

Newsletter

August 2026



22ND ERASMUS CONGRESS AND EXHIBITION

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



A Successful Congress in Paphos



The **22nd Erasmus Congress and Exhibition (ERACON 2026)** took place from **22 to 26 June 2026** at the Aliathon Resort in Paphos, Cyprus, under the auspices of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the EU. The event brought together **104 participants from 22 countries**, including Erasmus Coordinators, placement managers, researchers, and professionals from academia and industry across Europe and beyond.

The congress opened with a keynote plenary by **Mr. Johannes Gehringer** from the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, who addressed the current achievements of Erasmus+ and the outlook for the next programme generation, a timely and much-discussed topic given the ongoing negotiations for the post-2027 cycle.

The programme featured a rich mix of plenary sessions, thematic sessions, round tables, workshops, and paper presentations covering topics ranging from Erasmus+ quality standards and the Mobility Barometer to AI integration in mobility management, Centres of Vocational Excellence, and career development in international education.

The **National Agency of Cyprus for Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps (IDEP)** co-organised a dedicated session on 24 June, presenting four interlinked European initiatives: the European Student Card Initiative (ESCI), the European Solidarity Corps (ESC), the European Youth Card, and funding opportunities beyond mobility.

EAEC and EACG were strongly represented throughout the congress. Highlights included the **Networking Workshop for Erasmus+ Funding Programmes 2026–2027** led by Gregory Makrides and Thomas Economou, the **CREATIVEinGREEN Workshop** facilitated by Elpi Margariti, and the **SignVET: Assistive Technologies for Education** session (EWS6), presented by Thomas Economou and Elpiniki Margariti, which showcased the project's AI-powered bidirectional translation tool between Portuguese and Portuguese Sign Language.

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Participants came from Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, and Ukraine, reflecting the truly international character of the Erasmus community that ERACON continues to bring together year after year.

ERACON 2027 details will be announced in due course. Stay connected via www.eracon.info.



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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.

Erasmus+: Shaping Student Mobility Beyond 2027

The **ESCI+ Conference**, held in **Brussels on 11 June 2026**, brought together representatives from higher education institutions, National Agencies, student organizations and policymakers to discuss the future of **Erasmus+ student mobility beyond 2027**.

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Participants explored how the **European Student Card Initiative (ESCI)** can further simplify mobility by improving **digital services**, **interoperability between universities**, and reducing administrative procedures for students.

The conference also presented the results of recent consultations on the future of the initiative and recognized outstanding institutional achievements through the **ESCI Champions Awards**. The discussions will contribute to shaping a **more connected, digital and student-centered Erasmus+ programme** for the next programming period.

Erasmus+ Next Generation: A €40.8 Billion Budget for 2028–2034

At ERACON 2026, the European Commission presented the architecture of the new EU long-term budget for 2028–2034. Erasmus+ will sit under Heading 2 — Competitiveness, Prosperity and Security, alongside a renewed Horizon Europe and a new European Competitiveness Fund (ECF).

The numbers are significant. Erasmus+, which will now integrate the European Solidarity Corps, is allocated **€40.8 billion**. AgoraEU adds another **€8.6 billion**. Together they represent around **3% of the total EU long-term budget**. Heading 2 stands at **€590 billion**, within a total EU budget of approximately **€1,985 billion** across all headings.

This is a major step up from the current 2021–2027 cycle and signals a clear EU commitment to education, mobility and youth as strategic priorities for the next decade.

Where Erasmus+ Students Go, and Where They Come From?

Data presented at ERACON 2026 on student and staff mobilities starting in 2024 shows clear patterns in European mobility flows.

On the receiving side, **Spain leads with 14.3%** of all inbound mobilities, followed by **Italy (10.8%)** and **Germany (7.8%)**. On the sending side, **France tops the list at 13.1%**, followed by **Spain (12.4%)** and **Germany (12.0%)**.

Spain appears in both lists as a top destination and a top sender, confirming its central role in the Erasmus+ ecosystem. France, despite not featuring among the top three receiving countries, is the single largest source of outgoing participants.

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Erasmus+ Building Skills Worldwide

The European Commission has published "**Erasmus+ Building Skills Worldwide**", a new publication highlighting how the programme supports **skills development**, **innovation**, and **international cooperation** across partner countries around the globe.

The publication presents successful Erasmus+ projects that strengthen **higher education**, **vocational education and training (VET)**, **youth participation**, and **capacity building**, helping institutions respond to labour market needs and global challenges.

Through mobility, knowledge exchange and strategic partnerships, Erasmus+ continues to promote **digital skills**, **green transition**, **entrepreneurship**, and **social inclusion**, reinforcing its role as a key contributor to the **EU Global Gateway strategy** and sustainable development worldwide.

Source: European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) Newsletter, 16 June 2026; European Commission.

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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Funding Opportunities – Erasmus+

The **European Commission** continues to encourage organisations active in education, training, youth, and sport to explore the wide range of **Erasmus+ funding opportunities** available through the **EU Funding & Tenders Portal**. The programme supports mobility projects, cooperation partnerships, capacity-building initiatives, centres of vocational excellence, and innovative actions that strengthen international collaboration and educational excellence.

As preparations continue for the next **Erasmus+** programme beyond **2027**, the Commission is encouraging both experienced beneficiaries and new applicants to engage with upcoming calls and develop projects addressing priorities such as digital transformation, inclusion, sustainability, civic participation, and skills development. Organisations are also encouraged to monitor new funding opportunities throughout the year, as additional calls and initiatives are published regularly.

The **Erasmus+** programme remains one of the European Union's flagship investments in education and youth, supporting thousands of institutions and millions of participants across Europe and partner countries every year.



SignVET at ERACON 2026: Bridging the Gap Between Sign Language and Vocational Education

At this year's ERACON 2026 Congress in Paphos, Cyprus, the SignVET project took the stage to present one of its most innovative contributions to inclusive education: bidirectional translation tools between Portuguese and Portuguese Sign Language (LGP), as well as between Spanish and Spanish Sign Language (LSE), powered by 3D avatars and artificial intelligence.

The session, titled *"SignVET – Gateway to Equity: Engaging Deaf Students into VET"*, walked attendees through the origins of the tool, which emerged from a concrete challenge: how to effectively communicate with deaf students in vocational classroom settings. What began as a research initiative has evolved over a decade into a fully developed platform with real-world applications for teachers, students, and institutions.

At the heart of the demonstration was the translation pipeline itself. The system converts written language into sign language gloss — the written representation of sign language structure — applying a precise set of linguistic transformation rules that account for the fundamental differences between the two languages. Unlike spoken Portuguese and Spanish,

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which generally follow a Subject-Verb-Object order and rely on elements such as articles, prepositions and verb conjugation, Portuguese Sign Language (LGP) and Spanish Sign Language (LSE) use distinct visual-spatial grammatical structures. Meaning can be conveyed through sign order, body movement, spatial positioning and facial expressions. The SignVET tool processes these linguistic differences automatically, generating the appropriate gloss output and enabling a 3D avatar to render signs in real time.

The **SignVET platform** brings together four integrated tools: a **Translator**, a **Video Generator**, a **SignVET Studio**, and a **Dashboard** — offering a complete workflow for educators to create accessible VET materials in sign language, without requiring prior knowledge of it.

The project's goals are clear: support VET teachers in producing accessible content, improve access for deaf and hard of hearing students, and promote sign language awareness among hearing participants. As the session demonstrated, technology and linguistics, when combined with a genuine commitment to inclusion, can open doors that have long remained closed.

SignVET is an Erasmus+ funded project. For more information: [Website](#)



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.

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CREATIVEinGREEN: Driving digital and sustainable transformation of the AVM sector with innovation, education, and XR technology

On 24 June 2026, the European Association of Career Guidance (EACG) hosted a CREATIVEinGREEN Multiplier Event in Pafos, Cyprus, as part of the ERACON 2026 programme. The event brought together educators, researchers and professionals from across Europe, providing an opportunity to present the project's vision for transforming audio-visual and multimedia education through the integration of digital innovation, sustainability and green skills.

Participants were introduced to the project's main results, including the "Green the Web: Sustainable UX/UI" curriculum, the multilingual Moodle learning platform, the serious game and the interactive Augmented Reality learning scenarios. The session highlighted how these resources can support higher education students, educators and creative-industry professionals in designing more sustainable digital solutions, developing entrepreneurial competencies and responding to the evolving needs of the creative and cultural sectors.



D.E.F. Focus Group Event: Building More Inclusive Pathways to Entrepreneurship

On 24 June 2026, a national stakeholder focus group for the D.E.F. project was organised during ERACON 2026 in Pafos, Cyprus. Coordinated by Thomas Oikonomou from the European Association of ERASMUS Coordinators (EAEC), the session brought together representatives from education, training, business, public authorities and innovation ecosystems to discuss emerging labour-market trends, skills needs and the barriers that deaf people continue to face in employment and entrepreneurship.

The D.E.F. project—*Deaf Entrepreneurs for the Future*—aims to promote equal access to entrepreneurial education for deaf learners and to support higher education institutions in adapting entrepreneurship and business-management courses to their needs. During the focus group, participants exchanged practical experiences and recommendations and provided feedback on key project outputs, particularly the e-Compendium and the e-Space. The findings will contribute to a common European report, the improvement of the project's tools and the development of recommendations for more inclusive education and labour-market policies.

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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.

GET IN TOUCH

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