodation and explain how they will start the next day. If a host family is involved, they should also be present on the pupil's arrival to help with these first steps. Arriving on a weekend can be a good way of giving the pupil enough time to settle in.

You should build in an **adjustment period** into the schedule of the activity. The first days (and even weeks, in case of longer activities) will be an intense period for the pupil, with everything being new and no routines to rely on. The schedule for this initial period needs to include sufficient free time and rest opportunities.

During the first day at the host school, the pupil's mentor should show them around the school premises, introduce them to teachers and other pupils, and tell them where key facilities are (lockers, canteens, sports areas, the library, etc.). The mentor is responsible for helping the pupil integrate into the new school system and helping them resolve any practical problems during their stay. The host school can choose one or a few of their own pupils to be the visiting pupil's '**peer guides**'. This can help 'break the ice' and smoothly start the pupil's social integration, so they don't feel isolated during the crucial first days of their stay.



I would choose to go abroad again. You learn so much about culture and people, and your horizons are definitely broadened. Sometimes it takes a lot of courage to go somewhere alone or to just talk to strangers out of nowhere, but it's worth it! Most of the time, people aren't that different from you, you get to know their way of life, and I was able to take away new ideas from it.

***A pupil from Adolf-Schmitthenner-Gymnasium, Neckarbischofsheim, Germany
in exchange with Verkmenntaskóli Austurlands, Neskaupstaður, Iceland***

24. SUPPORT AND MONITORING DURING THE ACTIVITY

For the pupil's well-being and learning success, it is important that they feel supported during their stay abroad despite being away from their family and familiar environment. The sending and host school's responsibility is to monitor not only the pupil's learning progress, but also their emotional well-being and social integration at the host school.

The Erasmus quality standards identify the following requirements in this regard:



Erasmus quality standards

Support during the activity: *participants must be able to request and receive support from their hosting and sending organisations at any time during their mobility. Contact persons in both organisations, means of contact, and protocols in case of exceptional circumstances must be defined before the mobility takes place. All participants must be informed about these arrangements.*

Monitoring and mentoring: *where relevant based on the format of the activity, the sending and hosting organisations must identify a mentor or a similar key person who will be following the participant during their stay at the hosting organisation and who will help them achieve the desired learning outcomes. Particular attention should be given to the introduction and integration of the participants at the hosting organisation, and to the monitoring of the learning process.*

As the quality standards state, the first step is to make sure that the pupil knows who their mentors at both schools are, who their emergency contacts are and who else they can talk to if the mentors are not available. Secondly, it is important to understand that monitoring and mentoring are proactive tasks and that they should be planned and structured.

The learning agreement includes a paragraph on monitoring, mentoring and support arrangements. In this section of the agreement, you should define a **schedule for regular contact** between the pupil and the sending school, as well as between the two mentors and the pupil's parents. Typically, these exchanges will take place via video calls.

Regular contact between the pupil and their mentor back at the sending school is both a way to monitor the pupil's learning progress and to offer them an opportunity to speak to someone outside the host school in case there are problems the pupil does not feel comfortable discussing with their mentor there.

At the host school, the pupil's schedule should provide plenty of occasions for exchanges with their mentor there, so that the mentor has sufficient opportunities to assess their progress and personal situation. The mentor also keeps track of the pupil's attendance, grades and other results (as set out in the learning agreement), and their behaviour in terms of the host school's code of conduct.

The support the pupil might need can vary depending on the hurdles they face: difficulties using the local language, hard times integrating into their new class, difficulties with a particular subject, accommodation-related issues, problematic behaviour such as absenteeism, etc. The mentor's task is to advise the pupil and facilitate the resolution of problems by informing and coordinating fellow teachers

and other school staff. The mentor also assesses when involvement of the sending school and the pupil's parents is needed.

Throughout the activity, the pupil's mentors need to pay attention to the pupil's stress levels to avoid that they get overwhelmed with too many activities and obligations all at once. If it becomes clear that too many activities or tasks have been planned, then the pupil's workload needs to be reduced even if it means they don't achieve all the learning outcomes initially planned. **The pupil's well-being is always the top priority.**

During longer stays, pupils will probably have tasks to complete for the sending school. Such tasks should be introduced gradually following a calmer initial period of adjustment. Again, the mentors should be the ones to initiate a re-planning of certain tasks for after the mobility activity if it becomes obvious that too much has been initially planned.

The benefits of a learning mobility are generated through **immersion** in another country, so it is important that the pupil does not spend too much of their time abroad working on tasks linked to their sending school. The same applies for practices such as online tutoring which should be avoided during the mobility period because they reduce precious informal **learning opportunities at the destination.**

Information exchange between the host and the sending school mentors and the pupil's parents is crucial during the entire implementation phase. Each of the three parties is can monitor the pupil's progress from a different perspective and can help the others fulfil their role better.

Finally, if the sending and the host school have agreed to accommodate the pupil in a host family, this arrangement will play a major role in making the pupil's stay a success. The host family is in a unique position to ease the pupil's transition to the local culture and language in an informal and relaxed way. At the same time, the host parents need to exercise a healthy amount of parental supervision and care. Of course, the host family also must be in regular contact with the pupil's parents and mentors.

25. INTEGRATION STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES TO COMPLEMENT THE LEARNING PROCESS

Successful integration into social life at the host school is important for the pupil's overall mobility experience and a major determinant of the achievement of the desired learning outcomes. Particularly during long-term stays, integration is essential for the success of the entire mobility activity.

A mobility activity is a special situation, where the sending and the host school need to think about more than their usual tasks of providing learning content. For example, it is important to consider how to avoid a situation in which pupils feel isolated during weekends or holidays – something that is not normally a school's task, but it becomes one during an Erasmus+ activity.

That said, integration is a social process that can be facilitated, but not pre-programmed. The goal is to strike a balance between creating opportunities for the pupil to integrate socially while allowing them to remain in control of their time and experiences. The pupil's personality, identity and preferences need to be respected. They must not feel forced to participate in activities they are not comfortable participating in or that don't interest them, nor should they feel constantly supervised or directed.

26. INTEGRATION STRATEGIES – PRACTICAL ADVICE

Respect the pupil's personality	Not all people are the same – different pupils will respond better to different kinds of activities and interactions. Make sure to fit your ideas to the pupils, rather than trying to make the pupils adapt to your ideas or one-size-fits-all solutions. You should talk to each pupil about their interests, preferences and motivation in order to come up with ideas that fit best with their character and needs.
Use extracurricular and social activities	Before the mobility activity starts, the host school should give the pupil a list of activities at or around the school, such as sports, theatre or debating groups, hobby clubs, etc. Receiving the information in advance, makes it more likely that the pupil can make a good choice and fit the activity in their schedule.
Create a buddy system	One or a few pupils at the host school can volunteer to be the visiting pupil's designated 'buddies' who will show them around, explain the details of daily life at the school, introduce them to other pupils and keep them company, especially during the first days of the activity.
Choose learning tasks that facilitate social interaction	Project-based work and other cooperative tasks can be a great way of helping the visiting pupil integrate. Project work leads to interaction with peers and a give the pupil a sense of direction and purpose. On a smaller scale, simpler cooperative tasks are a good way for the pupil to 'break the ice' and start interacting with more of their peers at the host school.
Give the pupil a role in your Erasmus+ project	If your Erasmus+ project involves collaborative work between pupils in the sending and the host school (e.g. through eTwinning), the visiting pupil can take the role a 'coordinator' between their peers in the two schools.
Give the pupil a lead role in an extracurricular activity	Depending on the duration of the activity and the pupil's profile, the host school can consider setting up social or extracurricular activities where the pupil can play a leading role. This can be as simple as creating a conversation group with peers interested in learning the pupil's language. If the pupil is active in a sport not previously practised at the host school, they could become the 'coach' for a group of interested peers, and similar approach can be applied to any other of the pupil's major skills or interests.

27. EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND EMERGENCIES DURING THE MOBILITY ACTIVITY

Unexpected events can occur during any activity. It is important to have a plan in place before they happen. This is why the Erasmus quality standards require that there are protocols for exceptional circumstances agreed before the mobility activity takes place.

An emergency or a crisis can be defined as an **extreme situation resulting in serious disruption** of the mobility activity, and which requires urgent action. Crises should be distinguished from regular problems, which are not extreme situations and therefore require measured action, rather than urgent action. Problems are a normal part of managing any activity, and a problem is not immediately a crisis, but problems must be monitored and gradually resolved so they don't turn into a crisis.

Regardless of the scale of the problem, the perspective of the participant must be respected and taken seriously. During their stay abroad pupils are outside of their usual social circle and away from emotional support mechanisms they would typically lean on. Ensuring that they nevertheless have sufficient support and making them feel safe to speak out about any issue is your responsibility. Being able to communicate openly is an important part of the pupils' safety.

Following an emergency, a decision will need to be taken on whether the activity should continue or not. This is a decision taken jointly by the sending school, the host school, the pupil and the pupil's parents. In any case, if a pupil expresses a strong desire to stop the mobility activity and return home, this should be respected. An interruption and subsequent continuation of the activity is allowed under the Erasmus+ rules, so that option should also be considered when needed.

In terms of applicable rules, the sending school's Erasmus+ National Agency is best positioned to provide advice in emergencies since it oversees the relevant grant agreement. If the emergency has resulted in additional costs or the activity had to end prematurely, the agency can provide guidance on financial and reporting solutions.

In the legal terminology of Erasmus+, extraordinary circumstances beyond the schools' control are labelled *force majeure*. The programme rules become more flexible in those situations. The sending school's National Agency decides if a given circumstance constitutes *force majeure*.

Emergencies can broadly be sorted into two categories: personal emergencies affecting the pupil and external emergencies in the pupil's environment. You should consider both types during your preparations. Below are some examples, although the list is by no means exhaustive.

1. Personal emergencies

- A psychological crisis triggered by a pupil's severe learning, emotional or social difficulties
- Accidents, injuries and other medical emergencies
- Bullying or cyber bullying
- Harassment, verbal or physical, including sexual harassment
- Falling victim to crime or violence
- Consumption of alcohol or drugs, violent or illegal behaviour, police arrest
- Conflict with the host school or the mentor
- Conflict or another kind of serious problem with the host family or a major problem with commercial accommodation
- Death or serious illness of a family member
- Disappearance or death

2. External emergencies

- Natural disasters
- Public health crises
- Public security crises, such as riots or terrorist attacks

28. EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

An emergency protocol is a description of the steps to be taken in an emergency. Its logic is simple: thinking clearly during an emergency is extremely difficult, so to be prepared it is best to think about possible difficult situations in advance, decide what absolutely must be done, and write it down so that important actions are not forgotten in the moment of crisis.

An emergency protocol should be drawn up by the sending and the host schools jointly. There is a cultural component to how we deal with crises so an open exchange with your partners before the activity is an important step towards mutual trust. You want to know what to expect from your partner if a difficult situation comes up, and you want to communicate to them your own expectations.

Very sensitive situations such as personal conflicts or harassment can take place during a mobility activity, and it can also happen that not everyone agrees about the gravity of the situation. In such cases, a pre-made protocol that defines key actions and assigns clear responsibilities can make the difference between a productive resolution and a conflict.

The protocol can be divided into parts, depending on the type and impact of the emergency. It must contain key information necessary to implement it (e.g. the contact information of the people or services to be contacted). You should also consider the financial aspect: if there is an emergency cost, what will be the immediate (possibly temporary) source of funds, and what will be the eventual final source (e.g. insurance coverage).

As explained earlier on, under 'Contact persons for administrative matters and emergencies', emergency contact points need to be established in both schools and must be known to the pupil, their parents and the host family (if there is one).

Emergency protocol: actions to be included for all types of emergencies

Name a coordinator

Any emergency requires a swift and coordinated response. However, if too many people take the lead there is a risk that actions will be disconnected, inefficient, conflicting, or that key steps will be overlooked.

Your emergency protocol should identify one or at most two persons in charge of coordination in emergencies. This can be the project's emergency contacts, the school principal, or a person with specific expertise for a certain type of emergency (e.g. a psychologist). A replacement should also be named in case the first-choice coordinator is not available.

Identify other people who need to be involved

The coordinator must never work alone. Other people with relevant position, expertise or responsibility should also be named in the protocol, and their specific roles and skills described. If an emergency occurs, they will form the team around the coordinator.

If the nature of the emergency requires communication with the media (in both countries) and the public, a spokesperson will need to be designated.

Determine the facts and assess the gravity of the situation

If it appears that an emergency may be arising, the first step is to gather facts and assess them, so that appropriate actions can be taken, and the correct information passed on.

Your protocol should include this point of analysis, so that the decision on whether a situation constitutes an emergency is taken in a structured, rational and informed way, rather than being implicit or panic driven. At this moment, the severity of the emergency should also be assessed and explicitly established, so that all actors have the same basic idea of the circumstances.

Contact professionals and relevant services

Your protocol should include a list of potentially relevant external contacts: medical services, the police, the sending country's embassy, the Erasmus+ National Agencies in both the sending and the host countries, insurance companies, and any other actors that you could think of.

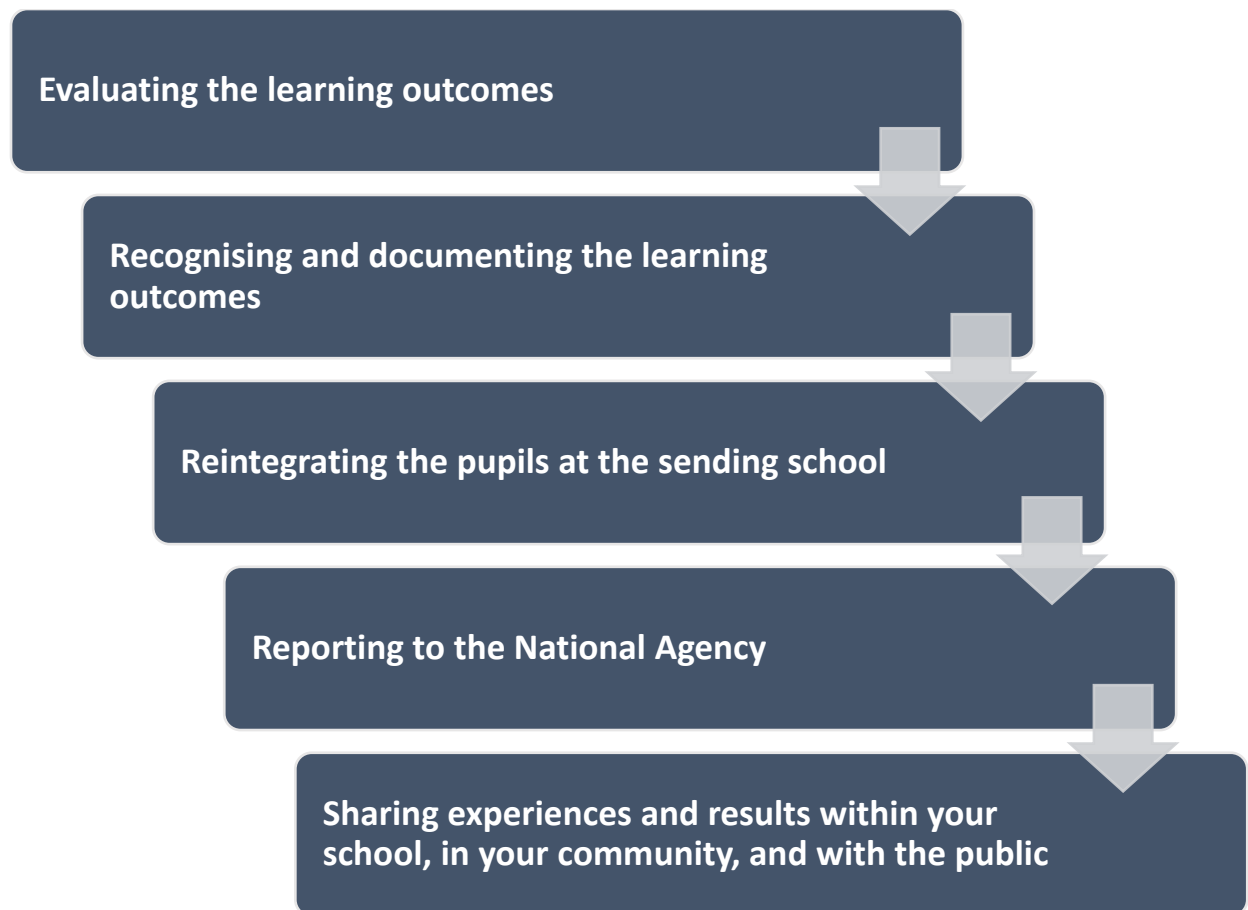
Document the event

Once the emergency has ended, the events, facts and consequences should be summarised in writing. A written report may be needed for insurance claims, legal proceedings, National Agency reviews or other administrative procedures. In the protocol, you should note down the expected structure and any specific requirements for the report (e.g. those defined by your insurance policy).

Depending on the circumstances, the sending or the host school should take the lead in drafting the report. The other school must be involved in the drafting. The pupil and their parents must be able to review and comment the report.

FOLLOW-UP PHASE

Follow-up phase starts as the pupil is finishing their last tasks at the host school and returns to the sending country. Thanks to the learning agreement, the actions the sending and the host school will take in follow-up phase should already be known and at this point. Your main task will be to follow through and to make sure that the pupils' return to your school is structured and comfortable.



29. EVALUATION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The evaluation of learning outcomes usually takes place during the last few days of the pupil's stay at the host school and sometimes continues after their return to the sending school.

Regarding evaluation, the Erasmus quality standards set out the following requirements:



Erasmus quality standards

Evaluation of learning outcomes: *learning outcomes and other benefits for the participants should be systematically evaluated. Results of the evaluation should be analysed and used to improve future activities.*

As a first step, you should collect the results of assessments performed during the pupil's time abroad in order to share them with subject teachers at the sending school and to include them in the final evaluation record. This will help avoid double work, both for the pupil and for the teachers.

However, the evaluation should include more than one type of exercise in order to cover both formal (academic) and **informal learning outcomes**. Examples of useful evaluation exercises include presentations by the pupil, the evaluation of project work, written essays or tests, mentor's report, an interview with the mentor or another qualified person, as well as self-assessment by the pupil (which can be a valuable pedagogical exercise as well).

Finally, the Erasmus quality standards also mention the need to follow up on the evaluation results to **improve future activities**. As an Erasmus+ beneficiary, the sending school is likely to be managing more activities in the future and should therefore learn from each experience. A good way for the sending school to address this requirement is to organise a joint reflection exercise after a certain number of activities have been completed. Pupils, mentors and other project staff can participate in this exercise to review their results and identify what can be improved. Involving host schools can be very useful, especially if your school works regularly with the same partner schools.

30. RECOGNITION AND DOCUMENTATION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The recognition of learning outcomes is the process of granting official status to the knowledge, skills and competences acquired during the pupil's mobility activity⁷.

The obligation to recognise the learning outcomes of returning pupils is set out in the Erasmus quality standards:



Erasmus quality standards

Recognition of learning outcomes: *formal, informal and non-formal learning outcomes and other results achieved by the participants in mobility activities must be appropriately recognised at their sending organisation. Available European and national instruments should be used for recognition whenever possible.*

This means that the pupils' learning outcomes must be documented (listed) in writing and certified - usually with a signature of the relevant representative of the host or the sending school.

Moreover, the standard Erasmus+ grant agreement specifies that a list of the participant's achieved learning outcomes forms a part of the obligatory supporting documentation necessary for the sending school to claim the Erasmus+ grant.

Using standardised European or national recognition instruments is highly recommended since it allows the pupils to later present their achievements in a wider variety of contexts, for example applications for university, stipends, traineeships, student jobs etc.

The most important and widely used of these instruments is [Europass Mobility](#): a standardised template for documenting learning outcomes achieved during a cross-border mobility activity.

The drafting of Europass Mobility should be coordinated by the pupil's mentors from the sending and the host school, with all subject teachers contributing to the description of the pupil's learning outcomes and achievements. The descriptions should be comprehensive, so that they can be understood even if the reader is not familiar with the education system of the host country. For example, a formal explanation may need to be annexed to describe how the grading system used at the host school translates to the system used at the sending school. A timetable and portfolio of work can be included along with the certificate so that any reader can evaluate exactly what the pupil has learned.

⁷ Cedefop (2014): Terminology of European education and training policy: A selection of 130 key terms.

31. REINTEGRATION AT THE SENDING SCHOOL

Once they are back at the sending school, pupils will need some time to get their bearings, especially if they have been abroad for a longer period. This process should not be spontaneous. It must be guided and thought through. It is the sending school's responsibility to prepare and facilitate the pupil's reintegration, both in terms of academic requirements and in terms of pupil's mental well-being.

Effective reintegration demonstrates to other pupils and parents that internationalisation and cross-border exchanges are an integral part of school policy and that pupils taking part in Erasmus+ will receive the support they need.

The role of principals (or other school leaders) is particularly important at this stage since formal decisions will need to be made and there may even be resistance from individual teachers to accept test results or work performed abroad.

Reintegration involves analysing and incorporating the results of the pupil's work abroad into the context of the sending school's curriculum. The key steps for this exercise should be established in the learning agreement, put into practice during implementation and finalised at this stage. The pupil's mentor at the sending school should take the lead role in this task, supported by the subject teachers.

A well-prepared and well-executed mobility activity should result in a smooth reintegration of the pupil into the sending school, with minimal additional workload and stress. Especially for longer activities, it is a clear sign of poor preparation if returning pupils are required to sit a comprehensive exam covering months' worth of material in all or almost all subjects. This should be avoided at all costs, as it can negate the positive effects of the mobility activity for the pupil and diminish interest in mobility activities among the other pupils at the school. In many countries curricular requirements are very strict and schools may not have many possibilities to influence them, however it is crucial to do everything possible to reduce and manage the pupils' workload, and to mitigate the psychological pressure that it creates.

The importance of discussing these matters in advance during preparation of the learning agreement cannot be overstated: the best way to avoid conflict, disappointment and double work is to have the detailed plan written down and everyone's expectations clearly set. As advised in the chapter on how to prepare a learning agreement, collecting and writing down requirements for each subject at the sending school before the pupil's departure will prevent stress and confusion when they are back. If the subject teachers have clearly written down what they expect from the returning pupils, then no new requirements can suddenly come up at this stage.

Aligning the requirements of curricula in two different countries is difficult, so it may not always be possible to entirely avoid extra work for the pupil. If this is the case, the mentor and other teachers at the sending school must take charge of managing and structuring the extra workload. The pupils must not be left to deal with it on their own.

32. REINTEGRATION AT THE SENDING SCHOOL – PRACTICAL ADVICE

Plan the reintegration before the activity starts	<p>Key requirements and expected workload need to be identified during preparation and included in the learning agreement.</p> <p>The schedule of the school year is predictable, and it includes known workload peaks. Choose the start and end dates of your mobility activities so that pupils are not returning during critical exam periods.</p>
Exercise leadership	<p>The sending school's principal is a key figure in the reintegration process. They need to display active support to demonstrate that the mobility activity doesn't only concern an individual pupil but is part of a school project. The principal's main responsibility is to make sure that subject teachers actively cooperate with the pupil's mentor stay flexible in terms of requirements and scheduling.</p>
Reintegration must happen at school level, not subject by subject	<p>All subject teachers at the sending school must be aware that they cannot act in isolation or add new requirements on top of what has been defined before departure. Teachers must work as a team to support the pupil's mentor and the pupil.</p>
Don't wait until the end of the activity	<p>During the pupil's stay abroad their mentor at the sending school should collect information from subject teachers as it becomes available (e.g., the dates of key exams) and pass it on to the pupil so they can better prepare. This way, the mentor can also intervene immediately if too many requirements are accumulating in too short time after the pupil's return.</p>
Control the reintegration workload and avoid double coursework	<p>Condensed and duplicated work is the most obvious risk for returning pupils. The evaluation of learning outcomes that takes place at the end of the mobility activity should serve to 'cross out' everything that has already been tested. The pupil's mentor at the sending school coordinates the 'transfer' of evaluation results from the host school to the sending school by informing the subject teachers and evaluation results.</p>
Stay in touch with the host school	<p>While reviewing the pupil's learning outcomes, subject teachers at the sending school may have additional questions or doubts. To answer their questions, a communication channel with the host school must remain open during the reintegration period. The two mentors at the sending and host school should act as the facilitators of this communication.</p>
Establish priorities	<p>It is the sending school's responsibility to identify the most important requirements that the pupil will need to fulfil when they return. With input from all subject teachers, the pupil's mentor should create a list of tasks to be completed and prioritise them to advise the pupil on how to best invest their time and effort.</p>
Work flexibly	<p>Practicalities must not get in the way of reintegration. If certain exams need to be rescheduled or additional exams organised – do so.</p>

33. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR RETURNING PUPILS AND THE SENDING SCHOOL

Reporting for Erasmus+ mobility projects is done using a dedicated online tool where project managers from the sending school need to put in each individual mobility activity that has taken place as part of the project.

In addition, after a mobility activity is completed, the project manager will need to ask the pupil to fill in a feedback survey - known in Erasmus+ as a 'participant report'.

Completing the participant report is obligatory and is a shared responsibility of the pupil and the sending school, as the Erasmus quality standards state:



Erasmus quality standards

Gathering and using participants' feedback: beneficiary organisations must ensure that participants complete the standard report about their activities, as provided by the European Commission. The beneficiary organisations should make use of the feedback provided by the participants to improve their future activities.

The participant report is not just a typical satisfaction survey. At the end of your mobility project, the replies of all project participants are aggregated and included in the project report. If your pupils do not fill in the survey, this will reflect negatively on your evaluation score.

For this reason, we recommended that you inform the pupil and their parents of the obligatory participant report before the mobility takes place and that you explain its importance. Once the mobility activity is over, it should be one of the first points for follow-up when the pupil is back at the sending school.

It's best if pupils complete the participant report on their own. If necessary, they can also do it with the help of their parents.

34. SHARING EXPERIENCES AND RESULTS

As a recipient of EU funding, your school has an obligation to share and promote the results obtained thanks to Erasmus+ funds.

The following provisions in the Erasmus quality standards define this responsibility:



Erasmus quality standards

Sharing results within the organisation: beneficiary organisations should make their participation in the Programme widely known within the organisation and create opportunities for participants to share their mobility experience with their peers. In case of mobility consortia, the sharing should take place in the whole consortium.

Sharing results with other organisations and the public: beneficiary organisations should share the results of their activities with other organisations and the public.

Sharing happens inside and outside your school.

Inside the school, it is about sharing among pupils, parents, teachers and other staff. Your key goal should be that the positive effects of the mobility activities do not remain limited to the pupils directly involved in them. Pupils coming back from a mobility activity will have many interesting stories to tell. At the same time, the pupils' mentors will have developed their professional skills too by working on the project. These powerful experiences should resonate through your school, helping you to make European cooperation a part of its culture.

Outside your school, you should share information, experiences and results from your projects with the general public (e.g. online and through the media) and with other schools, in your area or elsewhere.

In your Erasmus+ reports, you will be asked how you have complied with these quality standards. Investing time in sharing and follow-up will increase the quality of your project and your evaluation scores.

Within your school

Outside your school

Your pupils are your best Erasmus+ ambassadors: the returning pupils can give a presentation about their Erasmus+ experience to their class and other pupils. They can answer questions from a practical perspective and help encourage others to try out the same experience.



Inform your National Agency: if you think some of your activities have been particularly successful or illustrative of the impact Erasmus+ has on schools and pupils, you should talk about it with your National Agency. Part of their work is to collect success stories to promote Erasmus+. Perhaps your project can become one of them!



Involve your host partners: pupils or staff members from your host schools can join your sharing events through video calls. Later you can return the favour by helping your host partners with their own sharing events.



Become a mentor school: your success may inspire other schools in your area to try out Erasmus+. You can help them get there by becoming a 'mentor school' – a trusted advisor to help them understand the rules and practicalities.



Collect testimonials: if you ask the returning pupils to write testimonials about their experience, you can then publish them on your school's website or in the school magazine.



Contact the local media: local media in your area might want to publish a story about the pupils who have studied abroad with Erasmus+. Be proactive and approach them to see if they are interested.



Organise peer learning for your staff: Your staff members who have worked on Erasmus+ activities will have gained valuable experience. As a next step, you could organise a training session where they can share this knowledge with their colleagues. It is a useful capacity-building exercise for your future projects.



Share with other schools and institutions: you can invite neighbouring schools' staff to your school for a presentation, or you can get in touch with your local school authority to set up a sharing event.



Inform the parents: presenting pupils' experience in parent meetings is a good way to increase future interest in Erasmus+ activities. It is also an opportunity for the mentors, project managers and other staff involved in Erasmus+ to show how their work is improving the quality of teaching and learning at the school.



Encourage your pupils to take part in Erasmus+ alumni activities: depending on the country you're based in, there may be associations or other alumni networks set up for pupils who have completed an Erasmus+ mobility activity. Your National Agency can give you more information about such opportunities.



Sharing your Erasmus+ experience

CONCLUSION

Preparation of the first version of this handbook has followed a major change in Erasmus+ that took place in 2021 when pupil mobility became a part of the programme's Key Action 1. That can seem like a technical change at first glance, but its importance can be better understood if we consider the history of Erasmus+ in other areas of education. In higher education, the continuous flow of transnationally mobile students and staff funded by Key Action 1 of Erasmus+ has been one of the major forces driving the transformation of the European higher education systems since the 1980s. It has shown that the cumulative effect of many mobile individuals can bring about systemic change. Later, the Key Action 1 model had been expanded to learners in vocational education and training, and finally in 2021 it has been again expanded to offer the same opportunities to pupils in school education.

However, opening the funding opportunities was only the first step. Schools and teachers wanting to implement mobility activities face practical, administrative, curricular, legal, and other challenges. These challenges are different in every part of Europe because national education systems are very different.

The existence of this handbook is an acknowledgment of these challenges. Its goal is to provide motivation, reassurance, a framework for thinking, and some practical help. It aims to be useful while recognising the diverse realities experienced by its readers. It is written with understanding that the success of the Erasmus+ programme depends on the efforts and creativity of teachers, principals and others who are willing to take on the role of educational pioneers exploring new paths that others can later follow.

In many ways, this handbook is a call to action: an invitation to dare, to innovate, and to make a difference for your school and your pupils.

If you're uncertain how to start, a simple solution is to start small. Start with one pupil. The school's first mobility activity paves the way for future activities. That first step is crucial and worth focusing all your efforts on. Later, with time and experience, you can increase your ambitions.



An unexpected result we noticed was the increased motivation and engagement of both staff and pupils after participating in Erasmus+ activities. The experiences gained through these projects have sparked creativity, enthusiasm, and a renewed sense of purpose among our school community.

Overall, the Erasmus+ Programme has had a transformative effect on our school, enhancing the quality of education, promoting diversity and inclusion, and fostering a spirit of openness and curiosity among staff and pupils alike.

Facing challenges is a normal part of the Erasmus experience and overcoming them can lead to personal growth and valuable learning opportunities.

Project coordinator, 4th Upper High School, Serres, Greece

As any educator will know, learning is not made better by shortcuts. Real learning comes from effort, reflection, preparation, practice, facing challenges, trying your best – it comes from things that are not easy! Therefore, the goal of this handbook is not to be a shortcut, nor to make things easy. The goal is to provide an outline that you can fill in with concrete ideas, actions and solutions.

For questions that this handbook has not answered, there are other sources you can turn to. The handbook frequently refers to the Erasmus+ Programme Guide because that is the ultimate authority on any matter related to Erasmus+ and therefore the first place to look for answers. Secondly, the Erasmus quality standards provide a shorter, more condensed version of the principles this handbook explains. These standards can serve as an overview and a form of checklist for any Erasmus+ mobility project.

Beyond that, the best advice is most likely to come from a source closer to you: from a colleague in another school nearby, from your school authority or your Erasmus+ National Agency. In the end, some questions don't have a single correct answer. Practices for cross-border pupil mobility are only now taking shape and your project will be a part of that process: this is what makes it so valuable and worthwhile.