Official Journal
of the European Union

EN
C series

C/2026/1962

28.4.2026

Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee

Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028-2034, and repealing Regulations (EU) 2021/817 and (EU) 2021/888

(COM(2025) 549 final – 2025/0222 (COD))

(C/2026/1962)

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Legislative procedure	EU Law Tracker
Referral	European Parliament, 12.11.2025 Council of the European Union, 1.10.2025
Legal basis	Articles 165(4), 166(4), 214(5) and 294 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
European Commission documents	COM(2025) 549 final
Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	SDG 4 – Quality education SDG 10 – Reduced inequalities SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and strong institutions
Section responsible	Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship
Adopted at plenary session	22.1.2026
Plenary session No	602
Outcome of vote (for/against/abstentions)	216/8/12

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Concerning the proposal for a regulation, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC):

1.1. **stresses** the need to add a clear distinction in the programme structure for youth, education and training, and sport, ensuring that each is allocated an integral position in the proposed regulation, specifying the measures and relevant definitions;

1.2. **underlines** the need for a dedicated budget heading on youth issues and **calls** for a minimum of 15 % of the total Erasmus+ budget to be earmarked for the youth sector. Additionally, under education and training, the EESC calls for at least 26,2 % to be earmarked for vocational education and training (VET);

1.3. **expresses** concern that the proposed restructuring of Erasmus+ into two pillars risks reducing the visibility and effectiveness of certain key measures, in particular those related to policy development and youth participation. Therefore, it **emphasises** the importance of a 'support for policy development' measure, as a separate component from 'cooperation among organisations and institutions', retaining the functions of the current Key Action 3 (KA3) and recognising that policy development: plays a distinct role in promoting youth participation and democratic engagement for people of all ages; responds to a distinct need in the field beyond cooperation; and ensures consistency with the EU Youth Strategy, the European Youth Work Agenda and other policy fields related to education and training, such as the Union of Skills and validation of non-formal and informal learning;

1.4. **stresses** the importance of sound monitoring of the programme through indicators, particularly in respect of people with fewer opportunities, participatory governance structures with beneficiaries – such as youth organisations, social partners, civil society organisations and business representative bodies – and Member State oversight;

1.5. **underlines** the importance of safeguarding the unique value and identity of the European Solidarity Corps (ESC), and the need to preserve the core principles of solidarity, volunteering and civic engagement, while maintaining its visibility, non-formal and informal learning dimension and accessibility, especially for young people with fewer opportunities;

1.6. **emphasises** the importance of ensuring that the programme is open and accessible to Europeans beyond the EU – both people and organisations – by including non-EU European countries that uphold democracy, human rights and the rule of law, thus strengthening mobility, volunteering and solidarity across Europe;

1.7. **stresses** that volunteering and solidarity activities form a core part of youth work and civic engagement for people of all ages, and must be recognised and supported as valuable learning and participation opportunities. These activities must remain quite distinct from formal employment and traineeships, in line with existing rules, while preserving the unique purpose and added value of volunteering;

1.8. **calls** for the mobility of professionals to continue to be adequately covered by the learning mobility pillar. The mobility of professionals – including teachers, trainers and youth workers –strengthens long-term organisational capacity and ensures the transfer of innovative educational practices across sectors;

1.9. **calls** for the allocation of financial resources and the introduction of funding mechanisms to ensure effective outreach to and the inclusion of people with fewer opportunities – particularly NEETs – who are often overlooked by generalised inclusion measures.

1.10. **recommends** that Erasmus+ continue to increase its socio-economic impact, including labour market relevance, by keeping learning mobility at its core and ensuring a strong focus on initial vocational education and training (IVET) and VET in general. Action in this area needs significantly more funding. Capacity-building support for VET should continue to actively involve social partners, paritarian organisations, business representative bodies – especially SMEs – and training institutions, enabling stronger cooperation between education providers and the labour market in order to foster lasting innovation in skills provision.

2. EXPLANATORY NOTES

(a) The EESC emphasises that Erasmus+ is the EU's flagship programme for advancing educational, professional and personal development through lifelong learning in education, training, youth and sport. It contributes to sustainable growth, quality employment, social cohesion, innovation, a stronger European identity and active citizenship within Europe and globally. The programme has proven transformative for millions of Europeans of all ages, regions and

personal backgrounds, fostering inclusion, participation and solidarity across borders. Youth organisations, particularly youth-led organisations, amplify this impact by fostering meaningful youth participation, acting as a bridge between young people and institutions, ensuring that their expert perspectives are reflected in the programme's design, implementation and evaluation; these organisations must therefore be recognised and prioritised as the legitimate beneficiaries and main partners of the youth programmes.

(b) The EESC advocates the continued evolution of Erasmus+ to stay relevant in a changing world, ensuring that any reform upholds accessibility, inclusiveness and meaningful youth participation, grounded in evidence-based evaluation and continuity of proven value. Future improvements should preserve the programme's integrity, coherence and recognition of youth organisations as key partners and policy actors, supported by dedicated youth funding to guarantee access, diversity and lasting impact – enabling Erasmus+ to keep empowering young people to build a more democratic, resilient and cohesive Europe. The programme should promote scientific and democratic literacy, civic competence and critical and ethical thinking across all its actions, fostering evidence-based reasoning and enabling participants to engage actively in democratic life.

(c) The Erasmus+ programme plays a key role by supporting the green and digital transition in VET, as well as in upskilling and reskilling, as underlined in the EESC's opinion on green skills and green vocational institutions ([1]).

(d) The EESC notes the proposed increase in the programme's budget from the current EUR 26 billion to EUR 40,8 billion. However, when adjusted for inflation, and taking into account the proposed merger with the European Solidarity Corps (ESC), this increase is minimal. The EESC therefore calls for a fivefold increase in the programme's budget, as proposed by Mario Draghi in the *Draghi Report* ([2]), to EUR 130 billion to ensure that no young person or other beneficiary of Erasmus+ is left behind.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.1

2.1. All sectors – youth, education and training, and sport – are vital pillars of the programme, which deliver proven results and deserve clear structural distinctions to ensure coherence, visibility and continuity. Dedicated chapters must be preserved to address the sectors' specific needs and align with the programme's objectives, while explicitly recognising youth organisations as key actors through clear definitions of youth actions and youth-related terms. Strengthening organisational support and preserving the structural visibility of all sectors will enable the programme to continue empowering its beneficiaries, fostering their participation across Europe. Learners and youth organisations are unique multiplier organisations that need reliable, structural funding to sustain their work in fostering democracy across youth spaces and educational institutions.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.2

2.2. Despite its strong results in fostering inclusion and civic engagement, the youth sector remains chronically underfunded, with cooperation actions (Key Action 2 – KA2) showing the lowest success rates due to unmet demand. With only 13,837 % of the Erasmus+ and ESC budget allocated for 2021-2027, raising this share to at least 15 % for 2028-2034 is essential. Such earmarked funding would support more high-quality projects, protect vital non-formal learning initiatives from being diluted within a broader Education structure and ensure fair, stable distribution of resources that continue to empower young people and youth organisations in Europe's social and democratic life. The same rationale applies to education and training, where the EESC calls for at least 26,2 % of funding to be earmarked for VET. Dedicated funding for VET is essential to ensure quality, accessibility and responsiveness to the skills requirements arising from the green and digital transitions, while preserving the distinct role of vocational education and training as a key pillar of inclusion, skills development and social cohesion.

([1]) Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee – How to ensure green skills and promote green vocational institutions (exploratory opinion requested by the Danish Presidency of the Council of the EU) (OJ C, C/2026/23, 16.1.2026, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2026/23/oj).

([2]) *The Draghi report: In-depth analysis and recommendations* (Part B), published in September 2024. Specific budgetary references can be found in Section 2, Chapter 2, page 268.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.3

2.3. The cooperation between organisations and institutions must go beyond capacity-building to include structured dialogue, policy development and joint initiatives that engage people of all ages. The action for 'Support to Policy Development' should remain distinct, as it plays a strategic and systemic role in advancing democratic participation, lifelong learning and active citizenship across the EU. This ensures coherence with the EU Youth Strategy, the European Youth Work Agenda and other policy fields related to education and training such as the Union of Skills and Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning. Linking implementation tools to policy development enables the experience and innovation generated within the youth and adult learning sector to inform sustainable, evidence-based policy reform at all levels.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.4

2.4. Mechanisms for beneficiary feedback are vital to ensure the programme effectively meets the needs of those it serves. Common indicators should be maintained as in the previous programme and, where necessary, further developed, in cooperation with stakeholders, building on the existing Erasmus+ performance framework to measure the programme's impact on inclusion, gender equality, intergenerational fairness, democratic engagement and participation. A greater focus on geographic indicators of socio-economic disadvantage, for example, would be welcome. As a driver of active citizenship, Erasmus+ must embed participatory multi-level governance and structured dialogue, involving participants and beneficiary organisations such as youth organisations, social partners, civil society organisations and business representative bodies. Maintaining a three-sector focus and allocating at least 75 % of funds at national level safeguards accessibility for organisations closest to participants and territories, while allowing Member States flexibility to adapt implementation to their contexts, including through more than one national agency. Transparent oversight and a clear allocation of funds across sectors will ensure accountability, coherence and fair distribution of resources. The designation and operation of national agencies must ensure coherence, transparency and full compliance with the principles of **upholding human rights, democracy and the rule of law**. Furthermore, the Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme should ensure that access to its opportunities is safeguarded against any form of discrimination or restriction resulting from political or administrative decisions at national level. The programme should strategically reinforce the institutional capacity of smaller countries to ensure high-quality projects.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.5

2.5. The absorption of the ESC into the programme must preserve the principles of solidarity, volunteering and community engagement, while ensuring continuity, accessibility and quality, particularly for young people with fewer opportunities and for grassroots organisations. The ESC's identity, visibility and standards must be protected so it can continue fostering inclusion, skills development and civic participation through non-formal and informal learning, while strengthening communities and shared European values through volunteering and solidarity activities.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.6

2.6. The Erasmus+ programme should remain open to participation by European countries that abide by the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Extending access to such non-EU countries reinforces shared values, promotes democratic resilience and strengthens cooperation across borders. In this context, the EESC is pleased that the UK and the EU have agreed that the UK will re-join the Erasmus+ scheme in 2027 ([3]). The inclusion of partners from the Western Balkans, the Eastern Partnership and other European states, such as the United Kingdom and Switzerland, would

([3]) Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee – EU-UK Youth Engagement (own-initiative opinion) (OJ C, C/2024/4053, 12.7.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/4053/oj).

enhance opportunities for mobility, volunteering and solidarity, through a pan-European learning and civic space. Restricting access to a limited group of countries creates inequalities, weakens the programme's integrative potential and contradicts its founding principles of openness and equal opportunity. We welcome the recent initiative for international projects from sub-Saharan Africa. We believe this model should also apply to Europe's eastern and southern neighbourhood, and a uniform and permanent model of association with Erasmus+ should be developed for both neighbourhood regions that is consistent with the Youth Action Plan of the EEAS.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.7

2.7. The previous ESC Regulation was clear in stating that volunteering 'shall not be a substitute for traineeships or jobs'. This safeguard must be maintained. To ensure compliance, national agencies should carry out checks to ensure that organisations do not use EU-funded volunteers to fill staff shortages, replace paid workers or perform tasks typically assigned to entry-level professionals. This is essential to preserve fair labour standards, protect decent work and maintain public trust in EU solidarity initiatives.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.8

2.8. Staff mobility plays a crucial role in driving lasting improvements in education and training systems. Evidence shows that exchanges among teachers, trainers and youth workers generate a strong 'leverage effect' on institutional performance. Integrating staff mobility under the general Learning Opportunities Pillar, however, creates a structural risk that scarce resources could be diverted towards meeting the high demand for learner mobility. Staff mobility remains essential for innovation, quality teaching and institutional development. The mobility of professionals should continue to be adequately covered by the learning mobility pillar, while preserving the flexibility needed for national agencies to respond to actual demand and sectoral needs. This is vital to ensure the long-term quality, innovation and sustainability of European education and training systems.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.9

2.9. The Erasmus+ programme must ensure that all people can access its opportunities, regardless of the structural or situational barriers that prevent them from benefiting fully from it. Such barriers include poverty, rural residence, migrant background, disability, or other grounds constituting discrimination under Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. General mechanisms alone are insufficient, therefore, appropriate financial resources, such as dedicated and targeted funding mechanisms, complemented by outreach measures and additional support for validation of non-formal and informal learning, must be established to ensure effective participation. Sustained investment in outreach and services like Eurodesk are an integral to ensuring equitable access to EU opportunities.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.10

2.10. Learning mobility in VET is one of the programme's strongest drivers of employability and innovation. Evaluations consistently show that VET learners', apprentices', trainers' and staff mobility strengthens work-based learning, boosts skill acquisition and deepens cooperation between social partners, paritarian organisations, education providers and companies, particularly SMEs that host the majority of placements. Such mobility also supports cultural exchange and positive attitudes toward the EU. Erasmus+ must set aside a significant and adequate share of funding for VET and work-based learning in order to ensure that mobility continues. The tools and information provided by the programme and the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) need to be applicable for school-based systems as well as for dual systems, for rural areas with their specific difficulties and for industrial centres, for countries with established social dialogue and for those with fewer social dialogue structures.

3. **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

Amendment 1

Linked to recommendation 1.1 and 1.3

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
CHAPTER II	CHAPTER II
SCOPE OF INTERVENTION	SCOPE OF INTERVENTION
SECTION 1	SECTION 1
LEARNING ***OPORTUNITUES FOR ALL***	LEARNING ***MOBILITY AND VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES***
Article 4	Article 4
Learning mobility **and** ***volunteering opportunities***	***Education*** **and** ***Training***
1. In the field of education and training, the Programme shall support:	1. In the field of education and training, the Programme shall support:
(a) Learning mobility of higher education students and staff;	(a) Learning mobility of higher education students and staff;
(b) Learning mobility of vocational education and training learners and staff;	(b) Learning mobility of vocational education and training learners and staff;
(c) Learning mobility of school pupils and staff, including staff in early childhood education and care;	(c) Learning mobility of school pupils and staff, including staff in early childhood education and care;
(d) Learning mobility of adult learners and staff in adult learning.	(d) Learning mobility of adult learners and staff in ***formal and non-formal*** adult learning ***settings***.

Reason

This amendment restores separate sections for education and training, youth and sport, reflecting the distinct objectives and needs of each sector and ensuring balanced visibility and coherence within the programme.

Amendment 2

Linked to recommendation 1.1 and 1.3

Chapter 2, Scope for interventions, Section 1, Article 4:

After point 1, add text from EC Article 5 and add a new point 3

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC Amendment
	2. The Programme shall support talent and excellence development opportunities:
	(a) Erasmus+ scholarships in strategic educational fields, including in joint study programmes;
	(b) Erasmus Mundus scholarships;
	(c) Jean Monnet actions in the field of higher education;

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC Amendment
	(d) Support to the following Jean Monnet institutions pursuing an aim of European interest: the European University Institute, Florence, including its School of Transnational Governance; the College of Europe (Bruges, including its subsidiary in Tirana, and Natolin campuses); the European Institute of Public Administration, Maastricht; the Academy of European Law, Trier; the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Odense; and the International Centre for European Training, Nice.
	3. Learning mobility and volunteering may be accompanied by:
	(a) support to teaching and learning about the EU, including European integration, values and citizenship;
	(b) measures such as language support, preparatory visits, training and virtual cooperation.

Reason

Same as in Amendment 1.

Amendment 3

Linked to recommendation 1.1, 1.3 and 1.7

Chapter 2, Scope for interventions, Section 1, Article 4:

Point 2 becomes new Article 5, after existing Article 4

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC Amendment
	Article 5
	Youth
2. In the field of youth, the Programme shall support:	***1.*** In the field of youth, the Programme shall support:
(a) Learning mobility of young people, including DiscoverEU, activities supporting youth participation and learning mobility of youth workers;	(a) Learning mobility of young people, including DiscoverEU, activities supporting youth participation and learning mobility of youth workers;
(b) 'European Solidarity Corps' ***volunteering***, including the ***European*** Voluntary Humanitarian Aid ***Corps***.	***2.*** 'European Solidarity Corps' ***activities, divided in two strands:***
	(a) the 'participation of young people in solidarity activities', including ***volunteering activities, solidarity projects, networking activities, quality and support measures;***
	(b) the ***'participation of young people in humanitarian aid related solidarity activities' (the 'European*** Voluntary Humanitarian Aid ***Corps').***

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC Amendment
	Volunteering shall not be a substitute for traineeships or jobs, nor equated with employment; it shall be based on a written volunteering agreement.
	3. Learning mobility and volunteering may be accompanied by:
	(a) support to teaching and learning about the EU, including European integration, values and citizenship;
	(b) measures such as language support, preparatory visits, training and virtual cooperation.

Reason

Same as in Amendment 1. Furthermore, it specifies that volunteering experiences must not replace jobs or traineeships.

Amendment 4

Linked to recommendation 1.1 and 1.3

Chapter 2, Scope for interventions, Section 1, Article 4:

Points 3 and 4 become new Article 6

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC Amendment
	Article 6 ***Sport***
3. ***In the field of sport, the*** Programme shall support learning mobility of athletes and people active in grassroots sport and learning mobility of sport staff.	***1***. ***The*** Programme shall support learning mobility of athletes and people active in grassroots sport and learning mobility of sport staff.
4. Learning mobility ***under this Article*** may be accompanied by:	***2***. Learning mobility ***and volunteering*** may be accompanied by:
(a) support to teaching and learning about the EU, including European integration, values and citizenship;	(a) support to teaching and learning about the EU, including European integration, values and citizenship;
(b) measures such as language support, preparatory visits, training and virtual cooperation***;***	(b) measures such as language support, preparatory visits, training and virtual cooperation***;***
	(c) opportunities for validation of non-formal and informal learning;

Reason

Same as in Amendment 1.

Amendment 5

Linked to recommendation 1.1 and 1.3

Chapter 2, Scope for interventions, Section 1, Article 5:

Text moved to Article 4, see Amendment 2

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC Amendment
Article 5	
Talent and excellence development opportunities	
In the field of education and training, the Programme shall support:	
(a) Erasmus+ scholarships in strategic educational fields, including in joint study programmes;	
(b) Erasmus Mundus scholarships;	
(c) Jean Monnet actions in the field of higher education;	
(d) Support to the following Jean Monnet institutions pursuing an aim of European interest: the European University Institute, Florence, including its School of Transnational Governance; the College of Europe (Bruges, including its subsidiary in Tirana, and Natolin campuses); the European Institute of Public Administration, Maastricht; the Academy of European Law, Trier; the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Odense; and the International Centre for European Training, Nice.	

Reason

Same as in Amendment 1.

Amendment 6

Linked to recommendation 1.1 and 1.3

Chapter 2, Scope for interventions, Section 2:

Split Section 2 in two sections and add new paragraphs

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC Amendment
SECTION 2	SECTION 2
CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT	***COOPERATION AMONG ORGANISATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS***
[…]	[…]
Article ***6***	Article ***7***
Cooperation among organisations and institutions	***Education and Training***
The Programme shall support:	***In the field of education and training the*** Programme shall support:
(a) Partnerships for cooperation, including small-scale partnerships to foster wider and more inclusive access to the Programme;	(a) Partnerships for cooperation, including small-scale partnerships to foster wider and more inclusive access to the Programme;

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC Amendment
(b) Partnerships for excellence and innovation, building on the European Universities Alliances, Centres of Vocational Excellence, European Teacher Academies, European School Alliances, Joint study programmes***, European Youth Together and Sport Collaborative Alliances.***	(b) Partnerships for excellence and innovation, building on the European Universities Alliances, Centres of Vocational Excellence, European Teacher Academies, European School Alliances, Joint study programmes**.**
	(c) user-friendly online platforms and tools for virtual cooperation, including support services for eTwinning and for the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe, and tools to facilitate learning mobility, including the European Student Card initiative.
Article ***7***	***Article 8***
Support to policy development	***Youth***
The Programme shall support:	***In the field of youth the Programme shall support:***
(a) Experimentation, preparation and implementation of the Union's policy agendas and tools ***covering skills, education and training, youth and sport*** *[1]*;	***(a) Partnerships for cooperation, including small-scale partnerships to foster wider and more inclusive access to the Programme;***
(b) Programme implementation including synergies with, and support to other Union policies and programmes, online platforms, tools for virtual cooperation and tools to facilitate learning mobility;	***(b) Partnerships for excellence and innovation, building on 'European Youth Together'.***
(c) Dissemination and communication.	***Article 9***
	Sport
	In the field of sport, the Programme shall support:
	(a) Partnerships for cooperation, including small-scale partnerships to foster wider and more inclusive access to the Programme;
	(b) Not- for -profit sport events aimed at further developing the European dimension of sport and ***promoting issues of relevance to grassroots sport, building on the Sport Collaborative Alliances.***
	SECTION 3
	SUPPORT TO POLICY DEVELOPMENT
	Article ***10***
	Education and Training
	In the field of education and training the Programme shall support:
	(a) Experimentation, preparation and implementation of the Union's policy agendas and tools [1],

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC Amendment
	(b) Union tools and measures that foster the quality, transparency and recognition of competences, skills and qualifications acquired in formal, non-formal and informal settings,
	(c) Programme implementation including synergies with, and support to other Union policies and programmes, online platforms, tools for virtual cooperation and tools to facilitate learning mobility;
	(d) Dissemination and communication.
	Article 11
	Youth
	In the field of youth, the Programme shall support:
	(a) Experimentation, preparation and implementation of the Union's policy agendas and tools, in particular the Youth wiki network, the Eurodesk network, Youthpass;
	(b) Policy dialogue and cooperation with relevant stakeholders, including Union-wide networks, European organisations and international organisations in the field of youth, the EU Youth Dialogue, and support to the European Youth Forum;
	(c) cooperation with other Union instruments and support to other Union policies;
	(d) dissemination and awareness-raising activities about European policy outcomes and priorities and about the Programme.
	Article 12
	Sport
	In the field of sport, the Programme shall support:
	(a) Experimentation, preparation and implementation of the Union's policy agendas and tools, in particular the National Coordinating Bodies implementing the European Week of Sport at national level.
	(b) Programme implementation including synergies with, and support to other Union policies and programmes, online platforms, tools for virtual cooperation and tools to facilitate learning mobility;

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC Amendment
	(c) Dissemination and communication.
[1] In particular: the European Qualifications Framework (EQF); the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET); the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR); the ENIC (European Network of Information Centres in the European Region) and NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union) Networks, the Euroguidance network, the common framework and tools for the provision of better services for skills and qualifications (Europass), the Eurydice Network, National Coordinators for Adult Learning, the Central and National Support Services for online platforms, the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the National Reference Points on graduate tracking***, Youth wiki network, the Eurodesk network, the European Youth Forum, Youthpass, the National Working Groups implementing the EU Youth Dialogue and the National Coordinating Bodies implementing the European Week of Sport at national level***.	[1] In particular: the European Qualifications Framework (EQF); the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET); the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR); the ENIC (European Network of Information Centres in the European Region) and NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union) Networks, the Euroguidance network, the common framework and tools for the provision of better services for skills and qualifications (Europass), the Eurydice Network, National Coordinators for Adult Learning, the Central and National Support Services for online platforms, the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the National Reference Points on graduate tracking.

Reason

Same as in Amendment 1.

Amendment 7

linked to recommendation 1.2

Insert New Article 9, paragraph 3

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
	The indicative distribution of the amount set out in paragraph 1 shall be: ***(a) EUR XXX, representing 78,64 % of the amount set out in paragraph 1 of this Article, to actions in the field of education and training (26,2 % of this amount is to be earmarked for VET)*** ***(b) EUR XXX, representing 15 % of the amount set out in paragraph 1 of this Article, to actions in the field of youth*** ***(c) EUR XXX, representing 1,8 % of the amount set out in paragraph 1 of this Article, to actions in the field of sport;*** ***(d) at least EUR XXX, representing 3,13 % of the amount set out in paragraph 1 of this Article, as a contribution to the operational costs of the national agencies; and*** ***(e) EUR XXX, representing 1,42 % of the amount set out in paragraph 1 of this Article, for Programme support.***

Reason

This amendment establishes clear earmarked amounts for education and training, youth and sport, ensuring a balanced and transparent distribution of funds across sectors. It safeguards resources for youth and strengthens accountability in programme implementation.

Amendment 8

linked to recommendation 1.3

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
CHAPTER I **GENERAL PROVISIONS** […] *Article 3* […] 3. The Programme objectives shall be pursued through the following pillars, which mainly have either a transnational or an international character: (a) Learning opportunities for all; (b) ***Capacity building support***	CHAPTER I **GENERAL PROVISIONS** […] *Article 3* […] 3. The Programme objectives shall be pursued through the following pillars, which mainly have either a transnational or an international character: (a) Learning opportunities for all; **(b) *Cooperation among organisations and institutions;*** **(c) *Support to policy development***

Reason

This amendment ensures that the programme pillars reflect the range of its activities by recognising support to policy development. This strengthens coherence and better captures the programme's strategic objectives.

Amendment 9

linked to recommendation 1.1 and 1.3

Add New Paragraphs

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
CHAPTER I **GENERAL PROVISIONS** *Article 2*	CHAPTER I **GENERAL PROVISIONS** *Article 2* […] ***'European Solidarity Corps' means the Union initiative providing young people with opportunities to participate in solidarity, volunteering and community engagement activities, both in the Union and beyond, that address societal, environmental or humanitarian challenges. Such activities shall be non-profit, voluntary, include a strong learning and civic dimension, and contribute to strengthening solidarity, social cohesion and European values.*** […]

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
	(20) 'national agency' means one or more bodies in charge of managing the implementation of the Programme at national level in a Member State or in a third country associated to the Programme;
	(21) 'youth participation activity' means an activity outside formal education and training carried out by informal groups of young people or youth organisations, and characterised by a non-formal or informal learning approach;
	(22) 'youth organisation' means a non-profit organisation, network, association, collective or self-organised group (whether legally constituted or not) whose primary purpose is to work with, for or on behalf of young people, promoting youth participation, non-formal learning, volunteering or youth work. Youth organisations include youth-led, democratically elected and membership-based entities at local, national and European level.
	(23) 'EU Youth Dialogue' means the dialogue between young people and youth organisations and policy and decision- makers, as well as experts, researchers and other civil society actors, as appropriate; it serves as a forum for continuous joint reflection and consultation on the priorities of, and all fields of relevance to, young people;
	(24) 'resource centre' means a specialised body operating within the Erasmus+ Programme framework to improve the quality, relevance and impact of its activities.

Reason

This amendment introduces essential definitions absent from the current draft, ensuring clarity and continuity with the existing regulation. It recognises key terms, thereby affirming essential stakeholders and processes within the programme.

Amendment 10

linked to recommendation 1.5

Preamble

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
(8) In this context, it is necessary to establish Erasmus+ 2028-2034, the Union Programme for education and training and also in the fields of youth and sport (the 'Programme'), as the successor to the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programmes, which encompasses actions in	(8) In this context, it is necessary to establish Erasmus+ 2028-2034, the Union Programme for education and training and also in the fields of youth and sport (the 'Programme'), as the successor to the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programmes, which encompasses actions in

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
the field of education and training, youth and sport and sets up the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps.	the field of education and training, youth and sport and sets up the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps. ***The integration of the European Solidarity Corps into the Programme shall preserve the principles of solidarity, volunteering and civic engagement that characterise it, and ensure continuity, accessibility and quality, in particular for young people with fewer opportunities and for grassroots organisations implementing volunteering and solidarity activities.***

Reason

This amendment ensures that the unique value and identity of the European Solidarity Corps is preserved within Erasmus+, maintaining continuity, visibility and accessibility for young people and organisations engaged in solidarity activities.

Amendment 11

linked to recommendation 1.4

Insert new Paragraph 45, following Paragraph 44 of Preamble

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
	(45) Participatory governance mechanisms shall be established at Union and national levels to meaningfully involve beneficiaries, youth organisations, social partners, civil society organisations and business representative bodies in regularly evaluating and monitoring the programme implementation.

Reason

This amendment establishes mechanisms to involve beneficiaries such as youth organisations, social partners, civil society organisations and business representative bodies in the evaluation and monitoring of the programme implementation, ensuring that it remains responsive to the needs and realities of those it is designed to support.

Amendment 12

linked to recommendation 1.4

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
CHAPTER VIII	CHAPTER VIII
Article 18	*Article 18*
National Authority	**National Authority**
[…]	[…]
2. The national authority shall designate ***a national agency*** for the duration of the Programme and notify the Commission thereof.	2. The national authority shall designate ***one or more national agencies*** for the duration of the Programme and notify the Commission thereof.

Reason

This amendment ensures that Member States retain the ability to designate more than one national agency, reflecting their specific structures and the distinct needs of the education and training, youth and sport sectors.

Amendment 13

linked to recommendation 1.1

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
CHAPTER 1 *Article 3* **Programme Objectives** 1. The Programme will advance youth policy cooperation, and further develop the European dimension in sport. The objective is to foster a more inclusive, united, and robust Europe by empowering young people, strengthening community ties, and promoting solidarity through meaningful engagement and cooperation. Sport plays a vital role as a driver for social inclusion, health, education, and community development	CHAPTER 1 *Article 3* **Programme Objectives** 1. The Programme will advance youth policy cooperation ***by strengthening the EU Youth Strategy and the European Youth Work Agenda***, and further develop the European dimension in sport. The objective is to foster a more inclusive, united, and robust Europe by empowering young people, strengthening community ties, and promoting ***active citizenship and*** solidarity through meaningful engagement and cooperation. Sport plays a vital role as a driver for social inclusion, health, education, and community development.

Reason

This would show the importance of referring to two of the most important political strategies at EU level in the youth policy field, which should explicitly underpin the objectives of the programme. Additionally, as data shows a link between having participated in Erasmus+ and being more likely to vote, volunteer and engage in local communities, there should be an explicit reference to active citizenship.

Amendment 14

linked to recommendation 1.1

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
CHAPTER I *Article 3* **Programme Objectives** […] (d) engage and empower young people to acquire and develop professional and personal competences to participate actively in society and democracy and connect them to the European project;	CHAPTER I *Article 3* **Programme Objectives** […] (d) engage and empower young people to acquire and develop professional and personal competences ***through formal, non-formal and informal learning,*** to participate actively in society and democracy and connect them to the European project***, while facilitating and supporting the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy, the European Youth Work Agenda and other EU initiatives in the field of youth;***

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
	(e) opportunities for the Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning outcomes as per the EU VNFIL guidelines should be ensured, taking full advantage of the emerging opportunities for micro-credentials and personalised, secure digital learning portfolios.

Reason

This amendment broadens the reference to all forms of learning and aligns the programme objectives with the two key EU-level political strategies in the youth policy field.

Amendment 15

linked to recommendation 1.1

Insert new Paragraph 50 after Paragraph 49 of the Preamble

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
	(50) The basic architecture of the 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 Programmes, which was divided into three chapters, namely education and training, youth and sport, has proven successful and should be maintained. Improvements to streamline the actions supported by the Programme and make them more efficient should be introduced. Stability and continuity should also be ensured in terms of management and implementation modes. Overall, at least 75 % of the Programme budget should be implemented under indirect management by the national agencies. This includes actions such as learning mobility in all fields of education and training, youth and sport and cooperation partnerships, including small-scale partnerships in the fields of education and training and youth. Where appropriate, specific arrangements regarding direct management should be put in place for actions involving EU-wide networks and European organisations, excluding small-scale partnerships.

Reason

This addition would reinstate wording as per the current Regulation (2021-2027), seeing the three-sector focus maintained and a commitment to disbursing 75 % of the programme funds at the national level.

Amendment 16

linked to recommendation 1.4

Chapter VI, add new Article 16, after Article 15

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
	Article 16 ***Evaluation*** ***1. Evaluations shall be carried out in a timely manner to feed into the decision-making process.*** ***2. Once sufficient information about the implementation of the Programme is available, but no later than 31 December 2031, the Commission shall perform an interim evaluation of the Programme. That interim evaluation shall be accompanied by a final evaluation of the 2021-2027 Programme, which shall feed into the interim evaluation. The interim evaluation of the Programme shall assess the overall effectiveness and performance of the Programme, including as regards new initiatives and the delivery of inclusion and simplification measures.*** ***3. Without prejudice to the requirements set out in Chapter VIII and the obligations of national agencies set out in Article [XX], Member States shall submit to the Commission, by 31 May 2031, a report on the implementation and the impact of the Programme in their respective territories.*** ***4. Where appropriate, and on the basis of the interim evaluation, the Commission shall put forward a legislative proposal to amend this Regulation.*** ***5. At the end of the implementation period, but no later than 31 December 2038, the Commission shall carry out a final evaluation of the results and impact of the Programme.*** ***6. The Commission shall transmit any evaluations carried out under this Article, including the interim evaluation, accompanied by its observations, to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.***

Reason

This additional Article will allow for sound monitoring of the programme and the inclusion of participatory governance structure.

Brussels, 22 January 2026.

The President
of the European Economic and Social Committee
Séamus BOLAND

ANNEX

The following amendments, which received at least a quarter of the votes cast, were rejected during the discussions (Rule 74(3) of the Rules of Procedure):

Amendment 1

Point 1.10

Amend as follows:

Draft opinion of the Committee	Amendment
recommends that Erasmus+ continue to increase its socio-economic impact, including labour market relevance, by keeping learning mobility at its core ***and ensuring a strong focus on initial vocational education and training (IVET) and VET in general***. Action in this area needs significantly more funding. Capacity-building support for VET should continue to actively involve social partners, ***paritarian organisations,*** business representative bodies – especially SMEs – and training institutions, enabling stronger cooperation between education providers and the labour market in order to foster lasting innovation in skills provision.	recommends that Erasmus+ continue to increase its socio-economic impact, including labour market relevance, by keeping learning mobility at its core***. Its future implementation should strengthen the programme's relevance for the labour market by supporting mobility for VET learners, apprentices, trainers and staff, ensuring strong engagement of companies, including SMEs. Therefore, stresses the importance of safeguarding a visible and adequate share for VET and work-based learning within the programme***. Action in this area needs significantly more funding. Capacity-building support for VET should continue to actively involve social partners, business representative bodies – especially SMEs***, paritarian organisations where relevant*** – and training institutions, enabling stronger cooperation between education providers and the labour market in order to foster lasting innovation in skills provision.

Reason

This amendment proposes a wording that reflects more clearly how Erasmus+ delivers value for the labour market. By explicitly referring to mobility for VET learners, apprentices, trainers and staff, and to the engagement of companies, including SMEs, it anchors the programme in real work-based learning rather than only institutional cooperation. In addition, safeguarding a visible and adequate share for VET and work-based learning is crucial in the context of the next MFF, to ensure that VET mobility is not marginalised and that employers can continue to invest in skills and apprenticeships.

Outcome of the vote:

In favour:	82
Against:	115
Abstention:	16

Amendment 2

Point 2 c)

Insert new point 2 c)

Position: After existing point – Same level

Draft opinion of the Committee	Amendment
	Erasmus+ must continue strengthening its relevance for the labour market by keeping learning mobility at its core and ensuring a strong focus on VET and work-based

Draft opinion of the Committee	Amendment
	learning. Companies, including SMEs, play a key role in offering quality mobility opportunities and in identifying skills needs; their meaningful involvement remains essential. Capacity-building support related to VET should therefore continue to actively involve companies, especially SMEs, enabling stronger cooperation between education providers and the labour market and fostering lasting innovation in skills provision.

Reason

The importance of focussing labour market relevance by keeping learning mobility at the core of Erasmus + must be mentioned also in Chapter 2. This ensure that the opinion reflects more clearly how Erasmus+ delivers value for the labour market. By explicitly referring to mobility for VET learners, apprentices, trainers and staff, and to the engagement of companies, including SMEs, it anchors the programme in real work-based learning rather than only institutional cooperation.

Outcome of the vote:

In favour: 83

Against: 126

Abstention: 12

Amendment 4

Point 2.7

Amend as follows:

Draft opinion of the Committee	Amendment
The previous ESC Regulation was clear in stating that volunteering 'shall not be a substitute for traineeships or jobs'. This safeguard must be maintained. To ensure compliance, national agencies should ***carry out checks*** to ensure that organisations do not use EU-funded volunteers to fill staff shortages, replace paid workers or perform tasks typically assigned to entry-level professionals. This is essential to preserve fair labour standards, protect decent work and maintain public trust in EU solidarity initiatives.	The previous ESC Regulation was clear in stating that volunteering 'shall not be a substitute for traineeships or jobs'. This safeguard must be maintained. To ensure compliance, national agencies should ***use appropriate verification*** to ensure that organisations do not use EU-funded volunteers to fill staff shortages, replace paid workers or perform tasks typically assigned to entry-level professionals. This is essential to preserve fair labour standards, protect decent work and maintain public trust in EU solidarity initiatives.

Reason

It is proposed to refer to 'verification' rather than carrying out check to give more room for national agencies to define how they do this.

Outcome of the vote:

In favour: 78

Against: 134

Abstention: 16

Amendment 5

Point 2.10

Amend as follows:

Draft opinion of the Committee	Amendment
Learning mobility in VET is one of the programme's strongest drivers of employability and innovation. Evaluations consistently show that VET learners', apprentices', trainers' and staff mobility strengthens work-based learning, boosts skill acquisition and deepens cooperation between social partners, paritarian organisations, education providers and companies, particularly SMEs that host the majority of placements. Such mobility also supports cultural exchange and positive attitudes toward the EU. Erasmus+ must set aside a significant and adequate share of funding for VET and work-based learning in order to ensure that mobility continues. The tools and information provided by the programme and the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) need to be applicable for school-based systems as well as for dual systems, for rural areas with their specific difficulties and for industrial centres, for countries with established social dialogue and for those with fewer social dialogue structures.	Learning mobility in VET is one of the programme's strongest drivers of employability and innovation. Evaluations consistently show that VET learners', apprentices', trainers' and staff mobility strengthens work-based learning, boosts skill acquisition and deepens cooperation between social partners, paritarian organisations, education providers and companies, particularly SMEs that host the majority of placements. Such mobility also supports cultural exchange and positive attitudes toward the EU. Erasmus+ must set aside a significant and adequate share of funding for VET and work-based learning in order to ensure that mobility continues. ***Ensuring strong and systematic engagement of companies, including SMEs, is essential to align training with real labour-market needs, reinforce the programme's contribution to competitiveness, and maintain its proven impact on skills development and professional pathways.*** The tools and information provided by the programme and the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) need to be applicable for school-based systems as well as for dual systems, for rural areas with their specific difficulties and for industrial centres, for countries with established social dialogue and for those with fewer social dialogue structures.

Reason

The text should also emphasise the importance of strong and systematic engagement of companies (including SMEs) as this is fundamentally important to align training with real labour-market needs, reinforce the programme's contribution to competitiveness, and maintain Erasmus+ programmes proven impact on skills development and professional pathways.

Outcome of the vote:

In favour:	80
Against:	140
Abstention:	10

Amendment 6

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Point 3

EESC amendment 2

Linked to recommendation 1.1 and 1.3

Article 4

Amend as follows:

Text proposed by the European Commission
Article 4 Learning mobility and volunteering opportunities 1. In the field of education and training, the Programme shall support: (a) Learning mobility of higher education students and staff; (b) Learning mobility of vocational education and training learners and staff; (c) Learning mobility of school pupils and staff, including staff in early childhood education and care; (d) Learning mobility of adult learners and staff in adult learning. […]

Draft opinion of the Committee	Amendment
Article 4 **Learning mobility and volunteering opportunities**	*Article 4* **Learning mobility and volunteering opportunities**
1. In the field of education and training, the Programme shall support:	1. In the field of education and training, the Programme shall support:
(a) Learning mobility of higher education students and staff;	(a) Learning mobility of higher education students and staff;
(b) Learning mobility of vocational education and training learners and staff;	(b) Learning mobility of vocational education and training learners and staff;
(c) Learning mobility of school pupils and staff, including staff in early childhood education and care;	(c) Learning mobility of school pupils and staff, including staff in early childhood education and care;
(d) Learning mobility of adult learners and staff in adult learning.	(d) Learning mobility of adult learners and staff in adult learning.
2. The Programme shall support talent and excellence development opportunities:	***2. The Programme shall support talent and excellence development opportunities:***
(a) Erasmus+ scholarships in strategic educational fields, including in joint study programmes;	***(a) Erasmus+ scholarships in strategic educational fields, including in joint study programmes;***
(b) Erasmus Mundus scholarships;	***(b) Erasmus Mundus scholarships;***
(c) Jean Monnet actions in the field of higher education;	***(c) Jean Monnet actions in the field of higher education;***
(d) Support to the following Jean Monnet institutions pursuing an aim of European interest: the European University Institute, Florence, including its School of Transnational Governance; the College of Europe (Bruges, including its subsidiary in Tirana, and Natolin campuses); the European Institute of Public Administration, Maastricht; the Academy of European Law, Trier; the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Odense; and the International Centre for European Training, Nice.	***(d) Support to the following Jean Monnet institutions pursuing an aim of European interest: the European University Institute, Florence, including its School of Transnational Governance; the College of Europe (Bruges, including its subsidiary in Tirana, and Natolin campuses); the European Institute of Public Administration, Maastricht; the Academy of European Law, Trier; the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Odense; and the International Centre for European Training, Nice.***

Text proposed by the European Commission	
3. Learning mobility and volunteering may be accompanied by: ***(a) support to teaching and learning about the EU, including European integration, values and citizenship;*** ***(b) measures such as language support, preparatory visits, trainingandvirtualcooperation.***	

Reason given in the opinion	*Amendment to the reason given in the opinion*
This amendment restores separate sections for education and training, youth and sport, reflecting the distinct objectives and needs of each sector and ensuring balanced visibility and coherence within the programme.	This amendment restores separate sections for education and training, youth and sport, reflecting the distinct objectives and needs of each sector and ensuring balanced visibility and coherence within the programme.

Explanation of proposed changes

It is our understanding that the point 3) doesn't necessarily apply to this category of 'talent and excellence development opportunities', but only to learning mobility and volunteering. In the EC proposal, the point 3) is included only under learning mobility and volunteering opportunities. See https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52025PC0549, page 33.

Outcome of the vote:

In favour:	80
Against:	141
Abstention:	13

Amendment 8

COM(2025) 549 final

Point 3

EESC amendment 14

Linked to recommendation 1.1

Article 3, point 2 d)

Amend as follows:

Text proposed by the European Commission
Article 3 **Programme objectives** […] (d) engage and empower young people to acquire and develop professional and personal competences to participate actively in society and democracy and connect them to the European project;

Draft opinion of the Committee	Amendment
Article 3 **Programme objectives** […] (d) engage and empower young people to acquire and develop professional and personal competences ***through formal, non-formal and informal learning,*** to participate actively in society and democracy and connect them to the European project***, while facilitating and supporting the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy, the European Youth Work Agenda and other EU initiatives in the field of youth;*** ***(e) opportunities for the Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning outcomes as per the EU VNFIL guidelines should be ensured, taking full advantage of the emerging opportunities for micro-credentials and personalised, secure digital learning portfolios.***	*Article 3* **Programme objectives** […] (d) engage and empower young people to acquire and develop professional and personal competences ***through formal, non-formal and informal learning,*** to participate actively in society and democracy and connect them to the European project***, while facilitating and supporting the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy, the European Youth Work Agenda and other EU initiatives in the field of youth;***

Reason given in the opinion	***Amendment to the reason given in the opinion***
This amendment broadens the reference to all forms of learning and aligns the programme objectives with the two key EU-level political strategies in the youth policy field.	This amendment broadens the reference to all forms of learning and aligns the programme objectives with the two key EU-level political strategies in the youth policy field.

Explanation of proposed changes

Point 2(e) should be deleted as it mixes up objectives with delivery tools. Erasmus+ objectives should set out what the programme is meant to achieve, while instruments such as validation of non-formal learning, micro-credentials and digital portfolios belong to how it is implemented. Fixing these tools in the objectives would tie the programme to specific technical solutions for seven years, limit flexibility and risk distracting from Erasmus+'s core purpose of supporting learning mobility. These elements are better dealt with in the implementation framework or through existing EU instruments such as Europass and the EQF, which are designed to evolve over time.

Outcome of the vote:

In favour:	86
Against:	141
Abstention:	11