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EACG – European Association of Career Guidance

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ERACON Thematic Sessions

TS1 - NATIONAL AGENCY OF CYPRUS FOR ERASMUS+ AND THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

(IDEP|FOUNDATION FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF EUROPEAN LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMMES)

Erasmus+ Actions and European Youth Opportunities

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Ildiko Hegedus, Programme manager at European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) – European Student Card Initiative

Nuria Moyes Prellezo, Project Manager at NTT DATA

This session will present three European initiatives designed to strengthen higher education, youth engagement, and mobility throughout Europe.

Participants will gain insights into the key priorities of the Erasmus+ Programme and the European Solidarity Corps (ESC), with emphasis on funding and capacity-building opportunities that promote youth participation, mobility, and lifelong learning.

Through interactive presentations and practical discussions, the sessions will explore how digital transformation, solidarity actions, mobility tools, and innovation funding contribute to building a more connected, inclusive, and empowered European community.

ERACON Workshops

EWS4 - BEYOND MOBILITY- BUILDING INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY THROUGH THEMATIC STAFF WEEKS AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

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Internationalization in higher education increasingly requires universities to create meaningful communities rather than simply managing mobility processes. Budapest Metropolitan University has developed a community-centered Erasmus approach that combines thematic Staff Weeks, mentoring initiatives and cultural engagement activities to strengthen international cooperation and institutional visibility.

This workshop presents METU's experience in organizing thematic Erasmus Staff Weeks focusing on contemporary topics such as Artificial Intelligence, Sustainability and Wellbeing. These initiatives bring together Erasmus coordinators and higher education professionals in collaborative and experience-based learning environments. In 2026, the program is implemented for the first time as a Blended Intensive Program (BIP), creating additional opportunities for innovative mobility design and professional networking.

The workshop will also showcase METU's student mentor program and cultural integration activities, including excursions and community experiences that support incoming students' engagement with Hungarian culture and university life. The session explores how community-focused Erasmus initiatives can improve mobility experiences, strengthen institutional partnerships, support recruitment and enhance institutional branding.

Participants will engage in interactive group activities designed to support peer learning and exchange of good practices. Through guided brainstorming, reflection exercises and short group presentations, participants will explore practical tools for strengthening engagement, wellbeing, institutional visibility and sustainable partnerships within Erasmus programs.

EWS5 - European Universities alliances, EUonAIR European University on AI in Curricula, Smart UniverCity and (Return) Mobility - Impact, Insights, problems and the Road Ahead

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The European University on AI in Curricula, Smart UniverCity and (Return)Mobility (EUonAIR) is an ambitious alliance of 10 business and technical universities dedicated to creating a new responsible and collaborative AI model in education. This alliance aims to reshape learning, research, and working methods, aligning them with the current and future requirements of our educational systems and wider ecosystems. EUonAIR recognizes the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in addressing complex issues like mobility and migration. The alliance is committed to leveraging AI responsibly and innovatively to develop inclusive, sustainable, and innovative solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges.

This proposal outlines a comprehensive vision and foundation for the next four years and beyond, positioning EUonAIR as a lighthouse European University Initiative (EUI) Alliance. The alliance aims to contribute significantly to the overarching goals of the European Universities Initiative call and the enhancement of both European society and its European Education and Research Area.

EWS6 - SignVET: Assistive Technologies for Education

Elpiniki Margariti, European Association of Career Guidance, Cyprus

Thomas Economidou, European Association of Career Guidance, Cyprus

Assistive Technologies for Education explores innovative assistive technologies that promote accessibility and inclusion in Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Higher Education. It will present and discuss advances in automatic sign language translation systems designed to support deaf and hard-of-hearing students through AI-driven communication tools for educational settings.

The workshop will also address mobility equity in Higher Education by presenting an inclusive indoor navigation system for wheelchair users, focusing on accessible routing, indoor positioning, and user-centred design to improve independent mobility across campuses.

The session aims to encourage discussion on the role of assistive technologies in creating more inclusive and accessible learning environments.

ERACON Presentations

EP1 - THE DIGITISATION OF ERASMUS+ PROCEDURES IN HIGHER MUSIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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This position paper presents the perspective of the Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC) on the ongoing digitisation of Erasmus+ procedures within the Erasmus Without Paper (EWP) framework. Representing approximately 300 Higher Music Education Institutions (HMEIs), the AEC draws on a 2025 sector-wide survey to identify the opportunities, challenges, and specific requirements of music and arts institutions in the transition to fully digital mobility workflows. While HMEIs show high levels of EWP integration—over 96% connected for Inter-Institutional Agreements (IIAs) and 95% for Digital Learning Agreements (DLAs)—the findings reveal persistent issues related to interoperability, technical instability, and limited usability across both the EWP Dashboard and commercial providers.

The paper highlights the distinctive characteristics of HMEIs, including portfolio-based admissions, one-to-one tuition models, low but highly selective mobility flows, and small administrative teams. These features require flexible, multi-step workflows not adequately reflected in current digital tools. Survey results demonstrate gaps in awareness and implementation of the European Student Card Initiative, as well as concerns about the upcoming rollout of digital nominations and digital transcripts of records.

In response, the AEC formulates targeted recommendations to the European Commission: enhancing system stability and interoperability, improving communication and training, increasing editing and management capacities for International Relations Coordinators, and ensuring that new tools accommodate qualitative assessment methods and flexible IIAs. The paper concludes by calling for dedicated funding to support small institutions in managing digital transitions, stressing that without tailored solutions, many HMEIs risk being marginalised within the evolving Erasmus+ ecosystem.

EP2 - FROM MOBILITY TO LOYALTY: A CRM PLAYBOOK FOR ERASMUS+ PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

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Erasmus+ mobility is often managed as a set of transactions (applications, nominations, learning agreements), while participants experience it as a continuous journey. This paper tries to propose an approach that translates proven customer-experience and loyalty logic into a practical, coordinator-friendly CRM approach for Erasmus+—without turning mobility into “marketing”. We introduce a simple journey map (pre-departure, on-mobility, re-entry) and show how to operationalize it with: (1) a lightweight segmentation of participants by support needs and risk signals; (2) a communications cadence that balances compliance, care, and community; and (3) a measurement toolkit that combines short pulse checks, a standardized satisfaction item set, and an NPS-style recommendation question to benchmark partner performance over time.

Participants will work through a ready-to-use template to redesign one mobility touchpoint (e.g., onboarding, crisis support, or re-integration) and leave with an “Erasmus CRM canvas” that links activities to quality indicators and evidence for institutional reporting. The aim of the paper is to propose a framework and instrument designed to improve perceived quality, reduce avoidable drop-offs, and strengthen long-term partner relationships through consistent, data-informed coordination.

Keywords: participant experience; mobility quality; CRM; satisfaction measurement; partner management

EP3 - INTERNALIZATION AT HOME - UNIVERSITY OF MARIBOR

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Internationalisation at Home (IaH) has become a central pillar of the University of Maribor's institutional strategy for increasing the global competences of all students—regardless of mobility status. University of Maribor has developed an increasingly robust and systemic IaH ecosystem, supported by digital transformation, diversified partnerships, multilingual education, collaborative learning formats, and extensive integration of international students and staff into the academic environment.

The analysis shows that the University systematically integrates international and intercultural elements into learning outcomes, curriculum design and teaching methods. Despite legislative restrictions on the provision of full programmes in foreign languages, the University has expanded its English-taught offer and introduced mobility windows alongside full and automatic recognition of Erasmus+ obligations. Digital internationalisation—through virtual mobility, COIL initiatives and digitised Erasmus+ processes—further broadens participation and supports sustainable modes of international engagement.

Linguistic and intercultural development is supported through an extensive range of foreign-language courses, the Polyglot Café platform and structured Slovenian-language integration for international students. Extracurricular activities such as Erasmus Sport, PUŠ research projects, ESN Maribor initiatives and the Erasmus in Schools programme contribute significantly to building an inclusive and multicultural campus environment. International students and returning mobility participants play a key ambassadorial role, reinforcing a sustainable cycle of peer-driven internationalisation.

The findings demonstrate that the University of Maribor has developed a robust, institution-wide model of IaH that aligns with European standards and serves as a valuable example of good practice within the Slovenian and broader European higher-education context.

EP4 - STRATEGIC STAFF MOBILITY IN ERASMUS+ DELIVERING IMPACT, ACCOUNTABILITY AND INTERNATIONALISATION

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In an era of increasing internationalisation and digital transformation within higher education, Erasmus+ staff mobility is a strategic lever not only for individual professional development but also for institutional modernisation. This presentation, developed jointly by Erasmus Courses Ireland and Atlas Language School, explores how universities can optimise KA1 staff mobility to yield measurable impact aligned with institutional priorities, Erasmus+ objectives, and sustainable cooperation practices.

Drawing on practical experience from structured professional development programmes, we argue that effective staff mobility must extend beyond participation metrics to demonstrable contributions in digital readiness, inclusive pedagogy, and intercultural competence. Leveraging the Erasmus+ Programme Guide (2021–2027) framework, this session outlines a model for planning and reporting mobility activities that meet both administrative eligibility and strategic relevance.

Key components include establishing clear learning outcomes supported by structured curricula, capturing evidence for institutional reporting, and integrating mobility outputs into broader quality assurance and academic development processes. We also highlight the role of English-medium training and structured learning environments in strengthening networks and enhancing staff confidence in international engagement.

Participants will gain actionable insights into building mobility plans that satisfy funding requirements and contribute to measurable change in teaching practices, organisational policies, and international partnerships. By situating Erasmus+ staff mobility at the crossroads of professional growth and institutional strategy, this presentation offers a compelling template for universities seeking to unlock the full potential of Erasmus+ opportunities.

EP5 - INCLUSION IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS: A WHOLE -SYSTEM APPROACH TO CO-CREATING AN INNOVATIVE INTERNSHIP SUPPORT MODEL FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.

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This paper presents *Ready Steady Work*, an inclusive summer internship initiative at Munster Technological University (MTU) designed specifically for students with access to the disability support services. Responding to persistent barriers in accessing work experience opportunities, which leads to further challenges when student's graduate, the programme adopts a whole-system, co-creative approach, engaging students, employer partners, and university staff to embed inclusion across all stages of the internship lifecycle.

The model moves beyond traditional work placement by embedding structured, universally designed supports across the internship experience. These include employer engagement and education, staff training, student work-readiness preparation, and the implementation of inclusive recruitment and interviewing practices. The programme also draws on the wider community through a Retiree Mentors initiative, harnessing the expertise of experienced industry professionals to mentor and support students. Through close collaboration with employers, the initiative promotes more equitable access to meaningful work opportunities for students with disabilities.

Preliminary outcomes indicate enhanced student confidence, improved employability skills, and increased employer awareness and capacity for inclusive practice. The paper will outline the design, delivery, and evaluation of the programme, highlighting key learnings and practical strategies for replication in other institutional contexts.

This session contributes to the evolving discourse on inclusive employability by demonstrating how shared responsibility; across education, industry and the wider community, can drive systemic change and support the development of a more inclusive and innovative workforce.

EP6 - BEYOND MOBILITY: THE ROLE OF COVEs IN STRENGTHENING SKILLS THROUGH INTERNATIONALISATION

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The decline in basic skills across Europe is no longer a marginal concern but a systemic challenge with implications for both education systems and labour markets. Recent evidence indicates that students lack adequate skills and transversal competences, deficits that ultimately constrain adaptability, lifelong learning and employability opportunities. Within this context, Erasmus+ mobility, while highly successful in promoting internationalisation and the development of skills, risks relying on an implicit assumption: that students already possess the foundational competences necessary to fully benefit from mobility experiences. This assumption is increasingly difficult to sustain. This contribution argues that CoVEs can play a strategic role in addressing this gap by acting as bridging ecosystems connecting vocational education and training, higher education and labour market actors. Their multi-stakeholder nature positions them uniquely to integrate innovation, applied learning and quality assurance practices, making them particularly suited to reconnect mobility with competence development. Drawing on selected case studies, the paper explores how CoVEs can enhance Erasmus+ mobility schemes along three dimensions. First, by embedding skills development within mobility pathways, linking learning agreements to clearly defined and measurable competence outcomes. Second, by strengthening pedagogical integration, ensuring that skills are developed through applied, work-based and interdisciplinary learning environments. Third, by activating systematic feedback and monitoring mechanisms, thereby transforming mobility from a one-off experience into a structured cycle of learning, evaluation and continuous improvement. The analysis suggests that the added value of CoVEs lies not in simply expanding mobility opportunities, but in reframing mobility as part of a competence-oriented learning ecosystem.

EP7 - FROM FORMAL REPRESENTATION TO PARTICIPATORY IMPROVEMENT: STUDENT VOICE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Student participation in decision-making processes is today a formal cornerstone of higher education systems, yet its transformative potential remains only partially realised. Moving beyond a descriptive account, this contribution critically examines the Italian case through the lens of the AVA 3 framework promoted by ANVUR, where students are explicitly recognised as active actors in institutional quality cycles rather than passive recipients of educational services. The paper argues that the real issue is not whether students are included, but how their participation is structured, supported and translated into organisational learning. While Joint Student-Teacher Committees (CPDS) represent a distinctive feature of the Italian system, ensuring parity and institutional voice, their impact often remains constrained by weak integration into decision-making processes, limited access to meaningful data and insufficient visibility of outcomes. Drawing on a comparative analysis of European guidelines, the contribution reframes participation as a practice embedded in iterative cycles of evidence, reflection and action. In line with ANVUR's emphasis on continuous improvement and documented processes, the analysis highlights that student involvement becomes effective only when it is anchored in clear mandates, data literacy and traceable feedback loops. In the end, the paper proposes a shift from “participation as presence” to “participation as epistemic contribution”: students are not simply stakeholders but knowledge carriers of the learning experience. Strengthening this perspective requires investing not in additional representative bodies, but in the quality, visibility and usability of participatory processes.

EP8 - AI INTEGRATION WITHIN ERASMUS + MOBILITIES MANAGEMENT - PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING LIMITS AND ADVANTAGES

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This paper explores the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in managing Erasmus+ mobility programs, focusing on participants' perceptions of its advantages and limitations. Utilizing a quantitative approach, the study collected quantitative data through a survey with current and past participants to mobilities. The findings reveal that AI tools enhance efficiency in administrative tasks and personalization of learning experiences. However, concerns regarding data privacy and the lack of human oversight were prominent. The study also highlights the potential for AI to support decision-making in mobility logistics and learning outcomes assessment. Ultimately, this research underscores the need for balanced AI implementation that harnesses its benefits while addressing associated risks, offering valuable insights for policymakers and educational institutions aiming to innovate Erasmus+ mobilities.

Key words: Artificial Intelligence, Erasmus+ Mobility, Participant Perceptions, Educational Technology. Data Privacy

EP9 - EU-GaNoM: Improving Skills and Recognition of Administrative Staff in Erasmus+ and HORIZON EUROPE Projects

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EU-GaNoM, a cooperation partnership of 6 countries (France, Sweden, Spain, Greece, Albania and Ukraine), has been awarded an Erasmus+ grant aimed at strengthening the EU's Education and Research sectors. The project is focused on empowering Higher Education Institutions with enhanced capabilities in EU project design and management, by training grant advisors and administrative personnel. EU-GaNoM seeks to recognize the vital role of these professionals while fostering cooperation between education and research fields.

The project's goals include improving HEIs' competencies in organizing hybrid training courses. Central to this project is the development of one staff week course tailored for EU grant advisors and project managers, underpinned by pedagogical content that uses hybrid teaching methods. It conducts experimental training and peer-to-peer activities, providing practical, hands-on learning opportunities for participants. A hybrid job-shadowing session enhanced staff mobility coordinators' abilities to organize staff training courses within their institutions.

EU-GaNoM delivers tangible outcomes:

A hybrid model for staff week courses

A sustainable, digitally accessible training curriculum focused on key European project design and management skills for grant advisors and administrative staff

An online repository and re-usable digital resources to ensure the project's long-term accessibility and impact

Direct training for administrative staff members

As a result, EU-GaNoM enhances the competencies of EU project professionals but also contributes to the sustainability and collaboration of the EU's education and research communities.

EP10 - SMILE – Supporting Mobility and Internationalization for Learning and Engagement in Somali HEIs

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SMILE – Supporting Mobility and Internationalization for Learning and Engagement in Somali HEIs is an Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education project that strengthens the internationalisation capacity of Somali universities. The project responds to the limited participation of Somali Higher Education Institutions in international academic networks, Erasmus+ mobility and structured cooperation with European institutions. Somali HEIs continue to face barriers related to weak international relations structures, scarce academic partnerships, limited staff and student mobility, and restricted access to international learning opportunities, particularly for students with fewer opportunities.

SMILE addresses these challenges through a structured capacity-building pathway that combines training, mentoring, infrastructure support, practical application and institutional strategy development. The project trains Somali academic and administrative staff in Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility, intra-African mobility, partnership development, private-sector cooperation, inclusion strategies and virtual mobility. It also supports participating HEIs in strengthening International Relations Offices, developing internationalisation strategies, creating virtual exchange opportunities and building cooperation agreements with academic and non-academic partners.

SMILE aims to promote institutional modernisation, inclusive internationalisation and sustainable cooperation between Somali and European HEIs. By supporting staff capacity, mobility readiness, digital education and partnerships, the project contributes to stronger governance, better access to international opportunities, improved employability pathways and the long-term integration of Somali universities into regional and global higher education networks.

EP11 - GREEN TOUR - GREEN SKILLS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

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GREEN TOUR – Green Skills for Sustainable Tourism is an Erasmus+ KA220-HED Cooperation Partnership that strengthens the role of Higher Education in preparing students, educators and tourism stakeholders for the green transition of the tourism sector. The project responds to a clear skills gap between current tourism education and the competences required by a sustainable, climate-resilient and circular economy, with particular attention to coastal destinations that are increasingly exposed to climate change, environmental pressure and overtourism.

The project designs and implements innovative micro-credentials focused on green skills for sustainable tourism, while fostering a sustainability mindset among students, teachers and tourism professionals. Through cooperation between Higher Education Institutions, tourism enterprises, associations and policy stakeholders, GREEN TOUR connects academic learning with real labour-market needs and supports the development of practical, transferable and future-oriented learning pathways.

GREEN TOUR aims to contribute to the modernisation of Higher Education and to the wider transformation of tourism towards more responsible, inclusive and environmentally sustainable practices. By promoting flexible learning, stakeholder engagement and replicable models for green competence development, the project supports sustainable tourism ecosystems and strengthens the capacity of Higher Education Institutions to act as drivers of green innovation.

EP12 - OCEAN – Opening Collaboration for Education and Academic Networks in the Maldives and Papua New Guinea is an Erasmus+

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OCEAN – Opening Collaboration for Education and Academic Networks in the Maldives and Papua New Guinea is an Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education project that strengthens the internationalisation and inclusion capacities of universities located in remote and island regions. The project brings together Higher Education Institutions from the Maldives and Papua New Guinea, including newcomer institutions to Erasmus+, and addresses shared challenges linked to geographical dispersion, unequal access to quality Higher Education, limited international cooperation and high exposure to climate-change-related risks.

OCEAN applies a structured capacity-building methodology that moves from staff development to strategic planning, practical implementation and sustainability. The project supports partner institutions in developing internationalisation capacities, brokering international cooperation and mobility, creating links with socio-economic stakeholders, and embedding Green Deal principles into institutional strategies and educational provision. It also promotes blended learning, virtual mobility, inclusive education action planning and the upgrading of courses related to climate resilience, circular economy and sustainability.

OCEAN aims to connect remote Higher Education Institutions with European expertise while ensuring local ownership and long-term institutional change. Its expected benefits include stronger international relations capacities, new cooperation agreements, Erasmus+ mobility applications, green campus initiatives, inclusive education plans and more resilient academic networks linking Europe, Asia and the Pacific.

EP13 - Similarities and Differences in the Digital Transformation of Higher Education Perspectives from Africa, the Arab region, Asia, Europe, and the Americas

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“The main purpose was to compare the developments in digital transformation in higher education, with a focus on learning and teaching, and also in light of the developments during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. This report has been developed based on the regional and national reports submitted by GUAF members, which share the state of play and major developments in their regions and countries. Universities around the globe acknowledge the need to further explore blended and online learning to meet growing demands for flexibility and accessibility. However, the challenges faced in implementation, such as technology access, infrastructure development, and educational strategies, vary significantly across different regions and countries. The report presents the similarities in the approaches taken and the challenges encountered in the ongoing digital transformation.

There is considerable convergence in general trends and directions, but there are also some marked differences. Data on higher education in Greece will also be presented. The main topics to be presented and discussed by geographic region are : 1. Blended and online learning 2. Blended learning 3. Student learning assessment 4. Foster Equity and Inclusion

EP14 - WRITING WINNING EU PROJECT PROPOSALS WITH AI: A PRACTICAL METHODOLOGY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION, VET, AND ADULT EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Erasmus+ KA2 projects, Horizon Europe grants, and Forward-Looking Projects are among the most complex applications in European education funding. Successful proposals require strong alignment with programme priorities, clear internal logic between objectives, work packages, and outcomes, as well as institutional credibility. Many organisations fail not because their ideas lack quality, but because proposal development is often poorly structured and resource-intensive.

AI tools offer new opportunities to support this process — not by replacing human authors, but by acting as intelligent sparring partners. The vision, expertise, and institutional voice remain with the applicant, while AI helps accelerate analysis, improve argumentation, and maintain consistency across large and complex proposals. This human-in-the-loop approach remains fully aligned with Erasmus+ integrity requirements.

This talk presents a practical methodology developed through hands-on experience coordinating multiple EU-funded projects. AI was systematically integrated across the entire proposal lifecycle, from needs analysis and partner profiling to work package development, impact formulation, and quality assurance before submission.

The presentation highlights four stages where AI assistance creates the greatest value: contextual grounding through programme and policy analysis; structural coherence across interconnected proposal sections; evidence-based argumentation using European data and policy frameworks; and stress-testing proposals by simulating evaluator perspectives before submission.

Designed for project coordinators, research offices, and newcomers to EU funding alike, the session provides a realistic and actionable workflow for integrating AI into proposal writing while demonstrating where human expertise remains essential.

EP15 - D.E.F.: BUILDING MORE INCLUSIVE LABOUR MARKETS THROUGH COLLABORATION, DIGITAL TOOLS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

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Despite increasing awareness of diversity, equity and inclusion, many individuals from underrepresented groups continue to face significant barriers when accessing employment, entrepreneurship opportunities and professional development pathways. At the same time, employers, public authorities and education providers often lack practical tools and coordinated approaches to address these challenges effectively. As labour markets undergo rapid digital, social and economic transformation, there is a growing need for innovative solutions that support more inclusive participation and stronger collaboration among stakeholders.

The D.E.F. project was developed in response to these challenges. The project aims to promote more inclusive labour market ecosystems by bringing together public authorities, education and training providers, business support organisations, employers and other relevant stakeholders. Through research, stakeholder engagement and the development of digital resources, the project seeks to identify emerging labour market needs and support evidence-based approaches to inclusion.

A key outcome of the project is the D.E.F. e-Compendium, a practical repository of knowledge, resources, methodologies and good practices designed to support organisations working towards more inclusive labour market participation. Complementing this resource is the D.E.F. e-Space, an online collaborative environment that facilitates knowledge sharing, networking and stakeholder engagement across sectors and countries.

This session will present the objectives, methodology and results of the D.E.F. project, including the development of the e-Compendium and e-Space. Particular attention will be given to the findings emerging from stakeholder workshops involving policymakers, Chambers of Commerce, business incubators, public authorities and education providers. Participants will have the opportunity to explore the project tools, discuss current labour market inclusion challenges and contribute to a broader dialogue on building more equitable and resilient labour market ecosystems. The session aims in parallel, to foster an interactive stakeholder discussion aimed at gathering feedback on emerging labour market needs and identifying priorities for future action at local, national and European level.

Keywords: inclusive labour market, stakeholder engagement, digital collaboration, labour market inclusion, policy development, e-learning, ecosystem building, entrepreneurship, innovation.

EP16 - EVERY SIGN COUNTS: BUILDING INCLUSIVE FUTURES IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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Vocational training is often available only in national spoken languages, creating barriers for deaf students and limiting their access to further education and employment. At the same time, hearing students rarely learn national sign languages, reducing their ability to communicate with deaf colleagues and clients in professional settings. This exclusion has significant social and economic consequences.

Providing educational materials in sign language promotes equitable learning by giving both deaf and hearing students access to education in their first language while fostering inclusion. However, existing resources, such as interpreters, translation services, sign language training, and video materials, are scarce, costly, and not always available.

VirtualSign is an automatic sign language translation technology developed since 2012 and currently used to support communication between deaf and hearing people. It can translate educational content and professional terminology into national sign languages, enabling deaf students to access vocational education and training (VET) in their first language while helping hearing students learn essential sign language vocabulary.

The SignVET project aims to transfer VirtualSign technology to VET schools, enabling them to create sign-language versions of educational materials and professional dictionaries. The project is developing a methodology for automatic sign language translation, training teachers in its use, piloting and evaluating courses, and refining the process for wider adoption.

In this session we will present the SignVET adaptation of VirtualSign technology. Participants will have a chance to experience in first/hand the SignVET tools for the translation of didactic materials to national sign languages.

EP17 - OLS COMMUNITIES, IMMERSIVE 360° CONTENT AND GAMIFICATION: THREE KEYS TO FACILITATE ERASMUS+ MOBILITY

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The Online Language Support (OLS) platform, integrated into the Erasmus+ programme, has grown into a comprehensive digital ecosystem offering over 1,000 hours of multi lingual Learning content across all CEFR levels. This presentation introduces four interconnected initiatives developed by OLS to maximise the platform's impact on learner mobility.

OLS Communities are structured peer-learning spaces connecting Erasmus+ participants before, during, and after their mobility period. By addressing language anxiety and cultural uncertainty (two of the most cited barriers to full mobility engagement) these communities provide destination-specific preparation, live peer interaction and language practice opportunities.

A new series of 360° immersive environments places learners inside authentic mobility scenarios (university campuses, professional workplaces, city services) in 29 languages. These environments integrate directly into OLS learning pathways, enabling a seamless “learn then live it” experience accessible on standard devices.

The platform’s gamification layer is also explored, demonstrating how game-based modules, vocabulary challenges, and branching narrative scenarios sustain motivation and measurably increase content completion rates among Erasmus+ participants.

Finally, the OLS Starter Kit is presented: a practical onboarding resource designed to help National Agencies and Beneficiary organisations navigate and promote the full content library. Guided learning paths, NA resource packs, and facilitator toolkits enable any participant to move from first login to active learning a few minutes minutes.

Together, these four initiatives position OLS as a powerful, scalable facilitator of quality Erasmus+ mobility experiences.

EP19 - IMPROVING MOBILITY EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: DEVELOPMENT OF AN INCLUSIVE INDOOR NAVIGATION SYSTEM FOR WHEELCHAIR USERS

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Accessibility within higher education institutions remains a significant challenge for individuals with spinal cord injuries, particularly those with paraplegia or tetraplegia. Despite European legislation promoting inclusion, physical barriers within university buildings continue to restrict the autonomy and participation of wheelchair users. This paper presents *ISEP InDoor Mapping*, an innovative project developed at the School of Engineering of the Technical University of Porto aimed at addressing these mobility gaps through the design and implementation of a beacon-based indoor navigation system.

The system comprises three interconnected components: a mobile application, a web-based administrative platform, and a relational database. The mobile application, built with .NET MAUI, provides real-time, accessible navigation using Bluetooth beacon technology to determine user positioning and generate obstacle-free routes. A key distinguishing feature of the system is its integration of an EPOC brain-computer interface, enabling students with tetraplegia to control navigation through EEG-based brain signals, thereby extending autonomy beyond what conventional input methods allow. The web application supports administrators with tools for beacon management, user monitoring, and feedback collection through an Adaptive Mobile Diary, enabling data-driven decisions to continuously improve the system.

The project followed an incremental, modular development methodology structured around Work Packages, with iterative alpha testing phases revealing measurable progress across front-end, back-end, and database components. User involvement throughout the testing process ensured that real-world accessibility needs were consistently reflected in design decisions. *ISEP InDoor Mapping* represents a meaningful contribution to inclusive higher education, combining assistive technology, user-centred design, and institutional commitment to equitable access for wheelchair users.

EP20 - BEYOND ERASMUS: CREATING FLEXIBLE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY PATHWAYS THROUGH EUROPEAN AND GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

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While Erasmus+ remains the cornerstone of internationalisation strategies in higher education, institutions increasingly face the challenge of offering students a wider range of destinations and academic opportunities beyond traditional European mobility schemes.

This presentation explores how UDIT, combines a strong Erasmus+ foundation with an expanding network of bilateral partnerships across Europe, Asia and the Americas. Rather than replacing Erasmus+, these partnerships complement it by providing students with multiple pathways adapted to their academic, professional and personal goals.

The session examines how mobility opportunities can be designed around student needs rather than institutional limitations. Topics include academic advising, flexible destination planning, support for application and visa processes, recognition of studies, and strategies to reduce barriers that may discourage participation in international experiences.

Several case studies will be presented, highlighting student mobilities to both Erasmus and non-Erasmus destinations, including partnerships in South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Puerto Rico and other regions. Particular attention will be given to the role of mobility coordinators in guiding students throughout the decision-making process and ensuring that international opportunities remain accessible and inclusive.

The presentation argues that successful internationalisation is achieved not by directing students towards a single programme or destination, but by empowering students to choose the pathway that best fits their ambitions while providing the support and institutional flexibility needed to make that choice possible.

EP21 - MEMOIRS OF A DINOSAUR**Dr. Sabine Habermalz**

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This contribution offers a historically grounded and critically reflective overview of the ERASMUS programme from its establishment in 1987 to the current Erasmus+ generation (2021–2027), drawing on twenty-five years of professional experience as an institutional ERASMUS coordinator. Framed as a “memoir of a dinosaur,” the presentation traces the programme’s transformation from a small-scale student exchange scheme into a comprehensive, highly politicised European education and mobility instrument. It situates ERASMUS within broader processes of European integration, including the introduction of ECTS, the Lisbon Recognition Convention, and the Bologna Process, highlighting their combined impact on academic recognition, institutional cooperation, and the European Higher Education Area. Particular attention is paid to the expansion of mobility formats (students, teaching staff, administrative staff), the growing strategic role of mobility as a policy tool, and the successive reprogramming cycles aligned with EU budgetary frameworks. The presentation also critically examines unintended consequences of expansion, notably increasing administrative complexity, digitalisation challenges, and tensions between policy ambitions and student-centred support. By combining policy analysis with institutional practice and personal reflection, the paper aims to provide contextual insight for newer coordinators while encouraging renewed attention to students as the core beneficiaries of the programme.

CAREER-EU Presentations

CP1 - FROM COMPETENCE TO CURRENCY: RETHINKING WORKFORCE READINESS IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND GREEN TRANSITION

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The accelerating convergence of artificial intelligence and the green economic transition is profoundly changing the nature of professional competencies across Europe and well beyond. The half-life of professional knowledge is only continuing to get shorter, yet our traditional frameworks for workforce development — historically built on the foundations of subject matter expert skill sets over decades, if not centuries — are faltering. This paper contends that the so-called [competence–knowledge–degree] model of education needs to be succeeded by a currency-based variant, where skills are regularly assessed and updated alongside an ongoing recognition of their current labor market value.

Based on updated data from the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), this year's conference covered highlights from the OECD Skills Outlook, a newly emerging area of research looking at AI-augmented workplaces and its impact on competencies required in four major areas including digital technology, renewable energy, healthcare and creative industries. In more detail, special focus is provided to the impact of Erasmus+ mobility programs as major accelerators of the development of transversal and hybrid skills – abilities integrating technical know-how with adaptability, intercultural communication and systems thinking.

The paper then introduces a framing -Dynamic Skills Currency Model (DSCM) - for educational institutions and policy-makers to situate curricula development concerning the intertwined phenomena of technological innovation and sustainability. These graphs underline the significance of cultivating an ecosystem for lifelong learning and investing in constituents of such: micro-credentialing systems will enable new skills to be developed, and cross-sectoral partnerships will orient firms towards creating jobs that help equip both current and future workers with agility in tomorrow's job market. This paper adds to the emerging literature on education policy for a future-ready workforce and presents practical recommendations for Erasmus+ stakeholders seeking to develop agile, inclusive and innovative workforces in Europe. *Keywords: Workforce readiness · Artificial intelligence · Green transition · Skills currency · Lifelong learning · Erasmus+ · Vocational education · Future of work · Micro-credentials · Transversal skills*

CP2 - UNLOCKING CAREER CHANGE: SUPPORTING STUDENTS AND PROFESSIONALS THROUGH UNCERTAINTY, MOBILITY AND CAREER TRANSITIONS

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Career transitions are becoming a normal part of professional life. Students and young professionals increasingly face uncertainty, changing labour markets, international mobility, and the need to build more than one career path during their lifetime. However, many people do not struggle only with a lack of information. They struggle with fear: fear of losing stability, professional status, income, or a familiar professional identity.

The presentation introduces a practical model for supporting clients through career change. It focuses on the “second fear zone” that often appears after learning begins but before real professional action starts. At this stage, people may already understand the new career direction, but still ask: “Will anyone hire me without experience?”, “Is it too late to change?”, “Can I compete?”, “What will happen to my income?”

The presentation will discuss how career counsellors and university career services can help students and professionals move from reflection to action. Special attention will be given to slash careers, testing a new professional role while maintaining stability, and using structured tools such as labour market analysis, gap analysis, an ideal workplace profile, a career transition roadmap, and coaching questions.

The session will be relevant for Erasmus coordinators, university career services, educators and counsellors who support students and graduates before, during and after international mobility, helping them transform learning experiences into employability, confidence and professional identity.

CAREER-EU Round Tables

CRT1 - FROM MOBILITY COORDINATOR TO CAREER ARCHITECT: WHY INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATION IS THE NEW GOLD STANDARD FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

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In an era of global instability and shifting job markets, the traditional role of the Erasmus+ Coordinator must evolve from an administrator to a strategic "Career Architect."

This presentation argues that international certification in career counseling is the key to transforming mobility into a tool for student resilience, while simultaneously acting as a powerful career catalyst for the coordinator.

Drawing on the Erasmus+ Impact Study and the Erasmus Careers Project, we demonstrate that international experience alone is no longer a sufficient competitive advantage. To succeed, mobility must be integrated into a structured "Career Map." This requires a synergetic alliance between Erasmus+ Offices and University Career Centers.

The presentation outlines the mutual benefits of this collaboration: Erasmus offices gain high-impact KPIs and reduced drop-out rates, while Career Centers expand their reach to global markets and elite talent pools.

Central to this synergy is the professionalization of staff through international certification.

For the coordinator, this shift is a remedy for burnout and professional stagnation. By mastering skills such as Gap-analysis, the STAR method, and global talent mapping, coordinators transition from "back-office" executors to certified strategists with high market value in both academia and the private sector.

Participants will receive a practical 4-step roadmap to integrate career coaching into the mobility cycle. The presentation concludes with a "Career Architect's Manifesto," calling for a move from measuring quantity to securing futures in an unpredictable world.