

# NEWSLETTER

*April 2026*



## 22<sup>ND</sup> ERASMUS CONGRESS AND EXHIBITION

*Under the Auspices of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the EU 2026*



**Dates: 22–26 June 2026**

**Venue: Aliathon Resort, Paphos, Cyprus**

The **European Association of Erasmus Coordinators (EAEC)** is pleased to announce the **22<sup>nd</sup> annual Erasmus Congress and Exhibition – ERACON 2026**. This flagship event will bring together Erasmus Coordinators, Placement and Internship Managers, researchers, and professionals from academia and industry to exchange experiences and best practices.

It is our distinct honour to announce that the **Plenary Speaker of the conference will be Mr. Johannes Gehringer**, Policy Officer for Higher Education and Erasmus+ at the European Commission, representing the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC).

Mr. Johannes Gehringer works in the unit responsible for the Erasmus+ programme and higher education policy, where he is primarily in charge of higher education mobility under the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) and Erasmus+. He has also served as a policy adviser to the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the European Union on matters related to education and culture. He is trained as an engineer, political scientist, and linguist.

**The National Agency of Cyprus for Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps will chair a series of sessions during the Congress, which are available for reference in the official programme: <https://eracon.info/programme/>**

In addition to participating in these sessions, participants are warmly invited to share best practices, initiatives, or policy updates by submitting a presentation proposal in line with the abstract specifications to: [programme@eracon.eu](mailto:programme@eracon.eu).

**National Agencies are kindly invited to register by clicking the button below:**

**CLICK HERE**

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The ERACON Congress will feature:

- Workshops & Sessions on Erasmus+ 2021–2027, quality of ERASMUS+ activities, staff mobility, funding, and policy.
- Erasmus Staff Week with training and collaboration opportunities.
- Meeting with representatives of European ERASMUS+ National Agencies
- Networking for future KA2 projects
- University-to-University Meetings to initiate or strengthen partnerships
- Go-Exchange Fair for networking and mobility opportunities

Proposals for sessions, workshops, and paper presentations are welcome, giving participants the chance to actively shape the future of Erasmus.

More information: [eracon.info](https://eracon.info)

Registration: [ERACON 2026 Registration](#)

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## News

### Erasmus+ Calls 2026 – Applications Closed

The Erasmus+ 2026 call for proposals has officially closed, marking another highly competitive funding round across Europe. The call, launched by the European Commission in November 2025, offered substantial funding opportunities for projects in education, training, youth, and sport, with an overall budget of approximately **€5.2 billion**. Application deadlines were spread across February and March 2026, depending on the action. Key deadlines included:

- **12 February 2026** for youth mobility and Erasmus Mundus actions
- **19 February 2026** for mobility of learners and staff (Key Action 1)
- **5 March 2026** for cooperation partnerships and large-scale projects (Key Action 2)

The 2026 call continued to prioritise key European Union objectives, including:

- New action for schools: **European Partnerships for School Development** to support innovative teaching and skills development in school education.
- Continued funding for mobility, partnerships, cooperation projects, and Jean Monnet activities to integrate EU topics into curricula.
- This call strengthens Erasmus+ support for **digital skills, green skills** and civic engagement.

With thousands of organisations applying across Europe and partner countries, the strong response highlights the continued relevance and demand for Erasmus+ funding and international collaboration opportunities.

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### EU Strengthens Global Cooperation Through Green Energy Investment

The European Commission has led a major international initiative securing **€15.5 billion** to support renewable energy development across Africa. The campaign, led by Ursula von der

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Leyen and Cyril Ramaphosa, aims to accelerate the green transition and expand access to electricity for millions of people.

The investment will fund large-scale renewable energy projects, contributing to sustainable development, job creation, and low-carbon economic growth. In total, the initiative is expected to generate **26.8 GW of renewable energy** and provide electricity to **17.5 million households** currently without reliable access.

The initiative is part of the European Union's general commitment to international cooperation, sustainability, and global development key priorities, all of which are also being addressed through various Erasmus+ projects on green skills, innovation, and capacity building

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## United Kingdom Set to Rejoin Erasmus+ in 2027

One of the most significant developments in European academic mobility is the confirmed return of the United Kingdom to the Erasmus+ programme. Following an agreement with the European Union, the UK will rejoin the programme from January 2027, restoring participation for students, apprentices, educators, and youth workers.

The UK's financial contribution for the first year is estimated at approximately **£570 million**, with **over 100,000 participants** expected to benefit. This development will restore mobility opportunities for study, traineeships, and staff exchanges, and further strengthening cooperation across European education systems.

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## Erasmus+ 2024 in Numbers: Almost 1.5 Million Participants

The latest Erasmus+ Annual Report has revealed the programme's impact in 2024. With an annual budget of **€4.7 billion**, the programme supported more than **34,400 projects**, involving over **85,600 organisations**, and provided learning opportunities to almost **1.5 million participants** — including students, teachers, trainers, and youth workers.

The report also highlights support for nearly **265,000 people with fewer opportunities**, including migrants, people with disabilities, and citizens from remote or socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. These numbers reinforce Erasmus+ as the EU's most impactful education and mobility programme.

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Looking ahead, the European Commission proposed in July 2025 a long-term budget including a significantly strengthened Erasmus+, with a proposed **50% increase** compared to the 2021–2027 cycle.

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## EU PROJECT - News

### Erasmus+ Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) — 2026 Call Now Open

The European Commission has published two new reports highlighting how Erasmus+-funded Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) are driving innovation in vocational education and training (VET) across Europe.

Since **2019**, the EU has funded **69 CoVE projects**, involving partners from over **30 countries**. These centres bring together VET providers, businesses, research institutions, and public authorities to deliver high-quality and flexible training aligned with labour market needs.

The **2026 CoVE Call** is now open, with a budget of **€68 million** and a deadline of **3 September 2026**. An online information session held on **19 March 2026** provided guidance on the policy context, application process, and proposal preparation.

Organisations active in VET are encouraged to explore this opportunity and contribute to strengthening skills development, innovation, and cooperation across Europe.

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### SMILE Project — First In-Person Meeting Confirmed in Ankara

The SMILE project (Supporting Mobility and Internationalization for Learning and Engagement in Somali HEIs), **which kicked off in January 2026**, is advancing to its first in-person activity.

The consortium has confirmed its first meeting and mobility event for **April 2026** in Ankara, hosted by Middle East Technical University (METU). This 36-month initiative aims to strengthen the internationalisation capacity of Somali Higher Education Institutions through academic mobility, institutional cooperation, and digital education.

As a project partner, EAEC is proud to contribute to this collaborative effort aimed at building sustainable international engagement for Somali universities.

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## **GREENENTRE4DEAF - Building Inclusive Green Entrepreneurship Pathways**

The **GREENENTRE4DEAF** project, launched in December 2024, continues to make progress in developing VR-based learning scenarios for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) learners across Europe. Partners have been conducting interviews with green companies to capture their sustainable practices and assess their willingness to collaborate with DHH professionals.

EAEC, in collaboration with Emphasys Centre, has engaged directly with the DHH community through targeted meetings bringing together DHH adults, higher education experts, and green industry representatives. The next phase will focus on expanding these insights into the GREENENTRE4DEAF Living Hub and preparing validation and training tools.

[Website](#)

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## **DATA-READY - Advancing Data Literacy in European Schools**

The **DATA-READY** project is making important strides in promoting data literacy in compulsory education across Europe. Recent research in Greece, Poland, Germany, Portugal, and Cyprus revealed that data literacy remains **fragmented in curricula**, with minimal teacher training and few dedicated resources.

In Cyprus, focus groups with educators were held to explore current practices and co-design future actions to support data literacy. The project is also building partnerships with the EVIDALI and InclusiveFuture projects to explore collaborative synergies. As the **dissemination leader**, EAEC is committed to sharing these insights widely across Europe.

[Website](#)

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## **CREATIVEinGREEN - Towards a Sustainable UX Future**

The CREATIVEinGREEN project is shaping the next generation of **e-User Experience Designers** who can bridge creativity, technology, and sustainability. Together with partners from Portugal, Italy, Turkey, Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, and Greece, we are developing a curriculum

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that combines **digital skills** (design, IT, XR) with **soft skills** (entrepreneurship, communication, innovation).

Alongside this, we are co-creating an **interactive learning tool and serious game** where students explore green and digital practices in immersive ways. The game challenges learners to make creative design choices with real environmental impact — building awareness, skills, and critical thinking in a fun format.

Teacher and student interviews are also helping us shape tools that truly respond to real needs. Stay tuned for the piloting of our game and the release of first results!

[Website](#)

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## SignVET - Advancing Inclusive VET Through Sign Language

The **SignVET project** is continuing its mission to make vocational education and training more accessible for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) learners across Europe. After successful meetings in Porto (March 2025) and Bilbao (May 2025), the consortium recently held its next meeting in **Nicosia, March 2026**.

SignVET's goals include equipping VET teachers with skills to produce materials in national sign languages, improving DHH students' access to vocational programmes, and promoting sign language learning among hearing students. As **Quality Assurance and Dissemination leaders**, EAEC is ensuring the project's visibility and impact as work now moves toward delivering the first tools for teachers and learners.

[Website](#)

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## ABC BlendEd Launches Third Course Edition Focused on Africa

The ABC BlendEd project has launched its third course edition, with a dedicated focus on strengthening collaboration with higher education institutions across Africa. Building on the success of previous editions, this new cycle aims to further promote blended mobility, digital learning, and international academic cooperation.

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The programme combines virtual learning components with collaborative activities, enabling participants to engage in intercultural exchange while developing key transversal competencies. Particular emphasis is placed on fostering sustainable partnerships and enhancing institutional capacity.

This new edition reinforces the project's commitment to inclusive, innovative, and globally connected higher education.

[Website](#)

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## **STRCUU Project Advances Climate Resilience and Research Capacity in Ugandan Universities**

The STRCUU Project (Strengthening Teaching and Research Capacities in recently established Ugandan Universities) continues to support the development of higher education institutions in Uganda, with a strong focus on climate change resilience and green energy solutions for farming communities.

The project aims to enhance the capacity of emerging universities to contribute effectively to national and regional sustainability efforts. Through targeted training, research development, and international collaboration, STRCUU equips institutions with the knowledge and tools needed to address climate-related challenges affecting agricultural sectors.

As part of its ongoing activities, the project recently organized a training session on scientific writing and the preparation of policy briefs. The training followed the core stages of the research process, from defining research problems and objectives to the interpretation and discussion of results.

Combining interactive learning with practical, supervised working sessions, participants had the opportunity to apply key concepts directly to their own research outputs and policy documents. This initiative further strengthens academic capacity and supports the dissemination of research with real societal impact.

[Website](#)

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## TRUCE Project: Advancing Competence-Based Education in African Higher Education

The Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) project **TRUCE (Transitioning Universities and Higher Education Regulators to Competence-Based Education in East and West Africa)** is addressing a critical challenge facing higher education systems in Sub-Saharan Africa: the mismatch between graduate skills and labour market needs.

Historically, higher education in many African countries has been shaped by hierarchical academic traditions, where curricula and quality assurance systems have remained largely theory-driven. While this model ensured academic continuity, it has contributed to rising graduate unemployment and growing public concern about the relevance of university education.

In response, governments such as Ghana and Uganda have introduced Competence-Based Education (CBE) policies, adopted in 2012 and 2020 respectively, to promote practical, entrepreneurial, and employable skills. However, universities, particularly public institutions, have been slow to implement these reforms.

The TRUCE project brings together public universities, national education regulators, European partners, and regional stakeholders such as RUFORUM to accelerate this transition. Its overarching goal is to strengthen the capacity of higher education institutions (HEIs) and regulatory bodies to effectively design, implement, and sustain CBE systems.

To achieve this, TRUCE is developing a comprehensive suite of tools and resources, including CBE-aligned curricula, assessment frameworks, accreditation guidelines, and capacity-building programmes. A strong emphasis is placed on collaboration with industry, ensuring that educational programmes are aligned with real-world needs and outcomes.

The project also aims to create a lasting impact through the establishment of a Community of Practice, the training of Master Trainers and assessors, and the engagement of companies in challenge-based learning approaches. In total, TRUCE will directly and indirectly train over 1,000 university teachers, while strengthening regulatory capacity at both national and regional levels.

By fostering a systemic shift towards competence-based learning, TRUCE contributes to enhancing the societal and economic value of higher education in Africa, equipping graduates with the skills needed to thrive in dynamic labour markets and supporting sustainable development across the region.

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## The Erasmus Barometer Takes the Stage at ERACON

At this year's **ERACON Conference**, one of the most engaging moments will return with the presentation of the **Erasmus+ Barometer 2025**, a growing initiative that is quietly becoming a **reference point** for understanding the evolving impact of mobility in Europe.

Rather than offering abstract statistics, the Barometer brings together **voices from across the Erasmus+ ecosystem**: students, alumni, academics, and institutions. Its strength lies in this collective perspective. It does not just measure participation; it captures **real experiences**, what mobility means in practice, how it shapes skills, and where it still falls short.

During the session, what stands out is the **shift in narrative**. Mobility is no longer discussed only in terms of numbers or destinations. The Barometer highlights **employability, inclusion, and the long-term value of international exposure**. Participants note that while Erasmus+ continues to open doors, expectations have changed: students are more focused on **outcomes**, institutions on **quality**, and employers on **transferable skills**.

The discussion also addresses **persistent gaps**. Access remains uneven, particularly for students from underrepresented backgrounds. **Digitalization**, although accelerated in recent years, has yet to fully complement physical mobility in a meaningful way. These are not new concerns—but the Barometer gives them **greater clarity**, supported by consistent feedback.

What makes this presentation particularly relevant for ERACON is its **practical impact**. The findings are not meant to sit in reports; they are tools for **decision-making**. For higher education institutions and stakeholders at the conference, this translates into clear priorities: **improving support systems, strengthening partnerships, and aligning mobility experiences with real-world demands**.

In many ways, the Erasmus+ Barometer reflects a **maturing programme**. After decades of growth, the question is no longer how to expand Erasmus+, but how to **refine it**. The conversation at ERACON suggests that **listening—systematically and continuously—may be the most effective way forward**.

As Erasmus+ enters its next phase, initiatives like the Barometer will likely play a **central role**—not as a scoreboard, but as a **compass**.

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As co-organiser of **ERACON 2026**, the **National Agency of Cyprus for Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps (IDEP)** will host a full series of presentations and interactive workshops on **Wednesday, 24 June 2026**, under the theme “**Erasmus+ Actions and European Youth Opportunities**”. These sessions are designed for higher education staff and youth professionals who wish to better understand how Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps can support mobility, participation, and capacity building across Europe.

The programme will present **four interlinked thematic activities** that together offer a practical overview of key tools and funding opportunities:

- **European Student Card Initiative (ESCI)** – introduction to ESCI as a central pillar in the digital transformation of higher education in Europe, including the integration of the European Student Card and the Erasmus Without Paper Network, and the concrete benefits for students, institutions, and other stakeholders through data interoperability and simplified mobility procedures.
- **European Solidarity Corps (ESC)** – presentation of participation opportunities for young people and organisations, examples of successful projects, and the role of the ESC in promoting solidarity and social cohesion, including tools and methodologies for active youth engagement.
- **European Youth Card** – overview of the European Youth Card as an instrument to support empowerment, mobility, and access to opportunities, and its links with Erasmus+ activities and local youth initiatives.
- **Funding Opportunities Beyond Mobility – Youth** – guidance on European and national programmes that support innovation, cooperation, and youth participation, complemented by practical tips for preparing successful project proposals, managing projects effectively, and building sustainable partnerships beyond traditional mobility schemes.

Across all activities, participants will be invited to engage in discussions, ask questions, and reflect on how these initiatives can be used strategically within their own institutions and networks, making the sessions particularly relevant for academic coordinators, international relations offices, and staff working with young people.

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*This newsletter highlights how our projects bring innovation, sustainability, and inclusion into European education. The journey continues and we invite you to stay connected, share our news, and join us in shaping the future of learning across Europe.*

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## GET IN TOUCH

### EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF ERASMUS COORDINATORS

W: [www.eaecnet.com](http://www.eaecnet.com)

E: [info@eaecnet.com](mailto:info@eaecnet.com)

T: +357 22 283 600

Address: 36 Stasinou Str., Office 104, 2003 Strovolos, Nicosia, Cyprus

### EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF CAREER GUIDANCE

W: [www.eacg.eu](http://www.eacg.eu)

E: [info@eacg.eu](mailto:info@eacg.eu)

T: +357 22 283 600

Address: 36 Stasinou Str., Office 104, 2003 Strovolos, Nicosia, Cyprus