

# CoR and EU Commission launch partnership to help local authorities integrate migrants and implement the New Pact on Migration and Asylum



□□President Tzitzikostas and Commissioner Johansson announced the agreement at CoR Plenary

The European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions are joining forces to develop a new partnership to increase support to the work on integration that is performed by EU cities and regions. The partnership was announced by the President of the Committee of the Regions (CoR), Apostolos Tzitzikostas, and the European Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson, at today's CoR plenary session.

The new partnership on integration will support cities and regions in the EU through three main strands of work:

- Building an open and regular dialogue between EU institutions and local and regional authorities on integration;
- Building capacity and promoting exchange of experiences for local and regional authorities;
- Improving evidence and data on integration at the local level.

The partnership will build on the well-established cooperation between the European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions under the [Cities and Regions for Integration](#) initiative, which was launched by the European Committee of the Regions in 2019 to offer a political platform for European mayors and regional leaders to share information and showcase positive examples of integration of migrants and refugees.

[Apostolos Tzitzikostas](#) (EL/EPP), President of the European Committee of the Regions and Governor of Central Macedonia, said: " *Migration is not a challenge just for a few Member States: it is a matter for the whole of the European Union . The EU must support regions, cities and islands – such as Lesbos, Lampedusa and the Canary Islands – that are in the frontline to provide support, integration and other services to newly arrived migrants. While local authorities have put in place many successful and innovative practices for integration, they still face challenges in accessing funding, data and knowledge, in particular in small towns and rural areas. The partnership will support their efforts and show concretely that the EU is by their side in addressing the many challenges they are faced with*".

[Commissioner Johansson](#) commented: said: " *Integration happens in every village, city and region where migrants live, work, study and take part in activities such as sports. Local and regional authorities deliver essential*

*services in healthcare, housing and education. They organise sport and cultural activities where newcomers meet people and make friends. I look forward to working more closely with the Committee of the Regions to support cities and regions in their integration efforts. "*

[Mark Speich](#) (DE/EPP), North Rhine-Westphalia's Secretary of State for Federal, European and International Affairs and chairman of the CoR's [Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs](#) (CIVEX), said: " *Local and regional authorities are central to social inclusion and to solidarity, so I am very glad that the European Commission recognises local and regional authorities as key players and that, instead of the EU working in parallel, the Commission wants to put municipalities and regions at the heart of its programmes. "*

The CoR will agree its recommendations on the New Pact on Migration and Asylum at its plenary session in March 2021. The CoR's rapporteur, [Antje Grotheer](#) (DE/PES), Vice-President of Bremen City Parliament, said: " *Addressing migration does not begin nor end with the reception of migrants and refugees. This is why the Action Plan for Inclusion and Integration is an integral part of a holistic approach to migration, putting local and regional authorities at the heart of actions to combat discrimination, boost integration and ensure equal access to public goods and services for migrants. Inclusive societies are not only fairer, but also more prosperous societies, and this begins at grassroots level ."*

## **BACKGROUND**

The European Commission's proposal for a [New Pact on Migration and Asylum](#) is a "welcome and necessary" initiative that would – if approved – help building resilient communities as well as manage migration, the President of the European Committee of the Regions has said. He was speaking in a debate in which European Commissioner Ylva Johansson urged regions and cities to make use of increased EU funding available to support the integration of immigrants.

A central pillar of the [New Pact on Migration and Asylum](#) , first presented in September 2020, is an [Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion for the period 2021-2027](#) , drafted in November. The EU's next long-term budget foresees much greater EU funding for integration projects and programs in 2021-27.

The CoR in March 2019 established a [Cities and Regions for Integration](#) initiative – #regions4integration – aimed at bringing together cities and regions that are interested in sharing experience of integration policies and in finding out more about the possibilities of securing EU funding for their work on including migrants into local communities and local economies.

The [latest tranche of funding available from the EU](#) – totalling €37.2 million – was published in late November and will support projects that help migrant children and victims of trafficking, ease access to basic services, include migrants in the design and implementation of integration policies, and support the development of multi-stakeholder partnerships.

**Further information:**

The photos of the 141st plenary session of the European Committee of the Regions are available in the [CoR Flickr gallery](#) .

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## **Forward look: 14 – 27 December 2020**



Overview of the main topics and events at the Council of EU and European Council.

The location and the format (physical or virtual) indicated for each meeting are subject to change.

### **14 December 2020**

#### **Video conference of energy ministers**

Energy Ministers will exchange views on Energy System Integration and receive information from the Commission on recent developments in the field of external energy relations

#### **Video conference of home affairs ministers**

Home affairs ministers will discuss the migration and asylum pact, and will be updated on EU engagement with third countries on migration. They will exchange views on the priorities set out in the draft conclusions on internal security and the European police partnership

### **15-16 December 2020**

#### **Agriculture and Fisheries Council**

Ministers will seek to agree the fishing opportunities in the Atlantic and North Sea, Mediterranean and Black Seas for next year and adopt conclusions on animal welfare and front-of-pack nutrition labelling

**17 December 2020**

## **Environment Council**

Environment Ministers will aim to reach a general approach on the European Climate Law reflecting the outcome of the discussions in the European Council of 10-11 December 2020

For video coverage of Council sessions and audiovisual material, please see the following Council websites:

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## **Erasmus+ 2021 2027: Council reaches a provisional agreement with the European Parliament**



The German presidency of the Council and the European Parliament's negotiating team secured a provisional deal on the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2021-2027. The new programme will be much more inclusive than the current one and is expected to triple the number of participants, bringing them up to 12 million people. It will cover not only higher education, but all levels and types of education and training, which is reflected by the kept label "Erasmus+". It will be provided with a substantial budget of EUR 24.57 billion in current prices plus EUR 1.7 billion in 2018 prices, which constitutes a significant increase compared to the amount for the current programme. 83% of the total budget will be allocated to activities in the field of education and training, 10,3% to actions in the area of youth and 1,9% to sport-related activities.

I am very pleased that the German Presidency of the Council and the European Parliament reached a political agreement on the new Erasmus+ programme today. The new, larger programme for the period 2021-2027 focusses on inclusion. It enables us to support new initiatives and attract an even greater number of participants. We want to generate enthusiasm for Europe.

*Anja Karliczek, German Federal Minister of Education and Research*

For the three action areas – education and training, youth and sport, the main specific objectives of the Erasmus+ programme are the following:

- promote learning mobility of individuals and groups in the field of education and training

- promote non-formal and informal learning mobility and active participation among young people in the field of youth
- promote learning mobility of sport staff

The programme also aims to achieve cooperation, quality, inclusion, creativity and innovation at the level of organisations and policies in the field of education and training, youth and sport. Further to that, Erasmus+ will support teaching, learning, research and debates on European integration matters, including on the Union's future challenges and opportunities through the so-called "Jean Monnet actions".

Erasmus+ 2021-2027 will be much more inclusive by offering access to learners in higher or general education, vocational education or training, adult education, non-formal learning, youth and active participation activities. It will also facilitate the participation of small scale and grassroots organisations, and people with fewer opportunities, including people with disabilities and migrants, as well as EU citizens living in remote areas. The inclusiveness of the programme is also strengthened by the provisions on virtual learning and measures such as language support, preparatory visits, training and virtual cooperation for people who are unable to participate in learning mobility in the field of education and training, youth and sport.

Further to that, DiscoverEU, European Universities and Centres of vocational excellence initiatives are included in the scope of Erasmus+ 2021-2027.

### **Background and next steps**

Erasmus is one of the most popular and successful EU programmes. Launched 30 years ago, it has helped around 10 million people to study, work or volunteer abroad. Under Erasmus more than 2 000 transnational partnerships are established each year.

The Commission presented its proposal for the new Erasmus+ programme on 30 May 2018. On 15 November 2018, the Council adopted its mandate for negotiations with the European Parliament.

The provisional agreement will now be submitted to EU member states' ambassadors for endorsement. The adoption of the Erasmus+ regulation for 2021-2027 will happen at a later stage.

[Commission proposal, 30 May 2018](#)

[Council's partial general approach, 26 November 2018](#)

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## **Press release – EP and EU ministers**

## agree on Erasmus+ programme for 2021-2027



“We were able to secure an additional 2.2 billion EUR over seven years, meaning that we can now spend more than 26 billion euros on training, education and more. We can also boost inclusion, enable more people to benefit from the programme and properly fund the three initiatives that have been successfully piloted since 2018 – the Centres of Vocational Excellence, DiscoverEU and European Universities”, said the rapporteur [Milan Zver \(EPP, SL\)](#) after the trilogue.

“Until now, Erasmus+ has had low levels of participation among people with fewer opportunities. That must change. Those who have missed out in the past will have significantly improved access to learning and mobility, through the specific provisions we have inserted”, said Chair of EP Culture and Education Committee [Sabine Verheyen \(EPP, DE\)](#). She added that “the Parliament fought hard to have a stronger oversight and decision-making role over the next seven years, which will make the programme more democratic.”

[Watch statements by Mr Zver and Ms Verheyen following the conclusion of negotiations on Friday.](#)

### **Helping people with fewer opportunities to take part**

MEPs insisted that the new edition of Erasmus+ includes specific measures to enable more people with fewer opportunities to participate in the programme, regardless of whether those disadvantages are due to disability, poverty, remote location, migrant background or other reasons.

Both the Commission and member states will have to develop action plans to identify barriers and increase participation of people who are disadvantaged. They will also be able to provide top-up grants, including up-front payments for those in need to pay for the initial costs. According to the agreed text,

projects cannot be rejected for having higher costs linked to measures that guarantee inclusion.

### **A lifelong learning programme open to adult learners**

In order to better adapt to the changes caused by the green and digital transitions as well as the COVID-19 pandemic, and the need to acquire new work and life skills, Parliament successfully expanded the scope of the Erasmus+. People enrolled in adult education programmes – for example, learning digital skills or taking evening, professional or personal development classes, will be able to participate in mobility programmes from 2021.

### **A budget up to the task**

As part of the political agreement on the multi-annual budget for 2021-2027, MEPs managed to secure an additional 2.2 billion EUR – the equivalent of one year's funding under the current Erasmus+ programme.

### **Simplified access and less paperwork**

Thanks to the efforts of MEPs, the programme is now simpler and more manageable, as there are better and more user-friendly IT systems and less paperwork. Access to financing under the EU Regional Development Fund or Social Fund will be facilitated via a 'Seal of Excellence' that will be awarded for quality Erasmus+ applications that have not succeeded in obtaining financing under this programme.

### **A 'greener' Erasmus+**

In line with the European Green Deal and Parliament's [September resolution](#), Erasmus+ will in the future measure its contribution to achieving the EU's climate spending targets and reduce its own environmental footprint, for example by promoting climate-friendly means of transportation for participants.

### **Next steps**

The agreement reached today still needs to be approved by Parliament as a whole as well as Council.

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## **Democratic Republic of the Congo: Council extends sanctions for one year**



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