

**Mid-term Evaluation Report of the Erasmus+ Programme
and Predecessor Programmes
Slovak Republic**

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Abbreviations

CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
LL	Lifelong learning
ECVET	European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training
ESF	European Social Fund
EST	European Shared Treasure
ET 2020	Education & Training 2020, a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training
EU	European Union
ICT	Information and communication technology
IT	Information technology
IVT	Initial vocational training
KA1	Learning mobility of individuals
KA101	School education staff mobility
KA102	VET learner and staff mobility
KA103	Higher education student and staff mobility (between Programme and Partner Countries)
KA104	Adult education staff mobility
KA105	Youth mobility
KA2	Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices
KA200	Strategic partnerships focusing on multiple areas
KA201	Strategic partnerships for school education
KA202	Strategic partnerships for vocational education and training
KA203	Strategic partnerships for higher education
KA204	Strategic partnerships for adult education
KA205	Strategic partnerships for youth
KA219	Strategic partnerships for schools only
KA3	Support for policy reform
KA347	Dialogue between young people and policy makers
SME	Small and medium enterprises
NA	National agency
OER	Open educational resources
VET	Vocational education and training
CD	Citizens with disabilities
LLP	Lifelong Learning Programme
PIC	Participant Identification Code
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SAAIC	Slovak Academic Association for International Cooperation

Executive summary

Evaluation outcomes are formulated into two units, with respect to the expectations derived from impact analysis of Alternative Scenario 4¹ and the five areas covered by the evaluation questions formulated in European Commission guideline².

Fulfilment of impact analysis expectations:

i) Effect of a single point of contact (“one-stop shop”)

Developments in Slovakia neither confirm nor refute benefits of establishing a one-stop shop in other countries. Evaluation outcomes demonstrate that the number of national agencies is not the decisive factor in the success of programme management. Conversely, the continuity in providing services and the professional work done by the individual specialised agency employees are important. We support the preservation of two agencies as sufficient for Slovakia’s needs. A common gateway in the form of a high quality joint website would be beneficial.

ii) Increased participation as a result of simplification of the programme structure

The public was disoriented at the start of programme implementation as a result of abandoning proven names and the confusing selection of a name for the unified programme. Erasmus+ was perceived as an innovation of the traditional Erasmus brand and the public perceived it as being focused on higher education. Full understanding and acceptance of these changes was only possible thanks to the extra efforts of the national agencies. Stabilisation followed this initial uncertainty and a reduction in project activities at the start of project implementation, and the new structure is now fully understood and perceived in a positive manner. Participation is expected to improve because of the simplification of the programme structure.

iii) Improved inter-sector cooperation as a result of simplification of the programme structure

Improved cooperation between fields and sectors has not yet been observed in the metric of submitted projects. The actual existence of a new programme structure is not a sufficient driver for change on its own. More targeted intervention must be considered (such as increasing financial support for key actions KA2 and KA3 given their tremendous potential to support system changes).

iv) More time spent on project results thanks to a reduction in administrative burdens

These results are not clear cut. Fulfilment of this intention has been reported and administration has been simplified, but a higher workload has been placed on project coordinators, especially when cooperation involves a large number of different countries with different approaches to such administration (especially encountered in KA201 and KA204 projects in connection with employment agenda and KA202 in connection with the financial agenda). Efforts to reduce the administrative burden must continue. Criticism of the administrative demands with concurrent appreciation for IT tools has appeared, particularly with regards to youth. The scope and language of the programme guide has proven particularly problematic as it disadvantages the activation of certain informal youth groups.

v) Higher cost efficiency and economies of scale

Higher cost efficiency and economies of scale have not become evident yet in Slovakia. Significant changes have taken place in the national agencies, even though they remain independent. Large-scale internal restructuring in the national agency for education and training (NA (education))³ was induced by increased demands made by the new programme structure. Changes in the national agency for youth (NA (youth))⁴ were induced by external factors and were not related to the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme; however, it did increase its staffing level in 2017. The effect of the new programme structure, with the exception of changes in the national agencies, is not

¹ Commission staff working paper: impact assessment on education and training actions accompanying the document Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a single Education, Training, Youth and Sport Programme for the period 2014-2020, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:6504cbd3-689b-40a0-a6dd-83ac07a8fc57.0001.01/DOC_1&format=PDF.

² European Commission (2016). National reports on the implementation and impact of Erasmus+: guidance note.

³ The host organisation is the Slovak Academic Association for International Cooperation (SAAIC), www.saaic.sk.

⁴ The host organisation is IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute, www.iuventa.sk.

yet entirely clear. Findings from the field primarily involve practical aspects of financing (e.g. modifying the low lump-sums amount for staff costs and increasing the number of distance zones for reimbursement of travel costs).

Summary of responses to the evaluation questions per the evaluation criteria

European Commission guideline contains 21 evaluation questions grouped into 5 units known as evaluation criteria. Questions 1 to 9 examine achieved objectives, questions 10 to 15 determine whether the objectives were met efficiently, questions 16 and 17 determine the relevance of the objectives, questions 18 and 19 examine whether the activities induced by the Erasmus+ programme are coherent with each other and coherent with other activities at the Member States level, and the final two questions, 20 and 21, investigate the added value of the programme compared to activities at the Member States level and the potential for improving the European added value if the budget was increased.

i) Effectiveness

The Erasmus+ programme is considered effective and builds upon the success of preceding programmes while delivering a significant step forward compared to them. The most significant progress has been made in school education: responses from schools indicate that Erasmus+ projects are better developed and the programme itself is more effective than the Comenius sub-programme. Despite (initial) difficulties, emphasis is placed on development planning as an example of a positive impulse and a shift forward in programming activities. Programme objectives, as defined in the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the programme⁵, are fulfilled, albeit differently, in principle, as shown in the annexes, specifically in Tables 1 to 3 investigating the fulfilment of the individual specific objectives and in Table 5, focusing on general objectives. Specific reserves were identified in the fulfilment of these general objectives, primarily in relation to support for lifelong learning and youth with respect to labour market equality.

ii) Efficiency

Evaluation findings are conflicting. Large losses in efficiency were recorded, especially in the first phases of programme implementation, in response to efforts to overcome the shock of the transformational changes. The economic impact of unifying preceding programmes is questionable, given that agencies did not merge; however, the quality of the services provided by the competent and responsible agency staff has a greater influence on the actual life cycle of the programme than institutional status and the number of agencies.

Detailed assessment of the efficiency of the Erasmus+ programme based on the implementation of projects will be available after 2018. Additional efforts to increase the effectiveness of projects and the cost efficiency of investments certainly requires cooperation on the part of the national authority to support a "life cycle extension" for a project using measures to exploit its outcomes on a wider scale.

The issue of the critical mass of projects to achieve the desired effect remains an open question, and therefore the efficiency in the case of a small number of projects or an insufficient level of funding, i.e. in KA2 activities.

iii) Relevance

The objectives of the Erasmus+ programme are relevant and do not need to be changed. The relevance of the individual general objectives for Erasmus+ programme fields or sectors may only fully manifest themselves in a suitable national context. Additional clarification in terms of the national context and proper configuration of supporting national priorities within national education and employment policy may contribute to the increase of the relevance of the programme.

iv) Internal and external coherence and complementarity

There are no indications of inconsistencies or detrimental overlapping from the perspective of project implementors or management structures. The actual unification of the preceding programmes and change in the structure do not themselves create the prerequisites for synergies across fields and sectors. So far, it appears that the expected synergies have not been delivered, nor will they be in the near future, given the differences in target groups and the specifics of project work in different fields

⁵ Regulation (EU) No. 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing "Erasmus+": the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R1288&from=EN>.

and sectors. It would be apt to investigate opportunities for specialised interventions; however these are unlikely to be feasible without an increase in the budget for key actions KA2 or KA3.

The programme is unique and irreplaceable in the field of education and training. The same applies to youth, where it remains complementary to an existing domestic grant structure.

v) European added value and sustainability

The Erasmus+ programme has, just like its predecessors and likely successors, a very strong and inherent impulse to support the sharing of European values and promote community development through cooperation and tackling common problems. No additional intervention is needed to support an increase in European added value.

Basis of evaluation and methodology for preparing the national report

Basis of evaluation

This report is the outcome of evaluation conducted for the Erasmus+ programme in Slovakia, which has been implemented since 2014, along with its predecessors implemented from 2007 to 2013. In accordance with the assignment, this evaluation should consider the impact of changes implemented into the Erasmus+ programme, compared to preceding programmes, from the perspective of the participating country, and is focused on decentralised education and training and youth activities in accordance with European Commission guideline⁶.

Member States perspectives serve as a complement to the overall external evaluation of the programme and should be of assistance in improving the mid-term evaluation report for the Erasmus+ programme, which the European Commission shall complete by the end of 2017⁷.

The new Erasmus+ programme is the outcome of consultations and impact analyses of the preceding programmes and a direct reaction to criticisms focused on excessive fragmentation and the risk of the unnecessary overlap of activities. Criticisms included, for instance, that the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) had 6 sub-programmes, more than 50 objectives and more than 60 actions. This drives the “risk of overlapping”, the existence of activities with very small levels of funding that cannot achieve the “critical mass required for long-term impact” and demonstrate “limited opportunities to improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness”⁸.

In addition, the need to eliminate “similarities between the general objectives and delivery mechanisms of the Lifelong Learning sub-programmes and of Youth in Action programme, both focused on mobility, cooperation and human capital, particularly as concerns the management and implementation of the Programme”⁹ was identified.

Alternative Scenario 4 accenting the integration of the preceding programmes was selected out of the four alternative scenarios based on careful assessment of the social, economic and legal impact. In this alternative, a positive impact was expected, with lower administrative costs and improved availability of information and services through the establishment of a one-stop shop from the integration of the national agencies and the integration of formerly independent programmes. An increase in the relevance of the programme is expected from a “smaller number of priorities” and simplification of the programme structure to “encourage greater participation and better inter-sector cooperation” and contribute to a more effective response to “the most important problems Europe is facing in connection with the development of labour skills”.¹⁰ The simplification of rules should result in higher cost-effectiveness and a reduction in the administrative burden to shift focus on the outcomes

⁶ European Commission (2016). National reports on the implementation and impact of Erasmus+: guidance note.

⁷ Regulation (EU) No. 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing 'Erasmus+': the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R1288&from=EN>.

⁸ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing 'Erasmus for all': the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0788:FIN:EN:PDF>, p. 45.

⁹ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing 'Erasmus for all': the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0788:FIN:EN:PDF>, p. 45.

¹⁰ Commission staff working paper: impact assessment on education and training actions accompanying the document Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a single Education, Training, Youth and Sport Programme for the period 2014-2020, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:6504cbd3-689b-40a0-a6dd-83ac07a8fc57.0001.01/DOC_1&format=PDF, p. 68.

of activities. The establishment of an integrated programme should permit “economies of scale, simplify processes and the rationalisation of reporting”¹¹. These expectations are important and are reflected upon in formulating conclusions and summarising the results of evaluation.

Evaluation methodology

Programme evaluation was divided into multiple phases upon agreement with representatives of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as the “Ministry of Education”) and the national agencies.

A team of evaluators was created in the introductory phase and assigned specific evaluation tasks: school education – K. Vladová, M. Rychnavská, vocational education and training – V. Kalina, A. Čermáková, higher education – M. Dzimko, B. Brestenská, adult learning – Z. Štefániková, youth – O. Gallo, N. Maur, cross-cutting activities and synthesis of reports – D. Jelínková, national coordinator and synthesis of reports – J. Vantuch. Starting points and expectations based on Alternative Scenario 4, used as the basis for transforming the LLP and the Youth in Action programme into the integrated Erasmus+ programme, and evaluation questions defined by European Commission Guideline were all analysed.

European Commission guideline contains 21 evaluation questions grouped into 5 units. Detailed analysis of these questions and relevant documents demonstrated that the terms and terminology used in European discourse lack an unambiguously stable Slovak equivalent in all cases. Work in this phase was focused on finding consensus in the use of terms and the elaboration of additional and explanatory questions for the evaluation questions. Based on the discussion at the first working meeting covering programme relevance (especially in connection with evaluation questions 16 and 17) and subsequent commentary for the evaluators concerning all the evaluation questions, the national coordinator completed a list of 26 additional questions specifically for respondents, including coordinators and persons participating in projects, and 12 additional questions specifically for national agency staff.

These additional and explanatory questions were discussed at the second working meeting; the first 13 evaluation questions with the highest relevance for the evaluators working in the field were the primary subject of discussion. Procedures were also agreed upon with representatives of the national agencies to collect information from the national agencies and the specification of requests from evaluators for national agency cooperation (especially concerning access to documents).

Questionnaires, managed interviews (over the phone or in person) and analysis of the documents provided by the national agencies were used to collect information in the field. The evaluators completed the first draft of the partial underlying reports, which were presented and discussed at the third meeting of evaluators. The final versions of these underlying reports with answers to the individual evaluation questions were then sent to the national coordinator. A zero version of the synthesised report was created on the basis of these individual underlying materials and contained a summary of the answers to the evaluation questions, sometimes preserving the original text provided by the evaluators, even with overlapping and redundancy in responses to the individual evaluation questions.

The zero version of the report was then used for discussions with the national agencies, who were permitted to respond to the 12 additional questions intended for the national agencies, the evaluation questions, especially questions 14 to 21, and the zero version of the synthesised report itself. The amended zero version was then discussed with representatives of the national authority (Ministry of Education).

After these consultations, the first draft of the final report was completed, with ad hoc consultations held with evaluators and representatives of the national agencies and the Ministry of Education as needed. This first draft was then modified into the format required by the European Commission. The annexes to the report were completed to a high level of detail, and they document the fulfilment of specific and general objectives of the regulation and include examples of specific projects fulfilling applicable objectives.

The first draft was sent to evaluators and representatives of the national agencies and the Ministry of Education for final validation. All comments were reviewed at the validation meeting. Those relevant comments remaining after the meeting were incorporated, resulting in the final draft of the report.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 30.

Answers to the European Commission's evaluation questions

Effectiveness

(1) To what extent have the Erasmus+ programme and its predecessor programmes contributed to the realisation of the Erasmus+ specific objectives (as listed in point B.2 in annex 3) in your country? Are there differences across fields? Please provide, where relevant, your assessment for each of the specific objectives and provide evidence and examples where possible.

The Erasmus+ programme and preceding programmes (LLP and Youth in Action) have fulfilled the specific objectives in Article 5 of the Erasmus+ Regulation (hereinafter referred to as the "Regulation"). In the case of Erasmus+, this is a natural consequence of entry in the Regulation. In the case of preceding programmes, these objectives were fulfilled even if they were not explicitly formulated. The objectives and contents of project activities conducted in the preceding programmes, with any kind of priority, in many cases fulfilled those objectives explicitly named in the Regulation. Continuity in the understanding of the thought behind activities, regardless of the structuring of the programme, confirms this.

The actual contribution of the Erasmus+ programme to the fulfilment of these objectives is difficult to assess as the projects are only now being implemented. In the case of LLP and Youth in Action projects, we can clearly state that the specific objectives were met and we are able to determine if they had stronger or weaker effects. We cannot decide explicitly on the extent to which the programmes as a whole, both for Erasmus+ and its predecessor programmes, contribute to the fulfilment of specific objectives for a variety of reasons.

Understandably, there are differences between the individual areas and key actions/sub-programmes in terms of attractiveness and success in fulfilling the individual specific objectives. The results of analysis into the fulfilment of individual objectives are provided in the annex.

The tables in Annex 1 provide an overview of the fulfilment of the Regulation's objectives in "partnership" type projects. It is clear that the evaluators found conformity between the objectives and the projects. The fulfilment of the objectives in Article 5 (a) and (b) of the Regulation is fully documented in the Erasmus+ programme and LLP, with the exception of three sectors where major projects with a domestic coordinator were absent. The fulfilment of the objectives in Article 5 (c) of the Regulation cannot yet be evaluated in terms of the Erasmus+ programme, but it simply is a matter of time, as can be seen in the occurrence of major LLP projects.

The tables in Annex 2 provide an overview of "mobility" type projects. As expected, mobility presents a problem in terms of evaluating conformity with the specific objectives of the Regulation. Projects either lack the clear dominance of a single objective or are strikingly utilitarian, which is characteristic for mobility in higher education, as the fulfilment of the individual academic needs of students is the predominant trait.

The evaluators and NA (education) were unable to identify suitable projects outside of the VET sector in connection with the objectives of Article 5 (a) to (c) of the Regulation. The objective in Article 5 (d) of the Regulation is only relevant for higher education. In other sectors in the field of education and training, projects involving partnering ("third") countries could not be implemented, while the involvement of third countries could become a topic for discussion in the future, in the VET sector especially. Significant conformity was determined in the case of the objective in Article 5 (e) of the Regulation in school education, VET and adult learning. Language and multicultural aspects are inherent and explicitly targeted in higher education.

Annex 3 focuses on the fulfilment of youth objectives. All of the specific objectives in Article 11 (a) to (d) of the Regulation have been met in the opinion of the evaluators and Table 3 provides examples of noteworthy projects in terms of their fulfilment of the relevant objective. As opposed to education and training, conformity with the objectives of the Regulation were not examined in detail by individual key actions as the specificity of focus of youth projects varies and does not require such detailed differentiation as in the case of education and training. Cooperation with partner countries is significantly present, as opposed to education and training. It is also shown that the specific objectives of the Regulation better correspond to the focus of projects, which naturally extends from the needs of youth policy and societal needs in Slovakia. This makes the fulfilment of specific objectives simpler.

It must be emphasised that pressure to respect the specific objectives of the Regulation for education and training (Article 5 (a) to (e)) may ultimately lead to a dispute between the declared content and

actual content of a project. Declared compliance with objectives may be understood by those submitting projects as a necessity for project approval but without real significance for the actual implementation of the project itself. The urgency and attractiveness of the objectives and outputs from a national, and even local, perspective are decisive for the success of a project, especially its potential for dissemination and exploitation.

While the objectives in Article 5 of the Regulation are labelled as specific (and they are compared to the more general objectives in Article 4 of the Regulation), project experience has shown them to be insufficiently specific. The result is that conformity with the objectives may be attributed to an individual project by an evaluator. An impartial observer could confirm such conformity, but the project itself may not be based on this objective and the submitter of the project may not consider this objective to have a dominant level of importance in terms of the project itself. This may result in a dispute between the attributed and actual “internal” conformity or a dispute between declared conformity and actual “internal” conformity.

It appears that efforts to align the implementation of projects with the general and specific objectives of the Regulation should be interpreted as efforts to stay within the framework of the Regulation itself. This should be carefully safeguarded by the national authorities and national agencies. Pressure on explicitly declared objectives may be counter-productive and conformity between the objectives of the Regulation and the objectives of the individual projects only superficial. In every instance, the projects in the tables identified herein (see the annexes) were highlighted by the evaluators as examples of conforming to objectives.

(2) To what extent has the progress on the realisation of the specific objectives contributed to the realisation of the Erasmus+ general objectives (as listed in point B.2 in annex 3) in your country?

Project contributions to the fulfilment of general objectives based on the evaluation of the evaluation team are illustrated in Table 5 in Annex 5. The fulfilment of the individual general objectives in projects in the individual areas and sectors is evaluated by using an evaluation scale. The scale clearly indicates when an objective is reflected intensively by projects in Slovakia and if projects make an ample contribution towards its fulfilment (++) or if the full potential of a programme has not yet been realised, in spite of intensive reflection of this objective by projects (+). Significant discrepancies were determined in connection with objectives seeking to reduce the number of pupils with insufficient reading, maths and natural science skills (- -, -) and in connection with the involvement of adults in lifelong learning (-). In terms of youth, the fulfilment of specific objectives has not been transposed into the fulfilment of the general objective of equality on the labour market (-, x).¹²

Table 5 is used to comment on the individual areas and sectors in more detail.

The specific nature of VET in Slovakia is strongly transposed into this table. VET is traditionally delivered by the school system (~30% of secondary school graduates specialise in general education with 70% in VET) but the structure of programme assigns VET a special place outside of school education. Therefore, strategic objectives 2 and 4 are more perceived to belong to VET, which leads to a different perspective on these objectives for KA1 actions (learning mobility of individuals) and KA2 actions. While there is an intensive reflection on institutional cooperation in KA2 projects, they are perceived less intensively in terms of mobility in school education. This indicates that the potential for mobility within school education to support entrepreneurship and the career development of pupils is not fully appreciated and should receive increased attention. While mobility in school education has a clear influence on the attractiveness of education and helps keeping pupils in the education system, KA2 projects do not see the issue of early school leavers to be acute, certainly as a result of the traditionally low number of such early school leavers at a level that is well below the European reference value of 10%. Gradual increases in this value and the issue of the design of the indicator that underestimates that actual share of those early leavers in Slovak conditions indicate the need to focus more attention on this issue.

The outcomes of evaluation also indicate the need to focus greater attention on pre-school education. The most serious difficulties were recorded with the objective of reducing the share of 15-year-old pupils with insufficient skills. It appears that schools in Slovakia prefer resolving projects that play to their strengths, while the traditional weaknesses of Slovak schools related to the development of reading literacy and problem solving skills should be addressed more. However, this issue

¹² The evaluation scale capturing the fulfilment of individual general objectives in projects by the individual categories (+++, ++, +, -, - -, x) and the complete formulation of the goals are specified under Table 5 in Annex 5.

systematically belongs under the auspices of the national authority and KA3 type actions to support policy reform.

Deficiencies in mastering foreign language stand out in the VET sector and were transposed in the table into a negative evaluation for the fulfilment of both objectives. The number of mobility of VET staff remains low, despite the efforts of the national agency, which sees the low language skill levels among VET teachers as one of the primary impediments to progress. The same statements apply if we accept the relevance of the objective involving lifelong learning of adults. The mobility of VET staff is low and statistically reduced by the fact that VET teachers complete courses abroad through the school education sector, given that this activity is not eligible in the VET sector. Room for improvement in lifelong learning and mobility are clear in higher education as well.

It is undisputed that projects in adult education are properly configured in terms of content and objectives with respect to the general objectives, but insufficient pressure is applied on achieving a breakthrough as a result of a low number of projects. This is particularly apparent in the evaluation of strategic objectives 2 and 3. Given the low number of projects, and especially as a consequence of the lack of a national policy, no improvement has been observed in meeting the target reference value of 15% of adults in lifelong learning.

In the field of youth there are reserves in addressing the issue of labour market equality. The KA2 project "Youth guarantees application on the local level" was justly highlighted by evaluators, both for quality and for its focus on a group of young people who are not in education, employment or training (so called "NEET"). It is clear that labour market inequality is a serious problem for young people, especially Roma youth, and the acute nature and breadth of the issue clearly requires specific intervention to engage this group, who are difficult to engage with normal active labour market policy initiatives and common project procedures. Therefore, youth outreach activities to engage this group could be supported as a complement and a counter-point to work with active, though inexperienced, youth.

It is no surprise that projects in both fields (education and training and youth) contribute the fulfilment of European values. It does appear, however, that the projects have yet to reach their full potential. KA2 projects in the school education sector and KA1 projects in the VET sector are the exception in the opinion of the evaluators. A common trait is the strong influence of the school environment and educators, who naturally associate project activities with pupil participation, which has an effect on values.

(3) To what extent have Erasmus+ actions influenced policy developments in the domains of education and training, youth and sport in your country? What actions were the most effective in doing so? Are there marked differences between different fields?

The Erasmus+ programme has an unmistakable influence on policies in these individual areas, though in various extent and in different ways.

In terms of education and training, the Erasmus+ programme has forced project applicants to more thoroughly define the expected outcomes while considering the development plans of the institution and to think over subsequent dissemination and enhancement in more detail compared to LLP. One of the major contributions of the Erasmus+ programme in Slovakia is that it forces schools to think about their development potential. It accents the need for strategic planning, which is lacking in secondary and higher education, given that most are concerned with fighting for their very existence and not on the quality of graduates but rather on the quantity of accepted pupils/students, regardless of quality.

While the effects of the Erasmus+ programme shall only emerge, experience with similar LLP projects permits qualified assumptions to be made about their systemic impact on improving VET. The potential of Erasmus+ projects in the VET sector as the driving force for bottom-VET reform is explicitly emphasised in the "Learning Slovakia" strategic material (Part 3-10)¹³.

The Youth in Action programme affected national youth policy less than expected, in the opinion of the evaluators, and even greater potential is seen in the Erasmus+ programme. Current documents including the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth 2014–2020¹⁴ and the Concept for

¹³ "Učiace sa Slovensko: Národný program rozvoja výchovy a vzdelávania" document (Learning Slovakia: A national programme for development of education and training) was submitted for public consultation on 15 March 2017, www.minedu.sk/data/files/6987_uciace_sa_slovensko.pdf.

¹⁴ Stratégia Slovenskej republiky pre mládež na roky 2014 – 2020 (Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth 2014 – 2020), www.minedu.sk/data/files/3889_strategia_pre_mladiez.pdf.

Development of Work with Youth 2016 – 2020¹⁵ are in full compliance with European youth policy and the objectives of these documents are in compliance with the Erasmus+ programme.

The evaluators' findings are covered in more details below in terms of the individual areas and sectors.

A direct impact on the curriculum taught was recorded in the school education sector, which was transposed into the school education programme in multiple cases. By changing the programme documentation, the influence of the Erasmus+ project became permanent, and it will continue to be expressed in the education environment going forward. However, the expansion of these positive experiences has not occurred and no influence of Erasmus+ school education projects that would have been transposed into the national level of programming (in the national educational programme) has been observed. Repeated and very strong influence was noted in connection with the language instruction of pupils (using the CLIL method) as can be seen from an authentic comment from a participant: "The acquired knowledge had a direct impact in the form of using these newly acquired competencies during classroom time (using elements of the CLIL method – incorporating foreign language into specialised subjects), which resulted in a modification of the school education programme."¹⁶ Given the attractiveness of CLIL at the school level, stronger accent and support for CLIL in national policies can be expected. The application of CLIL methods in school practice and as a result of the Erasmus+ projects is explicitly noted by the State School Inspectorate and its topical inspection report for the 2015/16 school year.¹⁷

The need for more specialised teachers was highlighted for the preparation of school partnerships. The preparation of a project appears to be comparatively more demanding and the evaluators, and teachers themselves, noted that "through the Erasmus+ programme, teachers become researchers at an institutional level"¹⁸. It must be noted that teachers are only informed of the initial preparation of technical research activities and they do not acquire the skills needed without sufficient direct experience. The evaluators did record calls for courses focused on active research in continuous education. It was shown that the preparation and implementation of partnership projects is much more demanding than in the past as greater emphasis has been placed on school development plans and assessing project impact. The responses from schools indicate that Erasmus+ projects are better developed and the programme itself is more effective than the Comenius sub-programme. Cooperation between schools with similar academic focuses strengthens the focus of projects on areas of common interest with highly portable and strong innovative impact on the schools. The influence of the Erasmus+ programme on the system cannot yet be evaluated, but a positive influence on the quality of school development plans can be expected. An important impulse for connecting the philosophy of the Erasmus+ programme to prepared changes in regional education may be delivered by the Learning Slovakia strategic document. This document places tremendous emphasis on the self-evaluation of schools and the creation of self-evaluation reports and development plans by schools.

The development of specific specialised skills, typically in conjunction with less available technologies and equipment, is highly valued in VET mobility. Interest in less available technologies and equipment also serves as an indicator of domestic deficiencies in securing VET in school conditions. Schools therefore endeavour to engage in long-term foreign cooperation to compensate for such shortages.

Efforts to compensate for systemic shortages are characteristic for partnerships and strategic innovations in VET. This is determined by the fact that providing VET is much more complicated than delivering general education, and the VET system is larger and more permanently exposed to new challenges, too. A characteristic example is the Leonardo da Vinci "Professional automotive training (PAT)" programme, within which textbooks for the automotive industry were created and then officially accepted by the Ministry of Education and used at different schools. The projects respond to the systemic difficulties of providing for textbooks from the Ministry of Education.

The "Qual'n'Guide: Competence-based career guidance in employment services through European quality criteria" project is an example of a systemic impulse to change VET. It was intentionally

¹⁵ Koncepcia rozvoja práce s mládežou na roky 2016 – 2020 (Concept for Development of Work with Youth 2016 – 2020), http://www.minedu.sk/data/files/5762_koncepcia_prace_s_mladezou.pdf.

¹⁶ Underlying materials used in the synthesised Erasmus+ evaluation report

¹⁷ Report on the influence of continuous education on the quality of the educational process in primary schools in the 2015/2016 school year,

http://www.ssiba.sk/admin/fckeditor/editor/userfiles/file/Dokumenty/SPRAVY/2016/SS_KV_ZS_2015_2016_SR.pdf.

¹⁸ Underlying materials used in the synthesised Erasmus+ evaluation report

focused on transferring successful know-how to guidance work conducted before enrolling the unemployed into training for the labour market. A personnel audit based on this methodology would have much broader potential for exploitation, and therefore this project was awarded the 2015 National Award for Career Guidance by the Euroguidance Centre.

Compared to projects in the school education sector, the situation is much more pro-reform in VET as schools are under tremendous pressure from employers and more than schools providing general education are experiencing funding shortfalls to refresh their facilities. VET traditionally has many active stakeholders from outside the school environment.

The mobility of higher education students is considered as a standard component of training activities and the mandatory inclusion of mobility into academic plans is under intensive discussion. Support for the Erasmus+ programme in higher education was declared in the 2016 – 2020 Programme Manifesto of the Slovak Government¹⁹, but without further specification. No national benchmark value has been defined and no specific increase in funding from the state budget has been specified. The 2017 Action Plan, published on 17 February 2017, declares support for the mobility of higher education students in tertiary education and declares that an announcement on an increase in funding will be made to 30 June 2017. Support for mobility in higher education is definitely a major priority of the government, for instance in comparison with the mobility of pupils at secondary vocational schools, and therefore a similar commitment to provide increased funding from the state budget to support this mobility was delayed until 2018. There is no explicit evidence available confirming that the added value of higher education mobility is so dramatic that it justifies support for higher education mobility as a government priority. Higher education mobility is understood as an integral component of higher education and an assumption of strengthening of the European Higher Education Area as a major European priority. Attempts to shift or strengthen mobility in the 2nd and 3rd degrees of higher education reflect the trend of understanding mobility as an opportunity for professional student profiling. In connection with the upcoming reform of the accreditation of higher education institutions, discussions have taken up the issue of their participation in the Erasmus+ programme through engagement in mobility and in KA2 while evaluating the quality of higher education institutions.

Erasmus+ is expected to deliver a qualitative change in adults learning. Higher demands are being placed on applicants. Projects are elaborated in more details and they are better targeted. A systemic impact is expected from KA3. The engagement of managing authorities at the national level into projects, study of foreign experience to support lifelong learning and the validation of non-formal and informal learning could have a positive impact on the Act on Lifelong Learning, which is being prepared and which should replace the existing and criticised Act on Lifelong Learning and should be submitted to the government in 2018. Through the Erasmus+ programme, Slovakia could continue to gather experience in recognising non-formal and informal learning abroad and therefore the readiness to introduce corresponding procedures for recognition in 2018 remains disappointing.

The influence of European youth policy appeared in public policy in Slovakia already during the implementation of the Youth in Action programme. It can also be seen in the national strategic document defining key policies for 2008 – 2013²⁰ and subsequent action plans²¹. Strong cohesion between European and national efforts, explicitly expressed in national documents and in the programme, could already be seen during this period. Comparable support for the cohesion of European and national policies and related political support was never formulated for education and training. It can even be said that strategic youth-related documents best reflected European initiatives concerning also education and training. Project activities in the area of education and training do not appear to require the same kind of support as the framework created by the programme itself was a sufficient impulse. With the support of NA (education), it was immediately reflected and aligned with the autonomous needs of schools and other relevant institutions.

¹⁹ 2016 – 2020 Programme Manifesto of the Slovak Government, http://www.vlada.gov.sk/data/files/6483_programove-vyhlasenie-vlady-slovenskej-republiky.pdf.

²⁰ Key Areas and Action Plans for National Policy for Children and Youth in the Slovak Republic 2008 – 2013, https://www.iuventa.sk/files/documents/legislativa/2008_klucove%20oblasti%20a%20akcne%20plany%20statnej%20politiky_do_2013.pdf.

²¹ Draft Action Plan for Youth Policy 2010 – 2011, based on the Key Areas and Action Plans for National Policy for Children and Youth in the Slovak Republic 2008 – 2013, https://www.iuventa.sk/files/documents/legislativa/2010_2011_akcny_plan_statnej_politiky_voci_mladezi.pdf, and the Action Plan for Youth Policy 2010 – 2011, based on the Key Areas and Action Plans for National Policy for Children and Youth in the Slovak Republic 2008 – 2013, https://www.iuventa.sk/files/documents/legislativa/ap_2012_2013_schvaleny.pdf.

The need to support youth is much more acute and requires a clearly defined conceptual framework to induce programme activities. The explicit formulation of priorities at the national and European level is therefore much more acute and induces the need to align these policies. Characteristic topics (increasing employment levels, especially through non-formal learning and the acquisition of soft skills, youth engagement in public life and especially engagement in the process of structured dialogue) are naturally multinational.

The interim evaluation report for the Youth in Action programme stated that the programme “influenced national legislation and national youth policy indirectly or only to a lesser extent”²². The current evaluation has recorded a shift: “We can currently say that the interconnection of the focus and objectives of the Erasmus+ programme and Slovak youth policy is much more pronounced.”²³ The current strategic document Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth 2014 – 2020 very intensively reflects on European documents²⁴ and the objectives of this document comply with the Erasmus+ programme. In evaluating the programme, evaluators highlight the influence of European youth policy on which “the ideas and established priorities of youth policy in Slovakia are based”²⁵. In January 2016 the government adopted one of the first very concise conceptual materials to support youth work²⁶ that fully complies with European youth policy²⁷. Projects involving volunteering services have been considered the highest quality and most successful in connection with KA1. More support for youth work is also perceived as a positive as education and mobility for youth workers is supported by the Erasmus+ programme to a greater extent than in the previous programme period. The most visible connection between projects supported by Erasmus+ and national youth policy can be seen within key actions KA2 and KA3. They have tremendous potential in terms of the fulfilment of youth policy (in terms of European and national topics), but evaluating their impact is not realistic yet. Later on, it will be shown whether the budget currently allocated allows for the achievement of critical mass in the number and impact of projects.

(4) What specific approaches (such as co-financing, promotion or other) have you taken in order to try to enhance the effects of the Erasmus+ in your country? To what extent have these approaches been effective? Can any particular points for improvement be identified?

The Erasmus+ programme is sufficiently visible in Slovakia and its promotion is sufficient. Competition for Erasmus+ funding is high and many quality projects are rejected due to a lack of funding. Other specific measures to amplify the effects of the programme are likely to be necessary if funding is increased as many potential quality projects simply cannot be supported. This would open up opportunities for outreach type activities to better target specific groups and organisations (especially youth). Such projects are very necessary and more of them are needed in the Erasmus+ programme. Other efforts to amplify the effectiveness of projects and the cost efficiency of investments must be focused on better dissemination of project outcomes. This requires cooperation on the part of the national authority to support a “life cycle extension” for a project using measures to exploit its outcomes on a wider scale. Slovakia still has not elaborated a strategic document to support Erasmus+ programme objectives and leverage the outcomes of Erasmus+ programme projects and makes little use of the potential to support bottom-up reforms of the educational system through the deliberate dissemination of examples of good practices.

National co-financing of mobility in higher education is a positive. The importance of mobility for VET reform is highlighted in the Learning Slovakia strategic material, which proposes an explicit increase in funding to support KA102 and KA202 projects in measure 3-10.02.

²² Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic (2010). The interim evaluation of the «Youth in Action» programme (2007 – 2013): Slovak national report. Bratislava: Ministry of Education, p. 4.

²³ Underlying materials used in the synthesised Erasmus+ evaluation report

²⁴ For instance: An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering of 27 April 2009, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52009DC0200&from=EN>, Europe 2020 Strategy, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF>, White Paper on Youth, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52001DC0681&from=EN> etc.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Concept for Development of Work with Youth 2016 – 2020, http://www.minedu.sk/data/files/5762_koncepcia_prace_s_mladezou.pdf.

²⁷ Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on youth work [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42010Y1204\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42010Y1204(01)&from=EN).

The number of requests far exceeds the funding available to support education and training projects. Slovakia only provides additional funding for mobility in higher education as a government priority. Additional funding for other parts of the programme, which would permit the planning and use of public funds for such purposes, is lacking in national legislation²⁸. While project financing is below the level of 50% of quality projects suitable and recommended for financing in all categories, the situation in adult learning is particularly alarming (with an average of around one third of quality projects in key action KA2). The question of effectiveness would become more pressing if co-financing from the Erasmus+ programme from the state budget increased. The following quote is from a report filed by one of the evaluators on the evaluation team: "Increasing financial support for the Erasmus+ programme is a necessity without which no positive changes can be achieved."²⁹ Education and specialised guidance activities to support project activities of organisations working with Roma youth were a significant and specific youth-related activity in 2014/2015. Effects were seen in the quality and number of European Volunteering Service projects. For the future, it is recommended to focus on communication with groups with special needs through informational meetings and topical conferences. Within the international cooperation of national agencies for youth, a common objective could potentially be the creation of a pool of experts and their further professionalization and the creation of joint working groups to address European-wide topics of consensus.

A certain level of "encapsulation" of project activities is a serious risk for further amplification of the programme's effect. Ultimately, less than 300 entities have requested support in this area as a whole. Within the "Komprax" and "Praktik" national ESF projects managed by IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute, a total of 10,000 young people have completed training activities, but this has yet to be reflected in an increase in Erasmus+ project activities. The national authority should consider investigating the cause of this apparent disproportion (10,000 trained people and 300 project-active entities). Of course, it is not given that youth education and activation has to lead to Erasmus+ project activities; however, we consider it natural to expect some impact from ESF projects on Erasmus+ project activities. It clearly would be beneficial if the NA (youth) in cooperation with the host organisation IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute made an effort to exploit synergies and prepared specialised activities promoting the Erasmus+ programme with focus on those involved in these ESF projects.

(5) Do you consider that certain actions of the programme are more effective than others? Are there differences across fields? What are the determining factors for making these actions of the programme more effective?

We have no reason to assume that certain programme activities are more effective than others. It is, ultimately, conceptually difficult to compare the effectiveness of diverse activities among each other and compare individual areas with differences that condition different perspectives on effectiveness. Moreover, a clearer verdict may be rendered after 2018. Certainly, it will be possible to discuss increasing the effectiveness of individual activities and then a subsequent increase in the effectiveness of the Erasmus+ programme in individual activities on this basis.

Effectiveness is essentially related to the priorities of national policy. Given the current major emphasis on support for dual education and work-based learning in Slovakia, VET projects focused on internships could be considered more effective than certain other projects. Similarly, mobility of students in higher education could become a very effective tool to support internationalisation, given that the internationalisation of higher education is a high national priority and subject to lively discussion in the academic community.

Based on discussion with respondents, the following determining factors were identified in more effectively implemented activities in the individual areas and sectors.

Education and training field

School education, VET and adult education sectors

- The following are important in the pre-project phase of "partnerships":

²⁸ The proposal to increase co-financing for VET mobility by up to 60% of qualified projects in 2017 was deferred to 2018 given the expected increase was around €1,100,000. This amount exceeds the amount of actually available funds.

²⁹ Underlying materials used in the synthesised Erasmus+ evaluation report

- understanding the environment in the participating countries as best as possible and, for instance, the know-how to be adapted in the other country before submitting the grant application³⁰,
- involving stakeholders into the introductory pre-project analysis of needs.
- It has been shown that the consistent support of stakeholders (primarily representatives in the decision-making sphere) is critical to achieve effectiveness in the implementation phase. Another critical factor is to engage stakeholders as project partners, especially if the expected system change involves a modification of the stakeholder's place in the system itself. Other beneficial activities include:
 - communicating with stakeholders regarding the outcomes of analysis, keeping them regularly informed about the project and partial outputs through multiple dissemination channels,
 - achieving more effective support through personal meetings between stakeholders and experts investigating the project, including foreign partners driving the changes.
- Sharing experience from project implementation of projects in the sector in which the beneficiary of the grant operates must be intensified in the dissemination phase. Explicit proposals include
 - "expanding on project websites to include reactions from the target groups (e.g. when testing intellectual outputs), interviews with experts or project investigators on the contributions made by project outcomes, experience from their application abroad, an interview with a representative of the stakeholder foreign partner where similar intellectual outputs are exploited, an example case study, interesting links related to project outcomes, etc."³¹,
 - recognising schools and other entities that successfully implement projects at the regional, departmental and ministerial levels through the leadership of the self-governing region, departmental ministries and the Ministry of Education itself, and to stimulate from this level the promotion of successful schools and their products at the media.

Higher education sector

Mobility

Despite the significant increase in the number of receptions, the ratio of outgoing and incoming mobility remains unsatisfying. The share of incoming and outgoing students in 2014 within mobility for a study period was 51% and within mobility for traineeship was 35%.

- Within pre-project preparation for outgoing mobility, the issue of recognition of academic credits must be dealt with, along with complications in other organisational aspects of studies, once returning from such mobility.
- An increase in the range of courses taught in English must be achieved to support incoming mobility. Stronger stimulation for the creation of academic programmes in English would be beneficial. The intake of foreign students is significantly influenced by the enthusiasm of individual teachers. There are reports of cases involving "face-to-face" instruction outside the bounds of the standard educational programme.

Strategic partnerships

Only two of thirteen projects were approved within strategic partnerships in 2015, which is a demotivating factor and poses a threat with respect to interest in submitting type KA2 projects. Two of seven projects were approved in 2016. Increasing the number of projects, and therefore the volume of funds, is the key condition for achieving greater effectiveness.

Youth field

A significant difference in the quality of European Volunteering Service projects compared to youth exchange projects has been observed over the long-term in KA1. Distinguishing factors include better pre-project preparation related to the mandatory accreditation of outgoing/incoming organisations, regular consultation and training of coordinators, more intensive foreign contact and a long-term history of European Volunteering Service projects compared to youth exchange projects, in which the connection to specific programme objectives is often left behind in favour of attractive leisure time and sports activities.

³⁰ Currently, such efforts are complicated by a lack of willingness to share the know-how, among those who possess this know-how, before financing is clarified, and the restricted options available to those submitting the grant applications to travel to the given country in advance to learn more about the specifics of the know-how itself; given that there is no targeted instrument for this purpose, in-depth interaction only occurs during the implementation of the project, which may lead to discrepancies that threaten effectiveness overall,

³¹ Underlying materials used in the synthesised Erasmus+ evaluation report

A number of quality projects were seen within the calls for KA2 and KA3 that clearly fulfilled the objectives of the programme and the priorities of national youth policy. These projects were focused on support for youth employment, multi-cultural dialogue, the engagement of disadvantaged youth and youth participation in policy-making. To increase the effectiveness of youth projects, there is a need to strengthen monitoring by the NA (youth), with consideration given to increasing the budget for key actions KA2 and KA3 (currently 20%) and providing more consistent support in youth exchange in key action KA1 towards the achievement of the specific objectives of the programme in terms of supporting active citizenship, inter-cultural dialogue and support for social inclusion. Critical deficiencies have been identified on websites and in consulting activities as a result of NA (youth) employee turnover.

(6) To what extent has the integration of several programmes into Erasmus+ made the programme more effective in your country? Do you see scope for changes to the structure of the Erasmus+ or its successor programme that could increase effectiveness?

The integration of preceding programmes into the Erasmus+ programme has not delivered the expected positive effect. This may, but not necessarily, be caused by the preservation of two independent national agencies. However, there are no significant indicators of any benefits from integrating these different areas into a single programme that would justify the creation of a single, common national agency in Slovakia.

Conversely, the merging of these agencies could further destabilise the pool of experts and cloud the institutional standing of the new agency vis-à-vis key players (especially the Ministry of Education). Efforts to improve the quality of on-line services and consultation services are clearly important. An improved common gateway into the integrated programme (or with a suitable name) through better organisation of the programme's website could also be beneficial.

The transition has reduced the readability of the focus of the Erasmus+ programme. The name itself was directly responsible for discouraging persons interested in youth project activities because they considered Erasmus+ to be an update of the programme focused on higher education students and formal education. A similar misunderstanding occurred in the field of education and training. Given the fact that the name Erasmus has historically been connected to higher education, it was necessary to intensively explain that it also applied to primary and secondary schools. The fact a different umbrella name for the programme was not selected is viewed as a mistake. The abandonment of familiar names such as Comenius and Leonardo da Vinci were also perceived negatively.

Despite the fact that programme integration was not received positively at first, we do not recommend changing the structure of the Erasmus+ programme. We see no benefit with respect to increasing effectiveness by changing to a different structure; rather, another change in structure could once again give potential project applicants doubts and slow progress made by the new programme.

The new structuring of the programme (especially the introduction of key actions) is viewed as logical and it will be completely accepted and appreciated with time.

A summary of reactions and suggestions from respondents by individual fields is provided below.

Education and training field

Unification of the programmes was expected to deliver some kind of added value as a result of a change in project work. It could have driven content-based connections and concentration of the effects of projects from the originally independent programmes (LLP and Youth in Action). Interest in submitting projects in the areas corresponding to the originally separate programmes was also expected. None of these effects have been confirmed yet.

No effect in terms of the content convergence or content connections between education and training and youth has been confirmed. Such effect cannot be ruled out in the future (especially in specific cases, such as increasing the employment of young people, where certain activities have already been registered), but an extended period of concentrated activity is needed, either as separate agencies or one integrated agency, to support this interconnection. The identification of cross-cutting content and synergies between projects submitted by different entities or submitting a joint project requires specialised support (e.g. a collaborative platform).

No increased interest in projects from areas that originally belongs to a "different" programme has been expressed. Interest in youth projects with institutions traditionally active in education and training (such as schools) has not increased. Prior to 2013, contact with the Youth in Action programme was very limited and likewise, entities in formal education did not have and still do not have sufficient

interest in this field, with the partial exception of European Volunteering Service projects, which is still low when compared to its potential and the potential of the entire field.

Youth field

A loss of the “independence” of the programme and the reduction in the visibility of activities and the overall topic of support for youth are negatives. The merging of the programme did not deliver an increase in interest in projects from actors active in LLP, and, just the opposite, complicated the process of reaching traditional participants from the Youth in Action programme.

At present, The Erasmus+ programme has the same expectations with respect to all potential investigators of projects, beginning with higher education institutions and ending with informal youth groups, from a strong organisation with experienced administration to small organisations of enthusiasts. This is not realistic. The demotivation of youth activists without sufficiently strong institutional coverage is the primary threat here. Currently, the Erasmus+ programme indirectly advantages strong youth organisations and complicates the expansion of the programme towards new (and less experienced) candidates. It appears that efforts to reach potential project beneficiaries using simple language and in a direct manner, i.e. using a separate youth programme handbook, must be used to engage youth in the programme.

(7) Is the size of budget appropriate and proportionate to what the Erasmus+ is set out to achieve? Is the distribution of funds across programme's fields and actions appropriate in relation to their level of effectiveness and utility?

The budget amount is seen as insufficient. The small share of supported projects among quality prepared projects is criticised and specific objections have been raised to specific rules. In both fields, the lack of funds for key actions KA2 and KA3, which prevent the achievement of a breakthrough in the area of political and system changes, has been criticised.

The paradox is that the greater the potential of the target group, the lower the budget assigned to them. The question remains, what is the financial threshold below which it is superfluous to consider the impact of the programme in the given sector.

The unrealistic configuration of lump-sum costs for human resources also came in for significant criticism as a demotivating factor for more experienced workers and as a source of difficulty in attracting suitable experts to engage in projects. A revision of these lump-sum costs is proposed along with reimbursement of travel costs through fine tuning of the structure (increasing the number) of distance zones.

A summary of the responses and suggestions regarding the financing of projects in the individual fields and sectors is considered below.

The following negatives have been identified by project investigators in key action KA1 in the school education sector:

- lack of funds to cover courses,
- financial burdens on mobility participants who are forced to cover everything in advance using their own funds,
- attempts by the founders of schools to manipulate with project funds allocated to the school in violation of EU legislation,
- excessively large distance zones for the reimbursement of travel expenses; there should be more zones.

Positives include:

- possibility to provide financial compensation to the coordinator and accountant,
- possibility to flexibly cover dissemination activities.

Opinions are not unified with respect to KA2 in the school education sector. Project beneficiaries were unable to agree whether projects budgets were sufficient or the administration of projects in the Erasmus+ programme was more complicated or simpler compared to the past. Systemic problems that could threaten the achievement of defined objectives include dissatisfaction with the coordinator's compensation and the low level of sensitivity within the budget rules to cover travel expenses, which disadvantages participants from more distant locations.

The budget for activities in KA1 and KA2 in the VET sector is perceived as low. A high share of quality projects could not be supported. Increasing the budget would then permit

- a greater diversity of projects in terms of area of focus, objectives, topics, target groups and types of intellectual outputs,

- a support for a larger number of less financially-intensive projects and multi-national meetings between partners within strategic partnerships³²,
- a higher motivation on the part of new applicants to engage in projects financed from the Erasmus+ programme.

Increasing the budget with regards to the factors identified above should have an impact on increasing the effectiveness of the Erasmus+ programme in Slovakia.

Within KA1, the provided budget is slightly undersized and emphasis is placed more on increasing flexibility with distributing available funds. A great deal of criticism involved the classification of target countries into financial groups. Countries in which lump sum grants are sufficient and severely insufficient are present in a single group. There are some countries where the level of these lump sum grants is much lower than actual costs; this results in lower accessibility for many of our participants. For KA2, the total budget is considered insufficient to such an extent that it poses a threat to the objectives of the programme itself. Increasing the budget and flexibility in the distribution of funds is necessary according to the e-survey conducted at higher education institutions (September 2016). The results of the survey correspond to those in the national agency reports for the 2014 – 2016 period.

Both applicants and the agency consider the allocated youth budget as insufficient. A lack of funds for the mobility of youth workers within KA1 is frequent. The recommendation here is to introduce greater flexibility when budgeting the individual key actions based on current needs, and especially the quality of projects. In KA2, a higher share of quality projects is rejected and the overall effect of projects is therefore insufficient: "With regards to the fact that these projects are long-term and focused on the national and European priorities of youth policy, supporting their implementation with a larger budget is certainly worth consideration."³³

(8) What challenges and difficulties do you encounter while implementing the various actions of Erasmus+? What changes would need to be introduced in Erasmus+ or its successor programme to remedy these?

No major impediments were identified during the implementation of projects, with the exception of extraordinary circumstances such as the death of an expert or delay in connected national policies. More support for pre-project preparation is recommended in the field of education and training. More attention should be focused on the language of the programme guide or preparing a "simplified" youth version of the guide.

Difficulties encountered from different understandings of important terms were of note in the field of education and training, which in some cases led to different interpretations of the planned implementation procedures and difficulties stemming from insufficient cooperation on the part of a foreign partner when transferring know-how. Both types of impediments (conceptual uncertainties based on fundamental differences in national education and qualification systems and a limited willingness to share and adapt know-how) should be eliminated during the pre-project preparation. Realisation of preparatory visits with precisely defined and specified objectives would help to eliminate these issues.

In the field of youth a significant criticism of the programme guide confirms the opinion first expressed by the NA (youth)³⁴ that it was difficult to understand for various specific groups of individuals interested in the projects. The scope and language of the guide may deter less experienced youth activists and smaller organisations from project activities. A good opportunity would be a redesign of a "simplified" programme guide for the youth field to better engage to youth organisations using more accessible language and to better emphasise programme objectives.

(9) To what extent are the approaches and tools that are used for disseminating and exploiting the results of the Erasmus+ and its predecessor programmes in your country effective? Where can you see possibilities for improvements?

³² This proposal reflects the opinions of project beneficiaries, but the experience of NA (education) disputes the effectiveness of multi-national meetings. NA (education) gives priority to planning and quality justification for meetings between partners as a part of a project itself.

³³ Underlying materials used in the synthesised Erasmus+ evaluation report

³⁴ Hajtmánková, M. (2015). Erasmus+ programme yearly national agency report 2014. Bratislava: IUVENTA.

The processes and tools for disseminating and exploiting the results of projects in the Erasmus+ or predecessor programmes are effective and proven with respect to project activities. Neither the national agencies nor the national authority has a clear picture of the overall effect and exploitation of project outcomes. Given that the national agencies do not have the obligation to systemically monitor the exploitation of project outcomes and, ultimately, do not have the ability to function as coordinators to develop activities once a project is complete, it is to be the national authority which would take the initiative to cover these activities. Initiating the development of an analytical study for Erasmus+ support, including support for the dissemination and exploitation of its results and the results of predecessor programmes is recommended. In terms of youth, the training of applicants for youth exchange projects must be intensified.

One of the more interesting suggestions is the proposal that the national agency would conduct research into “work with project outputs among grant beneficiaries and target groups in Slovakia ~2 years after completion of the projects”³⁵. Given the insufficient capacities of the national agencies, a suitable alternative would be research initiated by the Ministry of Education to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the dissemination and exploitation of project results.

In the area of education and training, improvements clearly depend on increased support from the decision-making sphere, as observed in the responses from respondents among project implementers in the school education sector: “Efforts to develop schools as a whole through active engagement of teachers in a project is very difficult without the support of school management (teachers in Slovakia are used to doing what the headmaster says, and they, what the minister says, and so on)”.³⁶ For the VET sector, emphasis on the need to cooperate with all stakeholders is characteristic.

Promotion of the benefits for mobility in higher education for individual students continues to dominate. Few are looking to exploit the potential of mobility to internationalise higher education. Experience from the individual mobility of students is not much transposed into academic programmes or the higher education system as a whole. Changes in the perception of dissemination are recommended. It must appear “... in new academic programmes, in current and innovative forms of teaching and approaches. It should not only be concentrated on providing information in various media and meetings, conferences, seminars, etc.”³⁷

Within key action KA2 in the higher education sector, it is recommended to improve the structure of the database of project outputs to include priorities and topics (to better direct those interested and to exploit outputs in the growing quantity of data provided through the European Commission's portal). Another recommendation within the Ministry of Education's central portal is to present quality outputs with educational content in the area of higher education, which may bring significant benefits for the use and dissemination of project outputs to improve the quality of higher education in Slovakia.

The unsatisfactory quality of youth exchange and the sub-critical quantity of KA2 and KA3 projects form an impediment to the dissemination and exploitation of youth results. One proposal is to create a user-friendly platform within the IUVENTA organisation for communication between organisations implementing projects to facilitate collaboration between organisations in the dissemination of project results. More intensive training of youth exchange project applicants is a condition for creating higher quality projects and the deliberate dissemination of outcomes. More consistent effort is required to overcome the traditional focus of these projects on cultural and social activities and to emphasise the need to strive for activities that enhance the value orientation in youth and develop competencies leading towards active citizenship. This should be emphasised more in the programme guide.

Efficiency

(10) To what extent is the system of cooperation and division of tasks between the Commission, Executive Agency, National Agencies, European Investment Fund, National Authorities, Independent Audit bodies, and Erasmus+ Committee efficient and well-functioning from the point of view of your country? What are the areas for possible improvement or simplification in the implementation of Erasmus+ or a successor programmes?

³⁵ Underlying materials used in the synthesised Erasmus+ evaluation report

³⁶ Underlying materials used in the synthesised Erasmus+ evaluation report

³⁷ Underlying materials used in the synthesised Erasmus+ evaluation report

There were no relevant findings among project beneficiaries or the national agencies with respect to the system of cooperation and the distribution of tasks between the stakeholders specified above. The national agencies did not make any requests for changes. NA (education) praised the previous work of domestic auditors as highly professional and very reliable, which streamlined work for the independent audit body.

In the opinion of the national authority (Ministry of Education), the current division of tasks corresponds to the natural positions of the individual stakeholders. It is important to preserve and support the principle of partnership when resolving tasks and obtaining data on the full implementation of a programme, e.g. on centralised actions. The schedule for completing the national reports from the national agencies, the national authority's evaluation of these reports and completion of the audit is very demanding. During the programme, additional obligations are gradually added (i.e. the national authority's review of the annual report before the performance of an audit by independent audit body) and these turn the formerly adequate schedule into one that is much more rushed. From this perspective, attention must be given to proposing and complying with a realistic schedule for cooperation for the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme and future programmes.

(11) To what extent has the integration of several programmes into Erasmus+ resulted in efficiency gains or losses for the implementation of the programme in your country, both at the level of the National Agency/ies and on the beneficiaries' and participants' level? Do you see the scope for changes to the structure of Erasmus+ or its successor programme that could increase efficiency?

The integration of programmes into one single programme does not create the prerequisites for increasing efficiency in the implementation of the programme at the level of national agencies. Given the fact that the operating grant for the national agency is calculated from the total of the global grant, it makes no difference if it is calculated from the entire grant or the individual partial grants by sector. Therefore, from a financial perspective, the prerequisites are not in place for an increase in efficiency as the total of these individual shares is the same as the amount calculated from the total. Increases in efficiency can only be expected with the integration of small agencies as a specific minimum number of employees is required to fulfil all defined tasks. In the case of large agencies, employees may perform cross-cutting tasks across sectors, thereby increasing efficiency as a result of headcount savings.³⁸

Any future changes must be carefully considered as they place administrative burdens on the managing authorities and the project investigators. This is especially true in the case of smaller organisations with full competencies for managing the contents of the projects as a whole and where any formal changes result in unnecessary complications as they are poorly equipped to handle additional administrative burdens due to low headcount. We do not recommend any structural changes in the future. As mentioned before in connection with discussion as to the effectiveness of implementation, we do not expect that any changes need to be made to the structure of the programme to increase its efficiency.

A full evaluation will be possible with time given the recent integration of multiple predecessor programmes into the single Erasmus+ programme. In countries such as Slovakia where national agencies have operated in diametrically opposed and differently managed organisations, the pressure generated by the integration of programme management and administrative structures would be very problematic. An attempt at institutional change would be counter-productive given the reliable operation of the national agencies. The high performance of NA (education) was confirmed. While questions were raised regarding NA (youth) activities as a consequence of the significant employee turnover in the agency and in the host organisation, the situation has since consolidated. Within Slovakia, the pressure to integrate projects from the formerly independent LLP and Youth in Action programmes is seen as negative, because they were perceived to be very different from one another, including in terms of target groups, in Slovakia. Any merger of these agencies would not bring about any organisational advantages and the integration of education and training, youth and sports is not seen as a sufficient reason to make management and administrative changes.

A significant shortfall in the submission of certain types of projects was observed in the first year of Erasmus+ programme implementation due to such interference into administrative routines. Programme changes were so large, especially in the area of education and training that the

³⁸ NA (youth) had 11 employees assigned to the programme in 2016 with a budget of ~€3.5 million while NA (education) conducted the programme in 4 sectors with 26 employees and a budget of ~€20 million.

discrediting of reforms was only averted through the extraordinary efforts of NA (education). High levels of appreciation were noted time and again during evaluation for the national agency's efforts to respond to difficulties rooted in structural changes: "... a significant share of the credit for the fact that the Erasmus+ structural changes in Slovakia were implemented smoothly and the fact that the Erasmus+ programme in Slovakia is considered efficient goes to the activities of the national agency, which used multiple communication channels and informational seminars in all the regions to clearly and transparently communicate the rules, procedures and requirements."³⁹

Despite the preservation of the existing national agency, the merging of previous programmes into a single programme also reduced the visibility of the programme for youth. The creation of a single programme (and the extensive programme guide) resulted in complications for organisations working with children and youth and for volunteers with limited experience and capacities with respect to project management. Respondent to the survey in the area of youth stated that the name Erasmus+ was responsible for discouraging persons interested in youth project activities because they considered Erasmus+ to be an update of the programme focused on higher education students and formal education.

One respondent provided a very expressive response to the survey: "Young people don't know there is a difference.... the name was an unfortunate choice, it's confusing..."⁴⁰

The abandonment of proven brands such as Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci, Erasmus and Grundtvig as well as Youth in Action received a very negative response. The integration of key actions KA1, KA2 and KA3, however, is taken as a positive.

(12) Do you consider that the implementation of certain actions of the programme is more efficient than others? Are there differences across fields? What good practices of these more efficient actions of the programme could be transferred to others?

Unfortunately it is still impossible to reliably evaluate efficiency. The situation will be clearer after 2018 and then it will be possible to determine whether the projects actually fulfilled their objectives and were effective. Only then it will be possible, strictly speaking, to talk about whether they could have been implemented more efficiently. The evaluators did not obtain any evidence on this topic from the project beneficiaries. Ultimately, it is very difficult to differentiate between effectiveness and efficiency in on-going projects.

The only available option is to try and anticipate the efficiency of the allocation of funds for individual fields and especially for key actions.

The mobility of pupils (within activity KA102) has proven very attractive and effective in the VET sector. For schools, the activity itself is a major advantage when competing for students compared to schools that did not engage in such Erasmus+ projects. The mobility of VET pupils appears to be the most efficient in terms of the target group of pupils in education at regional level.

The increase in the attractiveness of traineeships (within activity KA103) in higher education sector is pleasing. They are perceived by higher education institutions, the national agency and the national authority as efficient and promising for potential growth.

The European Volunteering Service within key action KA1 appears the most efficient youth initiative thanks to its robust international foundation and know-how. Youth exchange has proven to be problematic within key action KA1. High popularity raises the question of whether the contacts between young people do not deliver appreciable results that are not immediately seen and that are difficult to examine through exacting research in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. Projects elaborated to a lower level of quality and more difficult to comprehend in terms of results may deliver such interactions between youth activists from different cultures, different socio-economic environments and with diverse personal experience as a breakthrough impulse for further meaningful work.

There is also a problem in assessing the efficiency of projects in KA2 and KA3, but for different reasons. While the projects themselves deliver quality, the projects and investments they make do not deliver the critical mass needed to fulfil the priorities of youth policy in very specific topics.

(13) To what extent has the system of simplified grants resulted in a reduction of the administrative burden for National Agencies and programme beneficiaries and participants? Are there differences across actions or fields? What elements of the programme could be

³⁹ Underlying materials used in the synthesised Erasmus+ evaluation report

⁴⁰ Underlying materials used in the synthesised Erasmus+ evaluation report

changed to further reduce the administrative burden, without unduly compromising its results and impact?

Opinions on the administrative burden are polarising within the field of education and training. Some respondents consider project administration simpler than the administration of projects implemented during previous programmes. Others emphasise that there has been no simplification of administration, but quite the opposite, project coordinators have been burdened with new obligations. In the field of youth, no negative reactions have been recorded and the process of submitting projects is seen as more efficient when compared to the Youth in Action programme.

The following positives and negatives were highlighted in the field of education and training:

Positives:

- option to submit applications electronically,
- simplification of project budget tables,
- introduction of lump sums of staff and travel costs.

Negatives:

- very extensive and non-transparently structured application with numerous questions that repeat to a certain extent,
- lack of conformity in interpreting the rules⁴¹; the interpretations of different countries vary, and therefore their demands on administration, i.e. when clearing attendance, a dispute appeared between partners due to the unwillingness of a foreign partner to provide certain documents, deferring instead to domestic practices; there are also differences in the approach taken to clearing lump sums of staff and travel costs,
- the obligation to conclude a large number of contracts with teachers and pupils and the more complex flow of funds for mobility participants compared to previous practice,
- the process of obtaining credits for training abroad places a high administrative burden on teachers; the Europass – mobility document is not of assistance and it would be truly beneficial if this issue was resolved in the process of preparing an amendment to Act No. 317/2009 Coll. on Pedagogical Staff and Professional Staff.

Project beneficiaries recommend the following:

- to simplify the application,
- to consider an additional reduction in the burdens placed on coordinators by supporting their position with respect to partners in the form of special guidelines. The coordinator is currently responsible for the financial documentation of all partners, but may lack the procedures applicable in the individual countries available, and therefore cannot guarantee the verification of financial documents submitted by partners,
- efforts to maximise the unification of forms, rules and requirements on submitting documentation and especially financial reporting requirements in all EU grant projects; variations in administration are a burden on small organisations with limited administrative capacities in particular.

In the field of youth, those experienced with submitting projects clearly appreciate progress that has been made in reducing administrative burdens. The greatest positive has been transitioning to electronic submission of projects, given that such electronic submissions are now the standard practice in domestic schemes. The respondents see room for improvement in terms of explanations of financial rules. This is related to the cancellation of regional consultants and the hiring of new and inexperienced staff at the agency.

However, there was also a warning of the negative (implicit) pressure placed on more formal quality in the completion of projects, which led to more professional writing for the projects themselves: “Emphasis is now on professional language, which I see as a negative... I appreciated the fact that Youth in Action projects were written by young people themselves. We don’t see projects like that anymore.”⁴²

⁴¹ Legislative partners from various countries differ greatly in certain areas, which may hinder the work of the coordinator if specific rules for cooperation are not agreed upon in advance (such as documenting business trips). It would be beneficial if the national agencies published appropriate guidelines to help coordinators establish such rules and avoid subsequent complications in communication with partners.

⁴² Underlying materials used in the synthesised Erasmus+ evaluation report

(14) To what extent are the IT tools provided by the Commission adequate for the efficient management and implementation of the programme in your country? Do they answer your needs? Give specific examples where they can be improved. Is the set of IT tools appropriate or should it cover more/less elements of the programme implementation?

In the field of education and training, criticism was primarily directed at the initial phase of project implementation while the support from NA (education) was noted for being a great help in overcoming difficulties. Responses to the electronic tools were typically associated with criticism of administrative procedures. In some cases, the excessive level of detail was criticized and the utility of the requested information was called into question.

In the field of youth, conversely, the new IT tools were seen as a clear positive. This is partially attributable to IT habits from the national youth grant scheme. Simplification of grant administration, including submitting reports and statistical information, was appreciated. Respondents evaluated the introduction of electronic submission of projects and final reports as a positive step to increasing the efficiency of the entire administrative process. The electronic application as a whole is understood as user-friendly and easy to read.

The situation is different in terms of national agencies. While the new environment is user-friendly in general, work for staff of the national agency was made more complicated. Integration is associated with an excessively complex system of IT tools that complicate the entire coordination of the programme and extend the time needed to process the project in individual phases and therefore requires more employees than the previous programme. NA (education) even took the step of a radical internal reorganisation to partially compensate for the inability to hire new employees for new work duties. NA (youth) perceives the operation of the system to be more cost intensive and the budget for IT system administration and maintenance as low.

The Erasmus+ Project Results portal (<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects>) is evaluated as a positive.

Some more detailed commentary in terms of individual sectors follows below.

The following positives were identified in KA1 in the school education sector:

- the computerization of documentation significantly eases the burden on project management (e.g. mobility reports in the form of a questionnaire, and the ability to complete documents in Slovak),
- the introduction of a PIC code simplifies the identification of institutions and the processing of their data (simplifies the process of completing information from participating parties).

Working with Mobility Tool+ tools is very time intensive. Criticism of application requirements (ambiguity of some questions, misunderstanding of the meaning of questions, similarity of questions) and the programme guide (text was simply too long) was related to this. Reactions in KA2 were positive and their utility for archiving purposes was highlighted as a positive.

Respondents in the VET sector in key action KA2 with experience from LLP projects evaluated the possibility to submit applications electronically as a positive. They also appreciated the simplification of the project budget tables and the introduction of lump sums of staff and travel costs. A portion of respondents indicated that the application in particular is very extensive, structured in a non-transparent manner and multiple questions repeat to a certain extent.

The new online tools received a mostly positive evaluating in the higher education sector. Highlights included their contribution to simplifying the processing of the agenda and the creation of a valuable database. Assistance from NA (education) in the adoption of new procedures was highly appreciated. Criticisms included that new programmes require the collection of a greater quantity of direct and indirect data, which results in an excessive administrative burden. Data requirements, i.e. after the completion of mobility, are excessively extensive and detailed. This leads to formal answers, especially in the case of educational and administrative mobility. The meaning and outcomes of evaluation are therefore problematic.

The requirement for simplification and alignment of administration resonated among project managers with experience from multiple programme schemes. The proposal was even made to unify forms, rules and requirements for submitting documentation in all EU grant projects.

(15) To what extent is the level of human and financial resources that is available for the implementation of the programme in your country adequate? What steps did you take to optimise the efficiency of the resources deployed for the Erasmus+ implementation in your country?

NA (education) was forced to change its internal structure to make more effective use of its internal human resources within the new programme. As opposed to the stable and very positively reviewed, by evaluators and project applicants, NA (education), NA (youth) was forced to rebuild its human resources from the ground up in 2017. The need for additional funds to train new employees and for higher quality monitoring and evaluation of implemented projects was noted during full functionality in 2015. Beginning in 2017, it has one more employee.

Multiple problems were noted in connection with the implementation of the programme at the project level, as you can clearly see from the reactions of respondents summarised below.

Demands on human resources in Erasmus+ projects in the field of education and training are increasing. The burdens on coordinators increased significantly and the need for the professionalization of performance in certain activities, especially in legal and financial areas, is now a concern. Within higher education mobility, it has been reported that the undersized quantity of professional administrative employees at terminal workplaces is an “impediment for the efficient and targeted work in this area”⁴³. This condition must be resolved at the level of higher education institutions using the funds schools receive for such purposes from the Erasmus+ programme. Some higher education institutions have developed quality administration, while completion of this task clearly awaits others.

The rates for staff costs, which do not correspond to realistic human resources costs in the organisations, were a tremendous step back. Compared to higher rates in Czech Republic (with a comparable cost of living), this is demotivating factor given that Slovak and Czech schools and organisations remain in close contact. A lack of appreciation in the public sector, which has been negatively transposed into the lump sum rates, prevents the engagement of talented specialists (including IT instructors) in the quantities needed for projects because their compensation is extremely low compared to the private sector.

As long as Slovakia remains one of the lowest “rated” countries in the EU in terms of staff costs, this will remain an impediment to improving project results. Human resources and funding available to implement the programme are inadequate. No steps to increase efficiency can succeed so long as the conditions for increasing the engagement of talented people in the project are not created.

Increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the project demands engaging more

- people with a high level of English or other relevant language of communication,
 - researchers and teachers,
 - headmasters of schools and other stakeholders,
 - specialists with experience, especially in VET projects and the IT sector,
- all of whom cannot assume adequate compensation in the project and they work in projects because of enthusiasm.

Proposals for measures to increase project efficiency include:

- improving language learning⁴⁴ for those involved in the projects focused on specialised language or the relevant activity (such as job shadowing),
- support the continuing education of teachers (associated with receiving credits and subsequent salary bonuses) focused on active research and the development of the capability to absorb innovative suggestions and incorporate them into the day-to-day operation of the school,
- institutionalise the position of “project coordinator” in the prepared amendment of the relevant act to reduce basic bond.

Relevance

(16) To what extent do the Erasmus+ objectives continue to address the needs or problems they are meant to solve? Are these needs or problems (still) relevant in the context of your country? Have the needs or problems evolved in such a way that the objectives of Erasmus+ or its successor programme need to be adjusted?

Analysis of general and specific objectives themselves and their reflection in projects leads to a clear conclusion: the objectives of the Erasmus+ programme are relevant, being met and don't need to be

⁴³ Underlying materials used in the synthesised Erasmus+ evaluation report

⁴⁴ So far, on-line language learning based on assigned language licenses has proven to be less effective. Utilisation levels are low, and, as an example, an average of 10 minutes of a 30-hour course was used in the VET field.

changed. The current objectives may not need to be changed, but as can be seen, not all objectives are relevant for the individual fields and sectors and cannot be relevant in some cases.

It would be useful to nudge the national authority and national agencies to take a more flexible approach to these objectives. The relevance of the general objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and ET 2020, a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training, for Erasmus+ fields and sectors may only emerge in a suitable national context. Achieved consensus in European efforts focused on education and training and the field of youth should continue to receive support also with suitable prioritising for time periods and a participating country.

The current structural change that exists in the Erasmus+ programme has significant potential to provide greater support for systemic changes over the previous programme, especially in school education and VET. It is recommended to continue putting emphasis on development plans of organisations and the impact of projects to improve the quality of education. In higher education, the recommendation is to give long-term priority to projects focused on the joint creation of new academic programmes, innovation of educational methods and the educational competencies of teachers and expansion of the profile of higher education graduates to ensure better success on the labour market.

In the field of youth, the recommendation is to get closer (in terms of language and topics) to youth and respond to the radicalization of opinion in societies in the countries of the European Union and around the world and therefore

- place more emphasis on human rights issues,
- support the “development of global competencies necessary for life and success in today’s globally connected world”⁴⁵.

(17) To what extent are needs of different stakeholders and sectors addressed by the Erasmus+ objectives? How successful is the programme in attracting and reaching target audiences and groups within different fields of the programme’s scope? Is the Erasmus+ programme well known to the education and training, youth and sport communities? In case some target groups are not sufficiently reached, what factors are limiting their access and what actions could be taken to remedy this?

The needs of stakeholders and sectors are diverse, but essentially they can be covered by the programme’s current objectives. Despite this, specific measures are needed to eliminate the so-called “Matthew Effect”, where the “rich get richer and the poor get poorer”. Active organisations and active individuals may reap greater benefits from the programme than passive organisations or disadvantaged individuals. In comparison with youth, it proved easier in education and training to direct pupils and other learners with special educational needs given the availability of rather strong institutions that are involved in project activities. The field of youth involves working with non-formal groups of young people, who are sometimes inexperienced in terms of project activities, if they are to effectively respond to specific groups, especially the marginalised Roma groups.

The Erasmus+ programme is well-known and the work of the NA (education) is highly appreciated in the area of education and training. There are no known impediments in terms of focusing projects on diverse target groups or engaging a diverse range of stakeholders. As noted above, additional measures are needed and the following suggestions were generated from evaluation:

- If support schemes for secondary school pupils will not be created, pupils from socially disadvantaged families may be excluded from mobility, or the share of pupils who have no trouble covering additional costs associated with travelling and living abroad will increase. Similar issues face mobility in higher education. Students (or their families) must cover the additional costs of mobility on their own, especially in receiving countries with high costs of living. This poses a threat with respect to the deformation of the flows of people within mobility in higher education (in terms of costs for travel and living expenses and opportunities to work while studying).
- Action must be taken to support the active engagement of management (school headmasters, founders, relevant ministerial staff or other staff of directly managed organisations of the Ministry of Education) to strengthen cohesion between school development plans and project objectives and the dissemination and exploitation of the results of successful projects.

⁴⁵ Underlying materials used in the synthesised Erasmus+ evaluation report

- In the VET sector, it would be beneficial to more broadly integrate professional and trade organisations, as the VET Act from 2015 reinforced the influence of these organisations in providing secondary VET.

Signals in higher education indicated the need to better target the mobility of doctoral candidates and to strengthen the cooperation of domestic higher education institutions while supporting efforts to ensure the quality of study stays of foreign students in Slovakia. While higher education institutions actively participate in information workshops, only 35% of them are actively engaged in KA2, and typically only strong, traditional universities participate. Only four universities explicitly state objectives involving the implementation of Erasmus+ projects in their strategic plans and objectives. We therefore recommend that higher education institutions amend their strategic and development documents to reference the Erasmus+ programme, especially considering its potential contribution towards improving the quality of education. NA (education) recommends strengthening the promotion and training of higher education staff with respect to key action KA2.

While the Erasmus+ programme is sufficiently visible for the full range of stakeholders in the field of youth after some initial issues, the activation of a sufficient quantity of different organisations has not occurred in such a way that is sufficient to reach the diverse range of target groups. Some respondents even said that those participating in Erasmus+ projects were in an “elite” group and the accessibility of the programme for disadvantaged groups of young people was seen as insufficient. Some respondents reported that the accessibility of the programme for smaller NGOs and non-for-profit organisations involved in outreach with marginalised Roma youth was an issue. People in these organisations are not always sufficiently equipped (technically or in terms of language skills) to administer projects, even though they would be able to manage the work involved in the project itself. Ultimately, this is the result that so few organisations actively apply for grants. In addition to consistent efforts to provide information focused on engaging these groups, it is necessary to think about a further reduction in the threshold to enter into projects.

Internal and external coherence and complementarity

(18) To what extent are the various actions that have been brought together in Erasmus+ coherent? Can you identify any existing or potential synergies between actions within Erasmus+? Can you identify any tensions, inconsistencies or overlaps between actions within Erasmus+?

No findings are available with respect to coherence and synergies between activities or any inconsistencies or inappropriate overlapping. No such indicators were signalled from project beneficiaries or management structures.

Certain ambiguity or overlapping could be seen between projects in the school education and VET sector, which is given by the nature of VET at the secondary school level, as schools are the dominant provider in Slovakia and VET learners are full secondary school pupils. No complications were noted for the implementation of projects because of this division at the sector level. A better response in terms of coherence, potential synergies or other unexpected manifestations of inconsistencies will be possible after 2018. The actual unification of previous programmes does not inherently create the prerequisites for synergies across fields and potential synergies have not yet been delivered, despite the fact that a campaign and information seminars have been organised as shared activities. So far, it appears that the expected synergies have not been delivered, nor will they be in the near future, given the differences in target groups and the specifics of project work in different fields and sectors.

(19) To what extent does Erasmus+ complement other national and international programmes available in your country? Can you identify any existing tensions, inconsistencies or overlaps with other programmes?

The Erasmus+ programme is irreplaceable in the field of education and training and in the field of youth as a dominant player. No major stress, inconsistencies or overlapping has yet been discovered between Erasmus+ and other programmes in Slovakia and no such discoveries are expected in the future.

The Erasmus+ programme is the dominant player in the field of education and training and its effects are amplified tremendously, especially given its current strict focus on the developing the potential of

institutions engaged in the programme. In terms of mobility, all other alternatives offer marginal volumes or potential to influence the quality of education. Other mobility-related activities are typically the result of historical ties between schools, communities and regions and serve other functions with the “neighbourly” social and cultural aspects of partnership dominant in such cases.

The Swiss Financial Mechanism provided a significant complementary effect in the VET sector within the “Odborné vzdelávanie a príprava pre trh práce” (Vocational Education and Training for the Labour Market) project, which focused on supporting the connection of secondary education to the labour market.

Potential synergies between the Erasmus+ programme and European structural and investment funds are not sufficiently leveraged and are insufficiently known. The Learning Slovakia strategic document covered these specific issues in measure 3-10.02 (emphasising support for projects KA102 and KA202) and in measure 3-10.03 (public monitoring of ESF projects in connection with VET).

In the field of youth, the “Programmes for Youth, 2014 – 2020” grant scheme administered by the Ministry of Education exists in addition to the Erasmus+ programme. The following six programmes were defined in accordance with the specific objectives: “SUPPORT for youth organisations”, “PRIORITIES of youth policy”, “VOICE of youth”, “SERVICES for youth”, “COMMUNITY for youth”, “PROOF of youth”.⁴⁶ This scheme functions more to contribute to the baseline operation of these organisations, while the Erasmus+ programme stabilises successful applicants in terms of staff and their content. The Erasmus+ programme is currently a key source of funding for entities focused on work with children and youth focused on supporting the development of key competencies of youth (and the development and recognition of non-formal learning), supporting active citizenship (and participation of youth in local, regional, national and even European youth policy) and supporting intercultural dialogue. Other entities working with children and youth are also engaged in the Erasmus+ programme (such as schools and leisure-time centres). Other funds, from local governments and private foundations and foundation funds, are less significant in terms of volumes.

European added value and sustainability

(20) To what extent Erasmus+ and its predecessor programmes produce effects that are additional to the effects that would have resulted from similar actions initiated only at regional or national levels in your country? What possibilities do you see to adjust Erasmus+ or its successor programme in order to increase its European added value?

No other activities at the local, regional or national level in terms of education and training or youth have a long-term effect comparable to the Erasmus+ programme. The Erasmus+ programme has, just like its predecessors and likely successors, a very strong and implicit impulse to support the sharing of European values and to support community development through cooperation and tackling common problems. Efforts focused on additional intervention to support an increase in European added value could even be counter-productive.

Erasmus+ and its predecessor programmes are exceptional in terms of education and training. This is given by the mass of the Erasmus+ programme and, after the restructuring, by the integration of project objectives into the development plan of institution with the ambition of engaging in Erasmus+. Direct contact and cooperation between international institutions on common objectives has no replacement. In particular, projects involving primary and secondary schools have high potential for success to support European values as the pupils in these schools are open to the formative effects of European cooperation.

A strong national grant scheme exists in the field of youth (see Question 19). In 2014, the total amount of grant funds provided by Programmes for Youth represents nearly €2.5 million, with more than €3.1 million via the Erasmus+ programme. The national scheme is primarily focused on support for established institutions, and this is the exact reason why the Erasmus+ programme is currently irreplaceable in terms of its programme objectives for entities working with children and youth and it has greater potential to activate non-formal groups of young people.

(21) To what extent Erasmus+ will be able to absorb in an effective way the sharp increase in the budget that is foreseen in the coming years up to 2020 in your country? Could the

⁴⁶ See www.minedu.sk/data/files/3120.pdf.

programme use even higher budgets in an effective way? Do you see challenges to effectively use more money for particular actions or fields of the programme?

A high share of quality projects are rejected in the Erasmus+ programme in Slovakia. A lack of funds has a demotivating effect in the case of certain activities, such as key action KA2 in higher education and adult education and in key action KA2 in the field of youth. In terms of an evaluation of the situation in 2016, Slovakia would easily be able to effectively absorb a budget increase.

Based on the responses from project beneficiaries regarding increasing effectiveness, there is a need to increase the level of flexibility in reallocating funds between sectors and activities at the national level.

Given the management structures, however, simply increasing flexibility will not resolve the underlying problem as the limits in place on transfers between activities and sectors are considered sufficient. Any increase in such transfers would result in dissatisfaction from the reduction in funds in other sectors or activities. Therefore, a change is required in the basic allocation of funds defined in the Erasmus+ Regulation⁴⁷.

The development of available funds (a year-over-year increase of 17% compared to 2016) highlights the need to intensify the information and promotion campaign to draw down these funds. No difficulties are expected in key action KA2 and in the mobility of pupils and educators in secondary schools, given the rising interest among secondary vocational schools to obtain VET mobility charters, what allows the agency to focus its information campaign and consulting activities to acquire additional schools and organisations.

The challenge going forward is to ensure a broader scope in youth activities in terms of organisations engaged in submitting projects and with respect to the target group. Intensive promotion and more targeted assistance to initial applicants for projects must be intensified along with the previously mentioned decrease of threshold for engaging in the programme (including the completing a simplified version of the programme guide).

Another positive impulse would be the definition of clear, simple and unambiguous rules for financing and reporting. A serious challenge is the insufficient (current) level of staff cost rates, which does not reflect real staff costs for the time invested by professionals to support projects.

Conclusions and recommendations for improvement of the Erasmus+ and future programme

Conclusions from evaluation in terms of the expectations of impact analysis

According to the impact analysis and the proposal of the new programme, improvements should involve

- i) “concluding contracts with organisations instead of individuals with a reduction in the complexity and number of contracts that are concluded,
- ii) financial management by introducing lump sum grants,
- iii) reducing management and audit costs through more transparent distribution of tasks between the participating countries (responsible for financial audit) and the European Commission (responsible for performance audit and conformity with rules)”.⁴⁸

All three of these positive ambitions have been transposed into practice and some unintentional complications have appeared.

The number of grants allocated to schools as a result of the transition from an individual to a group approach decreased by a third. The positive impact of the first measure is in reducing the administrative burden on agencies. However, this increased the administrative burden on organisations and, understandably, criticism appeared on the creation of a new “intermediate step”.

⁴⁷ Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing 'Erasmus+': the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R1288&from=EN>.

⁴⁸ Commission staff working paper: impact assessment on education and training actions accompanying the document Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a single Education, Training, Youth and Sport Programme for the period 2014-2020, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:6504cbd3-689b-40a0-a6dd-83ac07a8fc57.0001.01/DOC_1&format=PDF, p. 31.

Unintentional negative impacts also appeared for mobility participants. The payment discipline of NA (education) was higher, according to the response from in the field, than in the case of organisations or the founders of schools and numerous voices were heard criticising delays in the reimbursement of costs. Some dissatisfied individuals would have preferred the previous approach to support for individual development and individual mobility (and individual contracts with agencies) for reasons other than financial reasons. Active teachers, for instance, could be held back by less active schools. Strategic planning of school development and related continuing education for its staff are underdeveloped in the Slovak education system. Continuing education for educators is based primarily on their individual needs, which makes the situation in Slovakia more compatible with mobility in LLP based on a more individualised approach than the current approach to mobility. It has been shown that some schools had difficulties with the European development plan. Project applicants sometimes prepared their project with an ad hoc European development plan that was only suited to the needs of the specific project. Institutional preparedness is necessary for the effectiveness of the internationalisation of education and completion of the European development plan may help in these efforts, but not replace them, especially if the school has a weakly developed strategy for its future development. Efforts of the Erasmus+ programme to support the development of the organisation as a whole and exert pressure on organisations to think about a strategy for their development are therefore a step in the right direction. Despite certain difficulties and criticisms, the change delivered by the new programme is justified. Overcoming difficulties is, conversely, a challenge for the national authority and one of the impulses for the establishment of a national strategy to support the Erasmus+ programme and to support the exploitation of its outcomes.

In the second case, the introduction of lump sum grants, which significantly simplified financing and project administration, must be evaluated as a positive. A great deal of criticism involved the classification of target countries into financial groups. Countries in which lump sum grants are sufficient and severely insufficient are present in a single group. For instance, Czech Republic and Germany are in one group with the same grant for travel and accommodations, yet their real costs are significantly different. The level of these lump sum grants is much lower than actual costs in Scandinavian countries and therefore these countries are less accessible for most of our participants. The difference of €70 a month between financial groups 1 (€490) and 2 (€420) in the basic grant is disproportionate. While a grant is simply a contribution to implement mobility and must be complemented by a personal contribution (by an organisation or participant), there is truly a large range of additional payments that are needed, from zero to multiples of the full grant itself.

In the third case, the introduction of multiple new IT tools to support project management at the national level of project administration, conversely, complicated and made this process more demanding to such an extent that cost reductions for management and audit at the national level cannot even be mentioned. The introduction of financial audit in Slovakia, performed by the Ministry of Education since 2002, has been decisive in the effectiveness of financial audit at the national level. The distribution of tasks between players at the national and multinational level has not undergone fundamental changes since then.

Two independent national agencies have been long active in Slovakia. Projects involving education and training are secured by the civic association the Slovak Academic Association for International Cooperation and youth projects are secured by an organisation directly managed by the Ministry of Education, IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute. The simple difference in legal status of the national agencies indicates problems in the event of the forced creation of a joint agency. None of the organisations of the host national agency has the capacity or the profile to create a one-stop shop. Moreover, the potential benefits of a one-stop shop are very problematic in this case. With the exception of training activities and information seminars in which travelling is often required to visit a “client” outside of the national agency’s residence, higher quality on-line service and phone support is necessary.

Ultimately, agency’s staff must specialise in terms of projects, which are completely independent of the fact that there are two agencies or only one. Similarly, the client is primarily concerned with the quality of service provided by such a specialised staff (typically on the phone or at an information seminar). The quality of on-line tools and information provided by the national agency’s website is very important and a shared website (shared gateway) may, understandably, be an advantage. However, such an advantage may never fully emerge in Slovakia because the Erasmus+ portal (www.erasmusplus.sk) ultimately only performs those tasks related to education and training in full.

Developments in Slovakia neither confirm nor refute any benefits of establishing a one-stop shop in other countries. Practice in Slovakia clearly shows the effectiveness of service from two separate agencies, while none of the major potential benefits of unifying the agencies under one roof has been

recorded for management or providing services with respect to the new and integrated programme. Evaluation outcomes demonstrate that the number of national agencies is not the decisive factor for the success of management of the programme. Conversely, the important factors are service continuity and the professional work of individual specialised staff of the agency, the maximum possible standardisation of approaches and the elimination of insignificant differences in the administration of projects for the individual key actions/fields.

Changes in the administration of the Erasmus+ programme primarily received a positive response; however, further advancements in simplifying administration are still under intensive considerations, such as:

- simplify the application, make its structure more transparent and eliminate redundancies in questions,
- simplify the documentation and submission of interim and final reports and maximise the usage of standardised templates,
- standardise procedures for sensitive legal situations (intellectual property, public procurement).

In one sense, the priority for developing moving forward should be fulfilment of the proposals formulated when evaluating the impact of the implementation of Alternative Scenario 4, specifically:

- reducing the administrative burden and allowing managers and applicants to focus more on the outcomes of work in the project than on the project management rules,
- support full standardisation of documents and procedures.

It appears that small organisations in Slovakia have more trouble specialising one of their employees to conduct programme activities compared to large organisations. In reality, however, the size of the organisation is not important; having sufficient time and an adaptable person are the most important factors. This problem will be resolved over time, especially if progress is made in further simplification of administration.

However, the burden on project coordinators has increased compared to original expectations (especially in the case of a large number of partners) as a result of the non-unified interpretation of rules by national agencies in the individual participating countries.

With regards to the criticism of financial rules and in addition to proposal for operative improvements (more significant pre-financing, allocation of funds for unforeseen expenses), other requested changes have appeared with strong backing (revising the configuration of lump sum staff costs and increasing the number of distance zones for reimbursement of travel costs).

The low level of lump sum staff costs is demotivating to experienced employees, as they no longer are competitive in terms of potential earnings from other activities requiring a comparable amount of time. Differences in rates between Slovakia and the Czech Republic were subject to extensive criticism (the countries have comparable costs). This may result in difficulties recruiting capable professionals to engage in projects.

Another major challenge comes from the proposals made by project beneficiaries for the national authority. Funds are clearly lacking to disseminate and exploit Erasmus+ results, and beneficiaries have a clear problem to allocate them from the budget of the project and funds from other sources are very difficult to obtain. The solution is not a return to less flexible budgeting and the intentional commitment of a portion of the funds to the dissemination and exploitation of project results. The establishment of a national strategic document to support the Erasmus+ programme may aid in the dissemination of project results, support innovation and bottom-up changes to the system itself. This amplifies the outcomes of the programme and their benefits for the country.

Confusion was encountered at the very beginning of programme implementation as the result of the abandonment of proven brands and the unified name chosen for the programme, which collided with the traditional Erasmus brand⁴⁹. Such confusion complicated the process of absorbing the structural changes in the programme and the understanding of the changes and acceptance of the new structure was only possible thanks to the additional efforts of NA (education). Stabilisation followed this initial uncertainty and a reduction in project activities at the start of project implementation, and the new structure is now fully understood and perceived in a positive, even logical, manner. A great deal of difficulty would have been avoided simply by retaining the proven brands of Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci, Erasmus and Grundtvig from LLP and the use of a completely new name for the newly conceived and unified programme.

⁴⁹ A common question that the national agency was faced with was: "Is Erasmus+ only for higher education or are others involved?" (Underlying materials used in the synthesised Erasmus+ evaluation report.)

Similar difficulties appear in the field of youth and NA (youth) had to intensify its activities because the name of “Erasmus+” itself was disorienting.

Detailed assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of the Erasmus+ programme based on the implementation of projects will be available after 2018. No signals have yet been identified that would indicate a problem with the effectiveness of the individual projects as a consequence of the new programme structure. Conversely, concentrated targeting and focus on matching the development potential of the institution is perceived very positively, even if coordinators now face added work demands and their cooperation with stakeholders.

An open question remains the critical mass of projects needed to achieve economies of scale in the number of projects and the allocation of funds available for the individual key actions and sectors. Evaluators frequently reported that the small number of projects in key action KA2 prevented a clear determination of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Erasmus+ programme. This means that the criticisms that previous programmes came in for (“Some current activities lack the critical mass necessary for long-term effects.”⁵⁰) now apply to the existing allocation of funds for the Erasmus+ programme as well.

Evaluation showed that Slovakia is capable of effectively absorbing a higher volume of funds. The high share of rejected quality projects has been documented and greater interest in project activities is limited only by a lack of funding. The national agencies are capable (even though they operate separately) of supporting the project activities of institutions and it is justified to expect that they will be able to activate project activity and support efficient and effective implementation of a greater volume of projects with any increase in funding after 2020. Evaluation confirmed the high status of NA (education). Interested parties and project beneficiaries had a very positive evaluation of its work, highlighting its contribution to overcoming the challenges experienced when implementing a conceptually completely new programme.

As opposed to the fully functional NA (education), stabilisation of the headcount at NA (youth) is a prerequisite for successful absorption of funds. New staff must be trained and quality contact and on-line consulting must be secured.

Preliminary evaluation does not indicate that structural changes should have a significant impact on the quality of outputs from on-going Erasmus+ projects. A positive impact of new Erasmus+ programme objectives (greater emphasis on quality and dissemination) has been observed, even though insufficient support for dissemination and further exploitation of quality project outcomes remains a persistent issue.

Structural changes (including “improved logic”) are important in terms of the management structures at all levels, from the regional, and national to the EU level. Structuring into key actions KA1, KA2 and KA3 is seen as a positive by project beneficiaries and it should be retained or combined with a suitable and appropriate name (e.g. mobility of individuals, innovation and partnerships, policy reforms, etc.). Names do help improve basic orientation in the programme and are better received than technical codes along the lines of KA1, KA2 and KA3.

Focus on further simplification and standardisation of procedures, which would truly maximise the time available to achieve quality project outcomes and minimise the time needed for administration, should dominate the changes in the administration of the new programme. As such, we do not recommend any significant changes in the structure of the future programme.

The focus must be placed on the “real impact” of implemented projects to ensure programme effectiveness. A problem for any grant scheme is the existence of experienced project managers and a well-managed technical process for submitting applications with no emphasis on the actual implementation of projects. Any other (unpaid) activities are outside the scope of such routines, though they offer the potential to amplify project outcomes significantly in terms of public utility. This is clear when looking at the extinction of project websites and the low level of attention focused on describing project outcomes and potential for further exploitation. Additional efforts to increase the effectiveness of projects and the cost efficiency of investments certainly requires cooperation on the part of the national authority to support a “life cycle extension” for a project using measures to exploit its outcomes on a wider scale. Slovakia is lacking such a strategic document to amplify support of such evaluation of project outcomes and to support bottom-up reforms of the education system through the deliberate dissemination of good practices examples.

⁵⁰ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing 'Erasmus for all': the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0788:FIN:EN:PDF>, p. 45.

Conclusions in terms of the five evaluation criteria (to which the 21 evaluation questions correspond)

i) Effectiveness

The Erasmus+ programme is considered effective and builds upon the success of preceding programmes while delivering a significant step forward compared to them. This shift was most striking in the school education sector: Erasmus+ projects are more detailed and the programme itself is more effective than the Comenius sub-programme, especially thanks to greater emphasis on the development plans of schools and project impact. Evaluators and teachers themselves report that teachers take on the role of researcher through the Erasmus+ programme and they themselves propose improving the training for teachers focused on active research within their continuing education.

Programme objectives, as defined in the Regulation European Parliament and of the Council establishing the programme are fulfilled, albeit differently, in principle, as shown in Tables 1 to 3 investigating the fulfilment of the individual specific objectives and Table 5, focusing on general objectives (all tables are provided in the annexes).

It appears that efforts to align the implementation of projects with the general and specific objectives of the Regulation should be interpreted as efforts to stay within the framework of the Regulation itself, which should be carefully safeguarded by the national authorities and national agencies. Pressure on explicitly declared objectives may be counter-productive and conformity between the objectives of the Regulation and the objectives of the individual projects only superficial. Moreover, it would be appropriate to amend the objectives of the Regulation, or detail them more in a national context, by formulating EU priorities in a national context.

This is confirmed by the need for a strategic document to support Erasmus+ programme objectives, better amplify of the outcomes of Erasmus+ projects and makes better use of the potential to support bottom-up reforms of the education system through the deliberate dissemination of good practice examples. Slovakia has not yet elaborated such a strategic document. This could also be of service in overcoming weaknesses in fulfilling the objectives of the programme. Slovakia is clearly lagging behind in the fulfilment of strategic objective 1 involving lifelong learning and, ultimately, this is reflected in Slovakia's dramatic lag behind the ET 2020 reference level. Scope for the improvement exists in the fulfilment of strategic objective 3 involving social skills and active citizenship. In the field of youth, outreach-type measures have tremendous potential to target the youth who are not in education, employment or training ("NEET") and marginalised Roma groups.

ii) Efficiency

Evaluation findings are conflicting. There are differences in opinion between respondents among project beneficiaries and national agency staff. Significant reductions in efficiency were noted, primarily in the first phase of programme implementation, which presented the challenge of a shock to the system as a result of the changes and the ambiguity and lack of information needed to manage changes by the national agencies and the absorption of changes by beneficiaries. Small organisations in particular, and inexperienced, non-formal groups in the field of youth are very sensitive to administrative demands, not to mention changes. Despite some partial improvements, calls for the simplification of administration endure to permit project beneficiaries to focus as much as possible on the fulfilment of objectives and to lose as little time as possible on unnecessary administrative tasks.

Changes in the structure of the programme and administration place added demands on NA (education) staff capacities in particular. A realistic schedule for cooperation between national authorities and the European Commission must be the subject of focus for programme management activities.

The economic impact of unifying preceding programmes is questionable, given that agencies did not merge; however, the quality of the services provided by the competent and responsible agency staff has a greater influence on the actual life cycle of the programme than institutional status and the number of agencies.

Detailed assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of the Erasmus+ programme based on the implementation of projects will be available after 2018. Additional efforts to increase the effectiveness of projects and the cost efficiency of investments certainly requires cooperation on the part of the national authority to support a "life cycle extension" for a project using measures to exploit its outcomes on a wider scale. The issue of the critical mass of projects to achieve the desired effect remains an open question, and thereby the efficiency of a small number of projects or an insufficient level of funding, i.e. in KA2 activities.

iii) Relevance

The objectives of the Erasmus+ programme are relevant and do not need to be changed. The relevance of the individual general objectives for Erasmus+ programme field or sectors may only fully manifest themselves in a suitable national context. Additional clarification in terms of the national context and proper configuration of supporting national priorities within national education and employment policies may contribute for increasing the relevance of the programme.

iv) Internal and external coherence and complementarity

There are no indications of inconsistencies or detrimental overlapping from the perspective of project beneficiaries or management structures. A response to coherence and potential synergies between activities may be better formulated after 2018. The actual unification of the preceding programmes and the change in the structure do not themselves create the prerequisites for synergies across fields and sectors. So far, it appears that the expected synergies have not been delivered, nor will they be in the near future, given the differences in target groups and the specifics of project work in different fields and sectors. It would be apt to investigate opportunities for specialised interventions; however these are unlikely to be feasible without an increase in the budget for key actions KA2 or KA3.

The programme is unique and irreplaceable in the field of education and training. The same applies to youth, where the programme remains complementary to the existing national grant structure.

v) European added value and sustainability

The Erasmus+ programme has, just like its predecessors and likely successors, a very strong and inherent impulse to support the sharing of European values and to promote fellowship developed through cooperation and tackling common issues. No additional intervention is needed to support an increase in European added value.

No other activities at the local, regional or national level in terms of education and training or youth have an effect comparable to the Erasmus+ programme.

Recommendations for the Erasmus+ programme

1. The relevance of the individual general objectives for Erasmus+ programme fields or sectors may only fully manifest themselves in a suitable national context. Given that Slovakia doesn't have a clear strategy to support the Erasmus+ programme, initiating the elaboration of an analytical study for Erasmus+ support, including support for the dissemination and exploitation of its results and the results of predecessor programmes, is recommended. This document may provide a suitable complement and further clarify the objectives of the Erasmus+ programme defined by the regulation, specify the priorities of additional financing of activities, support the broader exploitation of project results and stimulate the support for innovation and "changes of the system in bottom-up principle". This enhances the outcomes of the Erasmus+ programme and amplifies its benefits for the country. Funds are clearly lacking to disseminate and exploit Erasmus+ results, and beneficiaries have a problem to allocate them from the project budget, whereby funds from other sources are very difficult to obtain. It would be highly appropriate if the European Commission supported the elaboration of such a document.
2. Synergic effect was expected from the simplification of the programme structure along with advanced project activities and better cross-sectoral collaboration. In order to support this synergic effect and overcome the current and enduring issue of a lack of critical mass of projects, we recommend to consider following:
 - more flexible allocation of funds at the national level to permit a more effective response to national specifications while endeavouring to achieve these European objectives, e.g. transfer of funds for KA2 projects if necessary.
 - increase of a financial support for key actions KA2 and KA3 given their tremendous potential to support systemic changes with a strong impact on the achievement of European objectives,
3. Secondary analysis of reports of mobility participants⁵¹ demonstrates the significant impact which mobility had on their personal development, especially at the secondary school level. The effects of mobility appear to be stronger in the case of the mobility of secondary school pupils and teachers, though they are undisputed in the case of higher education. We recommend to inspire

⁵¹ Hulín, M., Martinkovič, M. (2017). Evaluating the contributions of Erasmus+ mobility participation on the personal and professional development of participants (2014 – 2015). Bratislava: SAAIC (internal document)

Member States to analyse the benefits of mobility and increase the co-funding for KA1 from national sources. Within conditions in Slovakia, we recommend committing this increase in financing to support systemic changes, especially in the fields of secondary VET and professionally oriented higher education academic programmes.

4. Efforts must continue to reduce administrative burdens when submitting and implementing projects. Special attention must be focused on lowering the threshold for involving in the programme (i.e. elaborating two versions – simplified and full one – of the programme guide) to engage smaller organisations and especially non-formal groups of young people in projects in the field of youth.
5. The criticisms of financial rules from project implementers are transposed into the following proposals:
 - To provide more support for significant pre-financing for project implementation, which may give smaller organisations or those with less capital the opportunity to engage in a projects' solving⁵²,
 - To support an increase in emphasis put on the Erasmus+ programme to disseminate and exploit results by allocation a sufficient amount of funds from the budget of a project or additional sources of funding for this purpose,
 - To permit the allocation of a small amount of funds to cover unplanned or unforeseen expenses.

While these three proposals from project implementers are less important from the perspective of the national agencies, the following two proposals are fully aligned:

- To eliminate the risk of discrimination of more remote areas when providing reimbursement of travel costs by fine-tuning the structure (increasing the number) of distance zones,
- To revise the configuration of lump sums of staff costs.

Recommendations for future programme period

1. Any future changes to the structure or established names must be carefully considered as they place administrative burdens on the managing authorities and project implementers. This is particularly the case of smaller organisations with full competencies for “managing the contents” of the projects as a whole where any formal changes result in unnecessary complications as they are poorly equipped to handle additional administrative burdens due to low personal capacities. We do not recommend any structural changes in the future. We do not assume any changes in the structure of the programme are needed to increase the efficiency or effectiveness of its implementation.
2. Unification of the preceding programmes and the change in the structure do not themselves create the prerequisites for synergies across fields and sectors. So far, it appears that the expected synergies have not been delivered, nor will they be in the near future, given the differences in target groups and the specifics of project work in different fields and sectors. It would be appropriate to investigate the opportunities for potential specialised interventions (improvements) to support synergies if they do not emerge before the budget is increased for KA2 or KA3.
3. Efforts to reduce the administrative burden by standardising documents and procedures should continue. A positive impulse would be the definition of clear, simple and straightforward rules for financing and reporting, and, conversely, placing more emphasis on disseminating project results and its documentation. A demonstrated and positive impact of the results of a previous project should be considered as an indicator of the quality of an applicant submitting a new project.
4. A serious challenge for the future, and one that must be resolved urgently, is the insufficient (current) level of staff cost rates, which does not reflect real staff costs for the time invested by experts to support projects.
5. The challenge for the future is to achieve broader reach and greater effectiveness in supporting lifelong learning and youth with respect to equal access to the labour market for young people.

⁵² This requirement is characteristic for organisations with low financial reserves who understand the required co-financing as in-kind contributions in the form of their time and salaries.

Within the international cooperation of national agencies, a common objective could potentially be the creation of a pool of experts and the creation of joint thematic working groups to address European-wide topics of consensus. Support for this pool of experts and further professionalisation of these experts is very necessary, especially in the field of youth.

Annexes

Commentary to the annexes

The actual contribution of the Erasmus+ programme to the fulfilment of objectives defined in the Erasmus+ Regulation⁵³ is difficult to assess as the projects are only now being implemented. In the case of LLP and Youth in Action projects, we can clearly state that the specific objectives were met and we are able to determine if they had stronger or weaker effects. We cannot decide explicitly on the extent to which the programmes as a whole, both for Erasmus+ and its predecessor programmes, contribute to the fulfilment of specific objectives for a variety of reasons. This process remains incomplete for the Erasmus+ programme and in the case of the predecessor programmes, this is largely attributed to limited options for assessing the impact of projects on objectives that were not explicitly required.

When assessing the contribution of the programme towards a specific objective, it is important to distinguish the declared intention and, from this, the corresponding contribution to the fulfilment of the objective and its overall contribution from implementation (including undeclared and even unintended objectives).

The evaluation team therefore focused on identifying the presence of the promised contribution (Erasmus+) and, in the case of predecessor programmes, any undisputed contribution made on the basis of the analysis of documents (applications and final reports) and by making direct contact with project beneficiaries and the staff of the national agencies.

Annex 1 (Tables 1A to 1E) illustrates the fulfilment of specific objectives per Article 5 (a) to (e) of the Regulation by education and training projects. The tables clearly indicate which specific instances made a strong contribution to the fulfilment of the specific objective. Links to the projects are provided if a suitable project demonstrating an effect in terms of the individual specific objectives was identified by the evaluators and recommended for highlighting. The table also permits a comparison of the contributions of projects in key action KA2 of the Erasmus+ programme and analogous LLP projects grouped by sector: school education, vocational education and training, higher education and adult education.

Annex 2 (Tables 2A to 2E) provides a summary of mobility in the field of education and training in the context of specific objectives per Article 5 (a) to (e) of the Regulation.

Annex 3 (Table 3) illustrates the fulfilment of specific objectives per Article 11 (a) to (d) of the Regulation by youth projects.

Annex 4 (Tables 4.1 to 4.5) summarises all the projects highlighted in the evaluation process, divided into tables by individual sectors in the field of education and training (school education, VET, higher education, adult education) and the field of youth.

Annex 5 (Table 5) covers project contributions to the fulfilment of general objectives.

The projects are identified in the annexes using the names under which they may be located in applicable databases, if so registered. Any official translation of a project's name is provided in parentheses, if appropriate.

⁵³ Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing 'Erasmus+': the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R1288&from=EN>.

Annex 1

Examples of the fulfilment of specific objectives per Article 5 (a) to (e) of the Erasmus+ Regulation in the projects of key action KA2 of the Erasmus+ programme in education and training and analogous LLP projects

Table 1A – Examples of the fulfilment of the objective per Article 5 (a) of the Erasmus+ Regulation in Erasmus+ and LLP projects

Specific wording of the objective in Article 5 (a): to improve the level of key competences and skills, with particular regard to their relevance for the labour market and their contribution to a cohesive society, in particular through increased opportunities for learning mobility and through strengthened cooperation between the world of education and training and the world of work			
Projects selected by the evaluators as examples fulfilling this specific objective of the Erasmus+ programme			
School (general) education	Vocational education and training	Higher education	Adult education
<p>Young European Leaders project (see the link to the list 2015-1-SK01-KA219-008887)</p> <p>The objective of this project is to develop communication, debate, organisational and management competencies in pupils, to create clubs of young people and to prepare selected pupils to participate in a UN model assembly (ZAMUN), to create methodology materials for schools (intellectual output: guides with activities to develop communication and debate skills, active citizenship and teamwork) and to provide two months of academic mobility for the pupils in partner countries. Project outcomes are implemented into the education process, while the benefits of international cooperation support the development of schools and serve to increase the</p>	<p>Flash Electro project (link to list 2014-1-SK01-KA202-000495)</p> <p>This project is focused on improving the professional language competencies of pupils at secondary vocational schools focused on electronics and electrical engineering and related specialisations by creating educational materials in the form of competency-based textbooks for the teaching of professional English for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd years at secondary vocational schools, e-learning exercises and a multiple-language visual on-line professional glossary. Schools were lacking such materials and 52 schools, 150 teachers and nearly 3,100 pupils in Slovakia participated.</p>	<p>Extending and reinforcing good practice in teacher development project (link to list 2016-1-SK01-KA203-022551)</p> <p>Teachers in higher education usually develop own competencies important for quality teaching on their own. The “Teach teachers to teach better” course and the textbook created just for the course were designed to create the prerequisites for further development of these competencies and relevant key competencies among doctoral candidate students.</p>	<p>Skills Training for Effective Practice project (link to list 2014-1-SK01-KA200-000489)</p> <p>This project is focused on improving the employability of adults through quality career guidance and improving employment services. The developed and tested course is intended for career and guidance counsellors at secondary vocational schools. The course will be structured into modules accessible on-line and a Handbook of Career Advice Skills will be available as an open educational resource (OER).</p> <p>Knižnice pre vzdelávanie 50 plus (Libraries for education 50 plus) project (link to list 2016-1-SK01-KA204-022552)</p> <p>The objective of this project is to develop non-formal lifelong learning among seniors, to increase their</p>

attractiveness of schools.			awareness of the importance of active ageing, and preventing discrimination and social exclusion. The project investigates the prerequisites necessary to create a foundation for self-development activities among seniors using libraries with support provided by a range of suitable and thematic educational cycles focused on, inter alia, the development of reading literacy.
Projects selected by the evaluators as examples fulfilling this specific objectives in the Lifelong Learning Programme			
School (general) education	Vocational education and training	Higher education	Adult education
The evaluators did not highlight any project from a Slovak coordinator; however, projects involving a Slovak partner that fulfilled a specific objective did exist (links to the projects in the list 2011-1-AT1-COM06-04917, 2011-1-TR1-COM06-24188, 2008-1-ES1-COM07-00204).	<p>Professional automotive training project (link to list 2012-1-SK-LEO05-04201)</p> <p>This project produced innovative educational materials that contribute to an improvement in the level of professional competencies of pupils studying the specialisation of automotive mechanic and meet the current needs of employers in the automotive industry. Such materials were not available for schools in Slovakia. An interactive portal and the use of interactive materials accessible using a notebook computer, tablet or mobile phone contributes to the development of ICT skills among pupils and teachers.</p>	<p>Pokročilá environmentálna geológia 2 - Vplyv banskej činnosti na životné prostredie (link to list 12203 0899)</p> <p>The primary objective of this project was to provide students in the 2nd and 3rd degrees of higher education with current environmental information, both scientific and practical, and to show students ways to take action to resolve environmental problems associated with mineral mining and quarrying activities. Project outputs included academic materials for students and teachers in summer school and e-learning courses.</p>	<p>Vzdelávanie na prahu rozdielnosti (Learning at the Gates of Diversity) project (link to list 2009-1-SK1-GRU06-00638)</p> <p>This project familiarised experts in adult social work, psychology, and educational specialists with techniques for promoting active citizenship, facilitating relations between majority and minority groups and the prevention of discrimination. The project supported the development of social and civic competencies.</p>

Table 1B – Examples of the fulfilment of the objective per Article 5 (b) of the Erasmus+ Regulation in Erasmus+ and LLP projects

Specific wording of the objective in Article 5 (b): to foster quality improvements, innovation excellence and internationalisation at the level of education and training institutions, in particular through enhanced transnational cooperation between education and training providers and other stakeholders			
Projects selected by the evaluators as examples fulfilling this specific objective of the Erasmus+ programme			
School (general) education	Vocational education and training	Higher education	Adult education
<p>Lessons for Present, Lessons for Future project (link to list 2014-1-ES01-KA201-004981)</p> <p>This project innovatively responds to the rise in extremism and support for totalitarianism through active cooperation between secondary school pupils and teachers focused on reflecting on expressions of totalitarianism throughout Europe's history (discrimination, concentration camps and the Holocaust). Four separate modules of textbook materials will be prepared using original historical texts, photographs and fragments of films and documents as well as original testimony gathered by the pupils themselves in the form of an oral history. Interviews with people who lived through events or remembered specific stories give period materials an authentic and emotional dimension that has a stronger effect on the opinions of pupils. The project outputs include the jointly-prepared documentary film <i>Nezabúdaj, myslí, bojuj za spravodlivú Európu</i> (Don't forget, be aware, fight for a fair Europe).</p>	<p>Envi – Mobile: Integration of mobile learning into environmental education fostering local communities development project (link to list 2014-1-SK01-KA200-000481)</p> <p>This project is focused on practical and cross-cutting environmental education and developing foreign language (CLIL) and ICT skills. Teachers trained during the project worked on and completed 50 separate methodologies for cross-cutting instruction of environmental lessons. A database with 500 interactive exercises and that can be downloaded using a mobile application is now available.</p> <p>Robotika pre učiteľov stredných odborných škôl (link to list 2015-1-SK01-KA202-008970)</p> <p>This project joins higher education institutions with applied research facilities and the representatives of employers to provide professional capacities in this fast growing area. The focus here is on educating of secondary vocational school</p>	<p>Innovating Education of Talents in Chemistry for Business Success in SMEs' Innovations project (link to list 2014-1-SK01-KA203-000507)</p> <p>In partnership with employers' organisations and higher education institutions, reflection on expected changes in industry and technology were covered with the objective of innovating higher education based on collaboration between employers and the academic community. The objective of this project is to identify processes for training young innovators, fostering their business skills and their ability to employ themselves and thereby to support the development of small and medium enterprises (SME), and especially to increase their preparedness to respond to untapped investment opportunities for SMEs.</p>	<p>Adults Literacies as Benefit for Inclusion and Equity project (link to list 2016-1-SK01-KA204-022586)</p> <p>The project is used to support functional literacy in young adults. Slovakia has a very small portion of people with the highest level of reading literacy, which demonstrates that the education system does not sufficiently develop these competencies, is unable to compensate for differences in the social status of families, and ultimately disadvantages young people with a low level of reading literacy on the labour market. An educational programme will be developed and tested with the teaching materials provided to anyone interested in adult learning as an open educational resource (OER). The project tests and elevates reading literacy and the development of critical thinking skills of young people through non-formal learning with the support of NGOs focused on youth work.</p>

	teachers in the field of robotics and specific practical applications for the needs of innovation in the automotive industry. Innovation in the field of robotics must be transposed directly into vocational training at schools to ensure professionals are trained.		
Projects selected by the evaluators as examples fulfilling this specific objectives in the Lifelong Learning Programme			
School (general) education	Vocational education and training	Higher education	Adult education
The evaluators did not highlight any project from a Slovak coordinator; however, projects involving a Slovak partner that fulfilled a specific objective did exist (links to the projects in the list 2011-1-AT1-COM06-04917, 2011-1-TR1-COM06-24188, 2008-1-ES1-COM07-00204).	<p>Robotics in rehabilitation project (link to list 2013-1-SK1-LEO05-06364)</p> <p>The objective of this project was to familiarise rehabilitation professionals with the potential of robotic rehabilitation through continuing education using e-learning. E-learning lectures on robotic rehabilitation, programming and the control of rehabilitation robots, the safety of robotic rehabilitation equipment and new trends in these areas are available at the University of Technology in Košice. A platform to support the virtual rehabilitation of patients is also available. Two unique virtual rehabilitation solutions were created: a mobile platform for virtual rehabilitation and rehabilitation using a virtual CyberGlove II device.</p>	<p>Poľnohospodárske poradenstvo v krajinách EÚ project (link to list 13203 1040)</p> <p>The contribution of this project is based on obtaining theoretical and practical knowledge of the operation of agricultural extension in EU countries with the creation of a new subject, Agricultural Extension, securing the transfer of the latest know-how, the mutual exchange of academic materials, and improvement of educational methods and innovative procedures in the educational process.</p>	<p>No project suitable for highlighting was identified.</p> <p>Note: Project applicants were primarily NGOs unable to make any fundamental change in the system without the support of managing authorities. Therefore, most of the project resolved innovations in adult learning methods for direct practical application.</p>

Table 1C – Examples of the fulfilment of the objective per Article 5 (c) of the Erasmus+ Regulation in Erasmus+ and LLP projects

<p>Specific wording of the objective in Article 5 (c): to promote the emergence and raise awareness of a European lifelong learning area designed to complement policy reforms at national level and to support the modernisation of education and training systems, in particular through enhanced policy cooperation, better use of Union transparency and recognition tools and the dissemination of good practices</p>			
Projects selected by the evaluators as examples fulfilling this specific objective of the Erasmus+ programme			
School (general) education	Vocational education and training	Higher education	Adult education
No project suitable for highlighting was identified.	Projects focused on this objective were still in the preparatory phase during this survey (July-September 2016); key activities had not yet been implemented and identifying them as examples of good practices would be premature.	The specific objective is relevant but no project in Slovakia with such objective is suitable for highlighting.	No project suitable for highlighting was identified.
Projects selected by the evaluators as examples fulfilling this specific objectives in the Lifelong Learning Programme			
School (general) education	Vocational education and training	Higher education	Adult education
No project suitable for highlighting was identified.	<p>Qual'n'Guide: Competence-based career guidance in employment services through European quality criteria project (link to list 2013-1-SK1-LEO05-06365)</p> <p>This project was focused on transferring tools and systemic assurance of career guidance and counselling by adapting and deploying of a method of so called balance of competencies placing emphasis on the development of skills for managing one's own career. The objective of the balance of competencies is for clients to acquire tools and methods to enable them to effectively manage their career and changes throughout their lifetime, including making</p>	No project suitable for highlighting was identified.	<p>Krok za krokom k aktívnemu občianstvu a k reintegrácii na trh práce (Step by step towards active citizenship and reintegration into the labour market) project (link to list 2013-1-SK1-GRU06-06468)</p> <p>The objective of this project was to exchange foreign experience to improve cooperation between labour market entities at the local, regional and national level, and thereby contribute to increasing levels of employment for the disabled. Improving communication and IT skills for the disabled, improving the quality of occupational rehabilitation and professional guidance and counselling services for the</p>

	<p>educational choice and gaining qualifications. This method was applied for the needs of the labour office.</p> <p>The project received the National Career Guidance and Counselling Prize in 2015 for implementing these methods into employment services in Slovakia.</p>		<p>disabled, assistance for educational institutions for the creation of educational options for the disabled and the creation of comprehensive information materials all contribute to a positive shift in terms of employers for the potential reintegration of the disabled into work.</p>
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Table 1D – Examples of the fulfilment of the objective per Article 5 (d) of the Erasmus+ Regulation in Erasmus+ and LLP projects

<p>Specific wording of the objective in Article 5 (d): to enhance the international dimension of education and training, in particular through cooperation between Union and partner-country institutions in the field of VET and in higher education, by increasing the attractiveness of European higher education institutions and supporting the Union's external action, including its development objectives, through the promotion of mobility and cooperation between the Union and partner-country higher education institutions and targeted capacity-building in partner countries</p>			
School (general) education	Vocational education and training	Higher education	Adult education
-	-	-	-

* The evaluators either did not select examples of fulfilment of the specific objective or such projects did not exist, because third countries were ineligible to participate in the programme.

Table 1E – Examples of the fulfilment of the objective per Article 5 (e) of the Erasmus+ Regulation in Erasmus+ and LLP projects

<p>Specific wording of the objective in Article 5 (e): to improve the teaching and learning of languages and to promote the Union's broad linguistic diversity and intercultural awareness</p>			
Projects selected by the evaluators as examples fulfilling this specific objective of the Erasmus+ programme			
School (general) education	Vocational education and training	Higher education	Adult education
<p>Bags to Do in Your City project (link to list 2014-1-SK01-KA201-000431)</p> <p>This project strengthened the European dimension in education through multi-national cooperation activities between schools (in the areas of culture, history, language, geography and the arts) and secured the exchange of</p>	<p>Flash Electro project (link to list 2014-1-SK01-KA202-000495)</p> <p>This project is focused on improving the professional language competencies of pupils at secondary vocational school focused on electronics and electrical engineering and related specialisations, but just like other projects, it fulfils multiple objectives</p>	<p>Produktion fachsprachlicher Online-Lehr- und Lerntools und ihre Nutzung für die Ausbildung in der Fachrichtung Reiseverkehr project (link to list 2014-1-SK01-KA203-000470)</p> <p>The objective of the project is to develop interactive teaching materials using professional German for module-based</p>	<p>No project suitable for highlighting was identified.</p>

pedagogical experience and educational materials through job shadowing. The project laid the conditions for innovation of the educational process (teachers and pupils improved their ICT skills, improved their language competencies, developed social skills, recognised multicultural differences, etc.). Partnership gave pupils and teachers a unique opportunity to communicate in a foreign language and to even increase motivation towards language studies.	(see objective (a) in Table 1A).	<p>education (medicine, safety and the environment) in tourism and the creation of blended-learning modules/platforms for professional learning in the sector of tourism.</p> <p>One example of a project submitted and coordinated by an institution of a higher education but focused on the education at the regional level is the Transnational exchange of good CLIL practice among European Educational Institutions project (link to list 2015-1-SK01-KA201-008937).</p> <p>This project maps innovation in foreign language teaching using CLIL methods with the goal of creating an open database of materials for teachers and pupils, including records of teaching in a classroom and proposing continuing education for primary and secondary school teachers focused on the use of CLIL methods.</p>	
Projects selected by the evaluators as examples fulfilling this specific objectives in the Lifelong Learning Programme			
School (general) education	Vocational education and training	Higher education	Adult education
The evaluators did not highlight any project from a Slovak coordinator; however, projects involving a Slovak partner that fulfilled a specific objective did exist (links to the projects in the list 2011-1-AT1-COM06-04917, 2011-1-TR1-COM06-24188, 2008-1-ES1-COM07-00204).	No project that focused on this specific objective was identified.	No project suitable for highlighting was identified.	<p>Uč sa a ved'! (Learn and lead) project (link to list 2010-1-SK1-GRU06-01499)</p> <p>The objective of this project was to support the lifelong learning of English teachers through mobility, to create a centre of education for teachers and instructors in Slovakia</p>

			capable of matching the trends in contemporary modern Europe with its quality.
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Annex 2

Examples of the fulfilment of specific objectives per Article 5 of the Erasmus+ Regulation in the projects of key action KA1 of the Erasmus+ programme in the field of education and training and analogous LLP projects

As expected, mobility presents a problem in terms of evaluating conformity with the specific objectives of the Regulation. Projects either lack the clear dominance of a single objective or are strikingly utilitarian, which is characteristic for mobility in higher education, as the fulfilment of the individual academic needs of students is the predominant trait. The format used in Tables 1A to 1E is therefore only preserved in table 2E (even in the absence of examples in certain sectors).

There were no projects involving partner (third) countries in connection with the objective per Article 5 (d) of the Erasmus+ Regulation in any sector of the education and training field and therefore Table 2D is empty, the same as Table 1D.

The evaluators and NA (education) were unable to identify suitable projects outside of the VET sector in connection with the objectives of Article 5 (a) to (c) of the Regulation. Tables 2A to 2C have a different format compared to Tables 1A to 1E and Table 2E as they focus exclusively on the VET sector.

Table 2A – Examples of the fulfilment of the objective per Article 5 (a) of the Erasmus+ Regulation in mobility projects in the field of VET

Specific objective per Article 5 of the Regulation	Projects selected by the evaluators as examples fulfilling a specific objective	
	Erasmus+	Lifelong Learning Programme
Specific wording of the objective in Article 5 (a): to improve the level of key competences and skills, with particular regard to their relevance for the labour market and their contribution to a cohesive society, in particular through increased opportunities for learning mobility and through strengthened cooperation between the world of education and training and the world of work	<p>Vzájomná výmena odborných vedomostí na medzinárodnej úrovni inšpiruje k tvorivosti project (link to list 2014-1SK01-KA102-000248)</p> <p>This project supported the development of digital and entrepreneurial skills of pupils. Pupils studying information technology or technical fields (computer network technician, information and telecommunications technology technician and digital media graphic designer) were in the first group. The second group was comprised partially of pupils in technical fields (digital media graphic designer) and other pupils from economic fields (mobile operator marketer, and postal operator – postal and banking services). All material completed by the pupils during mobility can be used in the educational process.</p> <p>The cooperation between schools and the project's partner, the BBi Deutsche Telekom</p>	<p>Rozšírenie odborných kompetencií v oblasti automatizovaných systémov a informačných technológií project (link to list 12321 0355)</p> <p>This project was focused on the specialisations of computer network technician and electrical engineering technician with further focus on automation technology. Cooperation between the host school and companies, which are key employers in the region in which the sending school operates, gave pupils the opportunity to acquaint themselves with technology at a partner school (distributed production systems, integration with computer network technology and modular automation systems). Work with PID (proportional-integral-derivative) controllers appropriately complemented the grant beneficiary's educational programme.</p>

	training centre, was extremely valuable as the pupils received the opportunity to continue their education at the centre after successfully completing school.	
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Table 2B – Examples of the fulfilment of the objective per Article 5 (b) of the Erasmus+ Regulation in mobility projects in the field of VET

Specific objective per Article 5 of the Regulation	Projects selected by the evaluators as examples fulfilling a specific objective	
	Erasmus+	Lifelong Learning Programme
Specific wording of the objective in Article 5 (b): to foster quality improvements, innovation excellence and internationalisation at the level of education and training institutions, in particular through enhanced transnational cooperation between education and training providers and other stakeholders	<p>Transfer inovácií vo floristike v partnerstve FLORNET (link to list 2014-1-SK01-KA102-000320)</p> <p>A total of 15 gardencraft pupils specialising in the binding and arrangement of flowers at the Secondary Vocational School in Pruské participated in mobility by completing an internship with foreign partners in five countries, member of the European Flornet network. Pupils learned about innovative floristry procedures and developed their own craft skills in innovative floristry techniques. The school incorporated new methodology and teaching methods from abroad into its school curriculum. The project made a contribution towards improving the quality of the educational process at the school, bringing innovation to school curriculum and the internationalisation of education within the European Flornet network.</p>	<p>Euromechanik project (link to list 12321 0287)</p> <p>This project is focused on young people preparing for professions in the automotive industry and automotive technology. Internships provided third and fourth-year secondary vocational school pupils with a sufficient level of basic knowledge and skills to gain experience in their areas of expertise (repairing and maintaining different marques of vehicles) that otherwise cannot be obtained in the school environment. The primary objective of the project was to gain new knowledge and skills. Successful completion of the final practical work was rewarded with a certificate and Europass, serving as a record of the knowledge, skills and competences they acquired.</p>

Table 2C – Examples of the fulfilment of the objective per Article 5 (c) of the Erasmus+ Regulation in mobility projects in the field of VET

Specific objective per Article 5 of the Regulation	Projects selected by the evaluators as examples fulfilling a specific objective	
	Erasmus+	Lifelong Learning Programme
Specific wording of the objective in Article 5 (c):	Európske cesty v odbornom vzdelávaní	Príprava chemikov pre európsky trh práce (link

to promote the emergence and raise awareness of a European lifelong learning area designed to complement policy reforms at national level and to support the modernisation of education and training systems, in particular through enhanced policy cooperation, better use of Union transparency and recognition tools and the dissemination of good practices	<p>project (link to list 2014-1-SK01-KA102-000210)</p> <p>The Slovak mechanical engineering cluster was established for the purposes of bringing the public and private sector together to support the development of the mechanical engineering industry, which is a major sector in the region. The primary activity was the mobility of employees at selected secondary vocational schools and companies in which pupils make their practice as a part of their learning. Mobility provides the participants, inter alia, with the following opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to gain new experience and knowledge from a country in which a dual-education system exists, - to engage the key employers in the vocational training and to convince them that educational cooperation may deliver a host of benefits to them, - to deepen cooperation between organisations responsible for VET to ensure VET meets practical requirements. 	<p>to list 13321 0412)</p> <p>This project helps increase the quality of vocational education for participants by giving them the ability to acquire professional knowledge, skills and competencies incorporated into educational units in the conditions of modern and specially equipped laboratories of receiving organisations abroad.</p> <p>The project fulfils the principles of the ECVET</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - describe the acquired qualification using cumulative units of education, - permit the transfer of educational outcomes, - support cooperation between partners' organisations. <p>Participants were awarded by ECVET credits and they obtained a Europass – mobility document and a specialised certificate.</p>
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Table 2D – Examples* of the fulfilment of the objective per Article 5 (d) of the Erasmus+ Regulation in Erasmus+ and LLP mobility projects

Specific wording of the objective in Article 5 (d): to enhance the international dimension of education and training, in particular through cooperation between Union and partner-country institutions in the field of VET and in higher education, by increasing the attractiveness of European higher education institutions and supporting the Union's external action, including its development objectives, through the promotion of mobility and cooperation between the Union and partner-country higher education institutions and targeted capacity-building in partner countries			
School (general) education	Vocational education and training	Higher education	Adult education
-	-	-	-

* The evaluators either did not select examples of fulfilment of the specific objective or such projects did not exist, because third countries were ineligible to participate in the programme.

Table 2E – Examples of the fulfilment of the objective as per Article 5 (e) of the Erasmus+ Regulation in Erasmus+ and LLP mobility projects

Specific wording of the objective in Article 5 (e): to improve the teaching and learning of languages and to promote the Union's broad linguistic diversity and intercultural awareness
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Projects selected by the evaluators as examples fulfilling this specific objective of the Erasmus+ programme			
School (general) education	Vocational education and training	Higher education	Adult education
<p>Nechceme byť dobrí, chceme byť lepší (link to list 2015-1-SK01-KA101-008828)</p> <p>Two special educators who are not qualified English teachers, but who teach pupils with hearing disabilities at the primary school level, completed training to help pupils adapt to the demands of standard schools and to support their transition from a special primary school to a standard primary school. The experience they gained from learning, once the credits are recognised, should help both course participants to complete their second attestation.</p>	<p>No project suitable for highlighting was identified.</p> <p>Note: Every mobility project improves learning of foreign languages and the multicultural awareness of the participants. This is based on the nature of the projects themselves, mobility participants make their professional practice/internships in foreign language environments. Moreover, the preparation of pupils before their departure abroad includes language and intercultural training.</p>	<p>No project suitable for highlighting was identified.</p>	<p>BeLLL (Be Life Long Learning) project (link to list 2014-1-SK01-KA104-000115)</p> <p>This project facilitated attendance at 14 structured courses and job shadowing, thanks to which two managers gained experience with a major impact on changes in managing the work of instructors in the organisation. Given the long-term teacher career development experience possessed by Learn & Lead, the organisation had an effect on the Association of Language Schools of the Slovak Republic, the result of which is a new and on-going KA2 project.</p>
Projects selected by the evaluators as examples fulfilling this specific objectives in the Lifelong Learning Programme			
School (general) education	Vocational education and training	Higher education	Adult education
<p>No project suitable for highlighting was identified.</p> <p>Note: Every project was a benefit in terms of personal development, as, for instance, structured courses significantly contributed to the professionalisation of pedagogical staff.</p>	<p>No project suitable for highlighting was identified.</p> <p>Note: Every project improved learning of foreign languages and the multicultural awareness of the participants. This is based on the nature of the given type of project, i.e. mobility participants made their professional practice/internships in foreign language environments. Moreover, the preparation of pupils before their departure abroad included language and intercultural training.</p>	<p>No project suitable for highlighting was identified.</p>	<p>No project suitable for highlighting was identified.</p>

Annex 3

Table 3 – Examples of the fulfilment of specific objectives (a) to (d) as per Article 11 of the Erasmus+ Regulation in Erasmus+ projects in the field of youth and in projects of the Youth in Action programme

Specific objective as per Article 11 of the Regulation	Projects selected by the evaluators as examples fulfilling a specific objective	
	Erasmus+	Youth in Action
Specific wording of the objective in Article 11a): to improve the level of key competences and skills of young people, including those with fewer opportunities, as well as to promote participation in democratic life in Europe and the labour market, active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, social inclusion and solidarity, in particular through increased learning mobility opportunities for young people, those active in youth work or youth organisations and youth leaders, and through strengthened links between the youth field and the labour market	<p>Youth guarantees application on the local level project (link to list 2016-2-SK02-KA205-001012)</p> <p>This project of the Epic organisation is focused on engaging young people who are not in employment or training (“NEET”) for the labour market. Focus is on improving the competencies of young people (a total of 80 completed the programme) and the configuration of system changes. “Youth guarantees” activities provided by labour offices within national activities is needed to complete by local activities. The project builds on the Finnish experience with the localisation of such activities.</p>	<p>Nájdí vo mne človeka project (link to list SK-12-59-2008-R5)</p> <p>Youth initiatives in the previous programme period included an “incubator” for inexperienced young people, such as the initiative for Roma youth called Magnets. This project focused on creating space for communication and shared activities between the majority and the minority. The group was formed subsequently into a civic association engaged in resolving other projects within the programme. The project is an example of the maturation of a non-formal group of young people.</p>
Specific wording of the objective in Article 11b): to foster quality improvements in youth work, in particular through enhanced cooperation between organisations in the youth field and/or other stakeholders	<p>Creative Youth project (link to list 2015-1-SK02-KA105-000483)</p> <p>This project of the KERIC organisation is focused on mobility to obtain new skills for youth workers. The association is in the long term focused on networking and collaboration with other organisations in the region to help build capacities for youth work involving education and implement projects, especially in the European Volunteering Service.</p>	<p>T-STEY (Training for starting trainers in European youth work) – Challenges and priorities for future project (link to list SK-43-21-2007-R3)</p> <p>This project of the Plusko organisation was implemented in cooperation with organisations from 8 countries. The goal of the project was to use courses to educate young trainers (beginners) in the activities of youth organisations to permit participants to create training methods, to increase awareness and understanding of group dynamics and to increase awareness of the use of training methods in the youth work.</p>

Specific wording of the objective in Article 11c): to complement policy reforms at local, regional and national level and to support the development of knowledge and evidence-based youth policy as well as the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, in particular through enhanced policy cooperation, better use of the Union's transparency and qualifications recognition tools and the dissemination of good practices;	<p>Hovorme viac – participácia mládeže a medzirezortná spolupráca project (link to list 2015-1-SK02-KA347-000618)</p> <p>This project of the ZIPCEM organisation combined the EU presidency trio of countries to support and engage youth in dialogue with politicians. ZIPCEM has long-term experience with structured dialogue projects.</p>	<p>European Volunteering forum: Strengthening of cross-sectoral dialogue in policy-making in the area of volunteering (link to list SK-51-1-2008-R2)</p> <p>The goal of this Youth Council of Slovakia project, as a strong youth policy stakeholder, was to prepare recommendations for formulating youth volunteering policy. The outcomes of the project were partially transposed at the national level within the adopted Act on the Promotion of Youth Work. The Youth Council of Slovakia thereby contributed, for example, to the statutory definition of the term “youth volunteer”.</p>
Specific wording of the objective in Article 11d): to enhance the international dimension of youth activities and the role of youth workers and organisations as support structures for young people in complementarity with the Union's external action, in particular through the promotion of mobility and cooperation between the Union and partner-country stakeholders and international organisations and through targeted capacity-building in partner countries.	<p>Art Mark project (link to list 2014-3-SK02-KA105-000391)</p> <p>This international exchange project brought together six partners and was conducted by the Leisure-time Centre in Stará Ľubovňa in cooperation with partners from Armenia, Denmark, France, Lebanon and Ukraine. Young people discussed the importance of peace and tolerance in the modern age and expressed themselves through art. One of the works of art was exhibited on a street in Stará Ľubovňa, and other works were completed and exhibited in Ukraine within the continuation of youth exchange.</p>	<p>V4 and Eastern Partnership: Finding Common Spirit project (link to list SK-31-E31-2012-R3)</p> <p>This Centre for European Affairs conducted multicultural exchange in Georgia with 25 young people from 5 countries: Poland, Armenia, Georgia, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Using simulation and role-playing, EU issues were communicated to young people from Armenia and Georgia with the participation of high representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and EU.</p>

Annex 4

Table 4.1 – Projects in school education sector highlighted within Erasmus+ and LLP evaluation as examples of the fulfilment of specific objectives (a) to (e) as per Article 5 of the Erasmus+ Regulation

No.	Project name Project number	Project website	Type of project/activity	Source in international or national database	Specific objective*
1.	Young European Leaders 2015-1-SK01-KA219-008887		Erasmus+: KA2 (KA219) Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices Strategic partnerships for schools only	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/362c51d9-f7fe-4edb-b563-84ba27372f32	a)
2.	Lessons for Present, Lessons for Future 2014-1-ES01-KA201-004981		Erasmus+: KA2 (KA201) Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices Strategic partnerships for school education	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/d8824f46-e47e-4dc3-ad7d-24e77042061e	b)
3.	Bags to Do in Your City 2014-1-SK01-KA201-000431	www.bagstodoinyourcity.com	Erasmus+: KA2 (KA201) Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices Strategic partnerships for school education	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/517d9cba-1814-49c1-b0c7-6bf28ecd9086	e)
4.	Transnational exchange of good CLIL practice among European Educational Institutions 2015-1-SK01-KA201-008937		Erasmus+: KA2 (KA201) Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices Strategic partnerships for school education	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/a7f80e2a-50cf-4be7-8105-e2b1f3213e77	e)
5.	INSIEME - Same roots, different branches 2011-1-AT1-COM06-04917		LLP: Comenius School partnerships – multilateral	EST database** (DE/EN/FR): www.europeansharedtreasure.eu/detail.php?id_project_base=2011-1-AT1-COM06-04917	a), b), e)
6.	Food Culture Exchange (Izmenjava kultur prehranjevanja) 2011-1-TR1-COM06-24188	http://food-culture-exchange.org	LLP: Comenius School partnerships – multilateral	EST database (EN/SI/SK/ES/PL/IT): www.europeansharedtreasure.eu/detail.php?id_project_base=2011-1-TR1-COM06-24188	a), b), e)

7.	"Análisis comparativo del turismo en las regiones de Badajoz y Zilina: aspectos medioambientales, culturales y lingüísticos" ("Analýza porovnania cestovného ruchu v regiónoch Badajoz a Žilina: hľadiská životného prostredia, kultúry a jazyka") 2008-1-ES1-COM07-00204	http://comeniusinsieme.blogspot.com (communication platform)	LLP: Comenius School partnerships – bilateral	EST database (ES/SK): www.europeansharedtreasure.eu/detail.php?id_project_base=2008-1-ES1-COM07-00204	a), b), e)
8.	Nechceme byť dobrí, chceme byť lepší (We do not want to be good, we want to be better) 2015-1-SK01-KA101-008828		Erasmus+: KA1 (KA101) Learning mobility of individuals School education staff mobility	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/fc8b72d7-d120-418d-8bff-b0ea1f04bb3b NA (education) compendium*** (SK): www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=33&menu=0&proj=2015-1-SK01-KA101-008828	e)
9.	Study, practice, know 2014-1-SK01-KA101-000044		Erasmus+: KA1 (KA101) Learning mobility of individuals School education staff mobility	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/9d6206b7-c832-415e-8286-59c026eb1954	e)

* Specific objectives (a) to (e) as per Article 5 of the Erasmus+ Regulation

** EST – European Shared Treasure: www.europeansharedtreasure.eu

*** NA (education) compendium: www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=33

DE – German, EN – English, ES – Spanish, FR – French, IT- Italian, PL – Polish, SI – Slovenian, SK – Slovak

Table 4.2 – Projects in VET sector highlighted within Erasmus+ and LLP evaluation as examples of the fulfilment of specific objectives (a) to (e) as per Article 5 of the Erasmus+ Regulation

No.	Project name Project number	Project website	Type of project/activity	Source in international or national database	Specific objective*
1.	Flash Electro 2014-1-SK01-KA202-000495	http://flash.cfme.net	Erasmus+: KA2 (KA202) Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices Strategic partnerships for VET	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/c222b298-d54f-4a86-8028-a1b792807bad	a), e)
2.	Envi – Mobile: Integration of mobile learning into environmental education fostering local communities development 2014-1-SK01-KA200-000481	http://envi.stromzivota.sk	Erasmus+: KA2 (KA200) Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices Strategic partnerships focusing on multiple areas	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/5d2493ed-176e-492c-87d5-662a89334b03	b)
3.	Robotika pre učiteľov stredných odborných škôl (Robotics for teachers of secondary vocational schools - RUSOS) 2015-1-SK01-KA202-008970	http://rusos.sjf.tuke.sk/index.html	Erasmus+: KA2 (KA202) Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices Strategic partnerships for VET	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/cf7f5447-c3f3-49bc-ae97-78431d72ca96	b)
4.	Professional automotive training (PAT) 2012-1-SK-LEO05-04201	http://lcm spat.cfme.net	LLP: Leonardo da Vinci Multilateral projects transferring innovation	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/7f76a8b2-caea-45a8-abb8-7861c65ad16f	a)
5.	Robotics in rehabilitation (RoboReha) 2013-1-SK1-LEO05-06364	http://roboreha.sjf.tuke.sk	LLP: Leonardo da Vinci Multilateral projects transferring innovation	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/51e204ff-7626-42e4-a841-72eeaa69536a	b)

6.	Qual'n'Guide: Competence-based career guidance in employment services through European quality criteria 2013-1-SK1-LEO05-06365	www.bilanciakompetencii.sk	LLP: Leonardo da Vinci Multilateral projects transferring innovation	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplplus-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/c3ad688f-c733-4130-8a6a-1265bb0371af	c)
7.	Vzájomná výmena odborných vedomostí na medzinárodnej úrovni inšpiruje k tvorivosti 2014-1-SK01-KA102-000248	www.sos-it.sk/index.php/skolsky-blog/graficky-dizajn-a-skolske-projekty/item/1834-trutnov (school website focused on the project)	Erasmus+: KA1 (KA102) Learning mobility of individuals VET learners and staff mobility	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplplus-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/516e09d1-e3d5-475f-b4ad-191585bbc45b NA (education) compendium** (SK): www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=33&menu=13&proj=2014-1-SK01-KA102-000248	a)
8.	Transfer inovácií vo floristike v partnerstve FLORNET 2014-1-SK01-KA102-000320	www.sospruske.sk/erasmus/transfer-inovacii-vo-floristike-v-partnerstve-flornet.html?page_id=3807 (school website focused on the project)	Erasmus+: KA1 (KA102) Learning mobility of individuals VET learners and staff mobility	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplplus-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/7ea67f14-2a7c-405d-9376-5c8738eea05b NA (education) compendium (SK): www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=33&menu=13&proj=2014-1-SK01-KA102-000320	b)
9.	Európske cesty v odbornom vzdelávaní 2014-1-SK01-KA102-000210	www.1ssk.sk/index.php?con=aktuality (information website of the 1 st Slovak mechanical engineering cluster)	Erasmus+: KA1 (KA102) Learning mobility of individuals VET learners and staff mobility	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplplus-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/37a3a5d0-dd67-4129-8614-07548824ec48 NA (education) compendium (SK): www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=33&menu=13&proj=2014-1-SK01-KA102-000210	c)

10.	Rozšírenie odborných kompetencií v oblasti automatizovaných systémov a informačných technológií 12321 0355 (national identification number)	http://ssmt.sk/projekty/sou/s/rozs%20a%20mod/Rozsiren timer%20odb.htm (school website focused on the project)	LLP: Leonardo da Vinci Mobility – IVT***	NA LLP compendium (SK): http://web.saaic.sk/lp/sk/main.cfm?obsah=m_kompndium.cfm&sw_prog=11&ID_prj=2350&rok=2012	a)
11.	Euromechanik 12321 0287 (national identification number)	www.sosaba.sk/text/?text=text/text6&subpage=15 (school website focused on the project)	LLP: Leonardo da Vinci Mobility – IVT	NA LLP compendium (SK): http://web.saaic.sk/lp/sk/main.cfm?obsah=m_kompndium.cfm&sw_prog=11&ID_prj=2321&rok=2012	b)
12.	Príprava chemikov pre európsky trh práce 13321 0412 (national identification number)	www.sosch.sk/projekty/leonardo-da-vinci/leonardo-da-vinci (school website focused on the project)	LLP: Leonardo da Vinci Mobility – IVT	NA LLP compendium (SK): http://web.saaic.sk/lp/sk/main.cfm?obsah=m_kompndium.cfm&sw_prog=11&ID_prj=2688&rok=2013	c)

* Specific objectives (a) to (e) as per Article 5 of the Erasmus+ Regulation

** NA (education) compendium: www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=33.

*** IVT – Mobility of pupils in initial vocational education and training

EN – English, SK – Slovak

Table 4.3 – Projects in higher education sector highlighted within Erasmus+ and LLP evaluation as examples of the fulfilment of specific objectives (a) to (e) as per Article of the Erasmus+ Regulation

No.	Project name Project number	Project website	Type of project/activity	Source in international or national database	Specific objective*
1.	Extending and reinforcing good practice in teacher development 2016-1-SK01-KA203-022551		Erasmus+: KA2 (KA203) Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices Strategic partnerships for higher education	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/c1da856a-8126-4d93-b214-8b0180922be9	a)
2.	Innovating Education of Talents in Chemistry for Business Success in SMEs' Innovations 2014-1-SK01-KA203-000507	www.zchfp.sk/?vyber=39	Erasmus+: KA2 (KA203) Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices Strategic partnerships for higher education	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/29b25096-8c83-4cc5-b767-9f730a7075df	b)

3.	Produktion fachsprachlicher Online-Lehr- und Lerntools und ihre Nutzung für die Ausbildung in der Fachrichtung Reiseverkehr 2014-1-SK01-KA203-000470	http://falinar.tuke.sk/moodle	Erasmus+: KA2 (KA203) Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices Strategic partnerships for higher education	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/5b8c8a93-01ec-43dc-bef4-ca8380c0e765	e)
4.	Pokročilá environmentálna geológia 2 - Vplyv banskej činnosti na životné prostredie 12203 0899 (national identification number)	http://economicgeologysk.blogspot.sk	LLP: Erasmus Intensive programmes	NA LLP compendium (SK): http://web.saaic.sk/lp/sk/main.cfm?obsah=m_kompendium.cfm&sw_prog=11&ID_prj=2564&rok=2012	a)
5.	Agricultural Extension in EU Countries Poľnohospodárske poradenstvo v krajinách EÚ 13203 1040 (national identification number)	www.fem.uniag.sk/sk/agricultural-extension-in-eu-countries	LLP: Erasmus Intensive programmes	NA LLP compendium (EN): http://web.saaic.sk/lp/sk/main.cfm?obsah=m_kompendium.cfm&sw_prog=11&ID_prj=2829&rok=2013	b)

* Specific objectives (a) to (e) as per Article 5 of the Erasmus+ Regulation

EN – English, SK – Slovak

Table 4.4 – Projects in adult education sector highlighted within Erasmus+ and LLP evaluation as examples of the fulfilment of specific objectives (a) to (e) as per Article 5 of the Erasmus+ Regulation

No.	Project name Project number	Project website	Type of project/activity	Source in international or national database	Specific objective*
1.	Skills Training for Effective Practice 2014-1-SK01-KA200-000489		Erasmus+: KA2 (KA200) Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices Strategic partnerships focusing on multiple areas	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/2e59bcc7-9c59-4954-af7e-416c8ec6cca7	a)

2.	Knižnice pre vzdelávanie 50 plus (Libraries for education 50 plus) 2016-1-SK01-KA204-022552		Erasmus+: KA2 (KA204) Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices Strategic partnerships for adult education	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/5629766a-4d4e-4db5-b430-20d0bae56549	a)
3.	Adults Literacies as Benefit for Inclusion and Equity (ALBIE) 2016-1-SK01-KA204-022586	www.pdf.umb.sk/katedry/katedra-andragogiky/projekty-a-granty/adults-literacies-as-benefit-for-inclusion-and-equity-albie.html	Erasmus+: KA2 (KA204) Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices Strategic partnerships for adult education	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/6ad2d6cd-898a-4055-93fc-6b8e73eb25a8	b)
4.	Vzdelávanie na prahu rozdielnosti (Learning at the Gates of Diversity) 2009-1-SK1-GRU06-00638	http://gatesofdiversity.webnode.sk	LLP: Grundtvig Learning partnerships	EST database** (EN/SK/PL): www.europeansharedtreasure.eu/detail.php?id_project_base=2009-1-SK1-GRU06-00638	a)
5.	Krok za krokom k aktívnemu občianstvu a k reintegrácii na trh práce (Step by step towards active citizenship and reintegration into the labour market) 2013-1-SK1-GRU06-06468	www.starllp.eu	LLP: Grundtvig Learning partnerships	EST database (EN/SK/HU/FR/DE/CS): www.europeansharedtreasure.eu/detail.php?id_project_base=2013-1-SK1-GRU06-06468	c)
6.	Uč sa a ved'! (Learn and Lead) 2010-1-SK1-GRU06-01499		LLP: Grundtvig Learning partnerships	EST database** (EN/SK/FR): www.europeansharedtreasure.eu/detail.php?id_project_base=2010-1-SK1-GRU06-01499	e)
7.	BeLLL (Be Life Long Learning) 2014-1-SK01-KA104-000115		Erasmus+: KA1 (KA104) Learning mobility of individuals Adult education staff mobility	European Commission database (EN/SK): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/af774455-5898-4ab6-88f2-b1444e341940	e)

* Specific objectives (a) to (e) as per Article 5 of the Erasmus+ Regulation

** EST – European Shared Treasure: www.europeansharedtreasure.eu

DE – German, EN – English, HU – Hungarian, CS – Czech, FR – French, PL – Polish, SK – Slovak

Table 4.5 – Projects in field of youth highlighted within Erasmus+ and Youth in Action evaluation as examples of the fulfilment of specific objectives (a) to (d) as per Article 11 of the Erasmus+ Regulation

No.	Project name Project number	Project website	Type of project/activity	Source in international or national database	Specific objective*
1.	Youth guarantees application on the local level (Realizácia programu záruky pre mladých ľudí na miestnej úrovni) 2016-2-SK02-KA205-001012	www.epic-org.eu/podpora-zamestnavania-mladych-ludi/zaruky-pre-mladych	Erasmus+: KA2 (205) Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices Strategic partnerships for youth	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/4c918d22-8772-4695-9afe-13faee7defb0	a)
2.	Creative Youth 2015-1-SK02-KA105-000483		Erasmus+: KA1 (KA105) Learning mobility of individuals Youth mobility	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/1e5fa171-e9a2-487b-b3ef-5a846c373b63	b)
3.	Hovorme viac – participácia mládeže a medzirezortná spolupráca 2015-1-SK02-KA347-000618		Erasmus+: KA3 (KA347) Support for policy reform Dialogue between young people and policy makers	European Commission database (EN): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/925c7e07-732d-4d04-9209-73d01066fb49	c)
4.	Nájdí vo mne človeka SK-12-59-2008-R5		Youth in Action: Action 1 (1.2) Youth for Europe Youth initiatives		a)
5.	T-STEY (Training for starting trainers in European youth work) – Challenges and priorities for future SK-43-21-2007-R3		Youth in Action: Action 4 (4.3) Youth support systems Educational activities and networking of people active in youth work and in youth organizations		b)
6.	European Volunteering forum: Strengthening of cross-sectoral dialogue in policy-making in the area of volunteering SK-51-1-2008-R2		Youth in Action: Action 5 (5.1) Support for European cooperation in the area of youth work Dialogue between young people and policy makers		c)
7.	Art Mark		Erasmus+: KA1 (KA105)	European Commission database (EN/SK):	d)

	2014-3-SK02-KA105-000391		Learning mobility of individuals Youth mobility	http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/23989cb1-b12f-408d-815f-8f99b847a97f	
8.	V4 and Eastern Partnership: Finding Common Spirit SK-31-E31-2012-R3		Youth in Action: Action 3 (3.1) Youth in the World Cooperating with neighbouring partner EU countries		d)

* Specific objectives (a) to (d) as per Article 11 of the Erasmus+ Regulation

EN – English, SK – Slovak

Annex 5

The general objectives of the Erasmus+ programme are laid down in Article 4 of the Erasmus+ Regulation as follows:

"The Programme shall contribute to the achievement of:

- the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy, including the headline education target;
- the objectives of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020'), including the corresponding benchmarks;
- the sustainable development of partner countries in the field of higher education;
- the overall objectives of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018);
- the objective of developing the European dimension in sport, in particular grassroots sport, in line with the Union work plan for sport; and
- the promotion of European values in accordance with Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union."

We transposed the general objectives of the Erasmus+ programme into the names of the items in the rows of the table. The headings of the table columns are the key actions (KA) of the Erasmus+ programme for the individual fields and sectors – school education, vocational education and training, higher education, adult learning and youth. The evaluation scale capturing the fulfilment of individual general objectives by projects according to the individual categories (++, +, -, - -, x) and the complete formulation of the objectives are specified under the table.

Table 5: Mapping the fulfilment of Erasmus+ general objectives

Objectives		SE		VET		HE		AE		Y		
		KA1	KA2	KA1	KA2	KA1	KA2	KA1	KA2	KA1	KA2	KA3
Europe 2020	(RESL < 10%)	++	-	++	x	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	(HE 40%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	+	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Strategic objectives ET 2020	Strat. obj. 1	+	++	++	-	+	-	++	+	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Strat. obj. 2	x	++	++	++	++	++	-	-	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Strat. obj. 3	+	++	+	x	N/A	N/A	-	-	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Strat. obj. 4	x	++	-	++	++	++	+	+	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reference levels/ benchmarks ET 2020	(PISA <15%)	- -	-	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	(LLL 15%)	N/A	-	-	x	+	+	-	-	N/A	N/A	N/A
	(PPE 95%)	-	-	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	(EMPL 82%)	N/A	N/A	++	-	+	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	(MOB 20%/6%)	N/A	N/A	+	-	+	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Higher education	Partnership	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	+	++	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Youth	Labour market equality	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	x	-	x
	Citizenship	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	+	-	++
European values		+	++	++	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

Legend:

SE – school education, VET – vocational education and training, HE – higher education,

AE – adult learning, Y – youth

KA1 – Key action 1 of Erasmus+ programme and mobility of previous programmes, KA2 – Key action 2 of Erasmus+ programme and decentralised partnerships projects of previous programmes except mobility actions, KA3 – Key action 3 of Erasmus+ programme

- ++ The objective is reflected intensively in projects in Slovakia, and projects make sufficient contributions to its fulfilment in an adequate scope, appropriate to the options provided by the LLP, Youth in Action and Erasmus+ projects (as given by European settings).
- +
- The objective is reflected intensively in projects in Slovakia, but projects do not make a sufficient contribution to its fulfilment given the options provided by the LLP, Youth in Action and Erasmus+ projects.
- The objective is reflected less intensively in projects in Slovakia and should be reflected more to allow projects to aid in the fulfilment of the objective.
- The objective is not reflected at all in projects in Slovakia but should be because the objective is relevant.

- x The objective is reflected less intensively in projects in Slovakia but does not need to be reflected in projects more (because the issue is not acute in Slovakia or because other impulses are more necessary for the fulfilment of the objective).
- N/A Not applicable.

Notes:

Europe 2020 has two objectives for education:

1. The rate of early school leavers should be decreased to below 10% (RESL < 10%)
2. At least 40% of 30-34-year-olds should have completed third level education (VŠ 40%)

ET 2020 defines 4 strategic objectives:

Strategic objective 1: Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality

Strategic objective 2: Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training

Strategic objective 3: Promoting equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship

Strategic objective 4: Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training

The following benchmarks have been established for monitoring ET 2020 progress (the first two are also Europe 2020 strategy objectives, and that is why we don't repeat them in the table):

- the rate of early leavers from education and training aged 18-24 should be below 10% (RESL < 10%),
- at least 40% of people aged 30-34 should have completed some form of higher education (HE 40%),
- the share of low-achieving 15-years olds in reading, mathematics and science should be less than 15%(PISA < 15%),
- at least 15% of adults should participate in lifelong learning (LLL 15%),
- at least 95 % of children (between 4 years old and the age for starting compulsory primary education) should participate in early childhood education (PPE 95%),
- the share of employed graduates (aged 20-34 with at least upper secondary education attainment and having left education 1-3 years ago) should be at least 82% (EMPL 82%),
- at least 20% of higher education graduates and 6% of 18-34 year-olds with an initial vocational qualification should have spent some time studying or training abroad (MOB 20%/6%).

Higher education emphasises the "the sustainable development of partnerships in higher education".

Two objectives have been defined for youth within the renewed framework for the European cooperation in the youth field (2010 – 2018):

- i) to provide more and equal opportunities for young people in education and in the labour market,
- ii) to encourage young people to actively participate in society.

European values are expressed in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union as follows: "The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail."