

Erasmus+ school essentials #2

What's on offer?

This factsheet covers the three main Erasmus+ opportunities for schools:

- Staff Mobility
- Strategic Partnerships
- eTwinning

**A practical guide
for school leaders**

What's on offer?

Staff Mobility (Key Action 1)

A visit abroad to learn from another school or educational organisation can offer your staff career-changing opportunities to develop their learning and teaching.

Schools can send professionals in pre-primary, primary, or secondary/vocational school education on Erasmus+ Staff Mobility (Key Action 1) activities to expand their knowledge and skills, or improve their language competencies.

Mobility activities provide an opportunity for exchanging knowledge and working methods, as well as a broader perspective on education.

How can my school benefit from Staff Mobility?

Schools can benefit from the following kinds of Staff Mobility:

- There are **teaching assignments**, which enable teachers or other school education staff to teach at a partner school in another country. This is an excellent way for staff to gain knowledge of other European education systems and to develop their professional knowledge and skills.
- Staff Mobility also supports **training**, such as structured courses and training events, job shadowing and observations in a partner school or other relevant organisation. All school staff can benefit, not just teachers.

All activities last between two days and two months and are funded within a Staff Mobility project, lasting either one or two years. This means several members of staff can participate in mobility during the funding period.

How is Staff Mobility organised?

There are two ways to be involved in a Staff Mobility project:

- As an **applicant/sending organisation** – in charge of applying for projects, reporting on outcomes, and selecting staff to send abroad.
- As a **receiving organisation** – responsible for hosting teachers, student teachers or other school education professionals. This can involve providing activities for your visitors or benefiting from teaching activities provided by them.

Receiving organisations' roles will vary according to the activity. For example, they might provide a structured course or training event, or organise job shadowing or teaching assignments for visiting staff. The receiving organisation is not funded directly by the Erasmus+ programme.

How can my school participate in Staff Mobility?

Further information, including how to apply, can be obtained from your National Agency website: <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/tools/national-agencies>

What do school professionals think of Staff Mobility?

‘As a result of the training course, I started using new teaching methods in the classroom, I felt ready to organise my own informal English language courses, and I improved my classroom management skills. The course gave me – and through me the whole school staff and colleagues in neighbouring schools – a wider range of teaching approaches and methods to choose from, as well as a set of ready-made materials for everyday teaching, thus improving teachers’ professionalism and self-confidence.’

Tamara Pavlova, Teacher, Latvia

‘My experience impacted my life personally, academically and professionally. I had the opportunity to improve my French and learn more about French culture, while working in a friendly environment with a fantastic team... I really believe that without my experience, I would not have had the academic, personal and professional success that I have had.’

Jessica Gough, English Language Assistant, Ireland

Strategic Partnerships (Key Action 2)

Your school could lead or join a Strategic Partnership (Key Action 2) involving organisations across Europe. Strategic Partnerships are collaborative projects with specific objectives, which aim to raise standards in teaching and learning.

A wide variety of collaborative activities are possible. You could organise workshops and other knowledge-sharing activities, develop and implement new working methods, tools or resources, or run a joint research project on an issue affecting your learners.



Suggestion

Most National Agencies run information activities to help organisations apply for funding.

Ask when the next event is taking place in your country.

What kinds of Strategic Partnerships can we build?

You can build **Strategic Partnerships between schools and other organisations**, including schools, businesses, local authorities or services, etc. The partners you choose will depend on what you want to do. For example, you could share approaches/exchange experiences with other schools. Or, you could develop pupils' entrepreneurial spirit and skills through cooperation with a business. Or, you may wish to design new teaching methods in cooperation with a university.

Some Strategic Partnerships are **school-only projects**. This is ideal when you want to share an innovative pedagogical approach, or develop teaching practices – for example, if you want to engage pupils from the partner schools in decisions about their learning. Please note that there is a specific application form for this type of Strategic Partnerships.

Strategic Partnerships may also include mobility activities for learners and staff, provided they clearly contribute to your project's objectives. For example, learners or staff may attend joint learning events organised during the project, school staff may undertake teaching assignments at a partner school, and older pupils may spend some time studying at a partner school.

How are Strategic Partnerships organised?

Your school could be either the lead (applicant) or a partner.

Most Partnerships require a **minimum of three organisations (including the applicant) from three programme countries**.

Some kinds of Strategic Partnerships have different requirements:

- **Strategic Partnerships between regions** must consist of at least two local or regional authorities in two programme countries. In addition, they must include at least one school and one other local organisation in each participating country (this could be any kind of organisation – a business, a museum, a sport club, etc.).
- **School-only projects** require a minimum of **two schools from two programme countries**.

How can my school participate?

Help and guidance, along with information about events and how to apply for funding, can be obtained from your National Agency website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/tools/national-agencies>

What do schools say about collaborating in partnerships?

“Our recent projects have performed very well...This has led to a real snowball effect and nowadays, individuals and institutions regularly approach us wanting to collaborate or to support us.”

Christa Brokate-Golinski, Headmaster, Germany

eTwinning

By joining the eTwinning online platform, your school will be entering a network of over 250 000 school staff members from across Europe.



Suggestion

The eTwinning Cookbook is a comprehensive guide to using the platform and getting the most out of its many features.

You can find it on the eTwinning website:

<http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/discover/publications.htm>

What are the benefits of eTwinning for my school?

Through eTwinning your teaching and non-teaching staff (management, counsellors, librarians, etc.) can connect with other schools to set up online activities involving pupils and staff. The platform is also an excellent way to communicate with other schools and share ideas. It is often used alongside other Erasmus+ projects to stay in touch with partners.

How are eTwinning activities organised?

No formal application is required to start eTwinning; simply register your school on the eTwinning platform. There are four main kinds of activities for your school:

- Your staff can set up or join **Teachers' Rooms**. Rooms are areas where teachers can share their opinions, experiences and practice on something of general or specific interest.
- For longer term collaboration, members can set up or join **eTwinning Groups**. These private spaces allow members to work together in a more structured way – for example to discuss teaching and learning methodologies and find support to further their personal and professional development.
- eTwinning even allows members to host or participate in **Learning Events**, which are short, intensive online courses. Events are led by an expert and include active work and discussion among teachers across Europe. Learning Events offer teachers an introduction to a topic, in-depth learning modules to share ideas and support to help develop skills. Each event consists of 4-5 days of active work and discussion, followed by 4-5 days of reflection and personal work. The materials are online and participants can access them in their own time.
- **eTwinning Projects** involve pupils and staff in international online collaboration i.e. teachers learn new ways of working from fellow professionals, while pupils get to interact with their peers from different cultures, traditions and backgrounds.

Getting involved in projects is very straightforward, because eTwinning offers 'ready-made' project kits (a full project 'recipe' to follow) and short activities (which can be incorporated into your project or into everyday classroom work).

How can my school sign up to eTwinning?

Simply register your school at www.etwinning.net to explore the opportunities available.

What do schools say about eTwinning?

‘...I have been involved in fifteen projects with different countries such as Scotland, Poland, Norway, Slovakia and France. Every project was always well integrated into the National Minimum Curriculum and the school year syllabus. Nothing was done outside the curriculum or syllabus, but only delivered in a more stimulating way, which children really enjoyed and which meant they probably remembered better what they had learned.’

Maria Antoinette Magro, Teacher, Malta

‘I was amazed to learn that...thousands of teachers from all over Europe had joined and had started all kinds of interesting projects. I put a few ideas of my own on the eTwinning portal and pretty soon I had started communicating with other teachers.’

Helgi Hólm, Teacher, Iceland

Erasmus+ opportunity navigator

Table 1 presents some of the typical objectives of European projects and illustrates how they may be supported by Erasmus+.

What do you want to do?

You will see that the opportunities are actually quite fluid. For example, while Staff Mobility (Key Action 1) is a funding opportunity in its own right, many Strategic Partnerships (Key Action 2) include a mobility component. Furthermore, eTwinning brings benefits as a standalone activity, but can also enhance all Erasmus+ opportunities.

Erasmus+ pathways	Key Action 1:  Staff Mobility	Key Action 2:  Strategic Partnerships  eTwinning	
Work with other schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School staff can provide or attend training activities at other schools. Staff can share or transfer practices between schools by undertaking teaching assignments at other schools. The school can develop long-term relationships with mobility partners which can lead to further European projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools can share innovative policies, teaching practices, learning materials and tools or technologies with other schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools can host or join online Projects, Teacher Rooms, Groups and Learning Events. No formal application is required for schools to get involved.
Work with different kinds of organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School staff can attend training activities at any relevant organisation (e.g. NGOs, training centres, universities, careers advice bodies, counselling services, etc.). Schools can follow up Staff Mobility activities with larger scale collaboration (see Strategic Partnerships). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Partnerships can include any public, private or non-profit organisation, including local and regional bodies (e.g. involving businesses or employment services to improve career guidance). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools can find other schools with strong links to different kinds of organisations (businesses, local authorities, further/higher education, etc.) when seeking partners for Staff Mobility or Strategic Partnerships.
Provide opportunities for staff and pupils in other countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School teaching and non-teaching staff can benefit from professional development abroad. Pupils can benefit from new and improved teaching practices provided by visiting or returning staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff or pupils can take part in learning/teaching/training activities in a partner organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School staff and pupils can connect across Europe through virtual mobility. Pupils and staff can participate and help develop eTwinning projects. Teacher Rooms, Groups and Learning Events support professional collaboration and networking for school staff.
Develop and enhance cooperation through eTwinning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools can find partner schools for mobility activities. Education professionals and pupils can communicate before, during and after a mobility activity through eTwinning. Schools can enhance staff mobility through linked eTwinning activities. Staff can supplement training activities with an online component. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> eTwinning is an ideal place to find partner schools for Strategic Partnership activities. Schools can publish and deliver training modules, curricula and other materials developed by the Partnership. Partners can communicate carry out online collaborative activities before, during or after a Strategic Partnership through eTwinning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools can follow up eTwinning with funded Erasmus+ ventures. Partners can maintain and develop lasting relations through eTwinning. Schools can access an extensive range of tools to supplement all Erasmus+ projects.