ERASMUS INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY PLAN AT B2 LJUBLJANA SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND PARTNER UNIVERSITIES IN ERSMUS PROJECTS[1]

Introduction

Equality, equity, and inclusion are fundamental values promoted by the European Union. At B2 Ljubljana School of Business (B2 LSB), we embrace these principles as central to our mission and practice. As societies become increasingly diverse in terms of culture, background, and experience, it is vital to equip individuals with the competences needed to engage with this diversity constructively. B2 LSB aim is to create an inclusive learning environment that not only prepares students for the realities of a diverse and globalised labour market but also contributes to building cohesive and resilient communities across Europe.

European Union programmes are designed to be accessible to all, yet some individuals continue to face structural and personal barriers that limit their ability to participate fully. Removing these barriers and ensuring fair and equitable access to education, training, and youth opportunities is therefore a key priority embedded in several EU policy frameworks.

The current generation of the Erasmus+ programme places strong emphasis on inclusion, with a dedicated framework that sets out clear priorities for the coming seven years. At B2 LSB, we actively embed these priorities into our study programmes, working to ensure that Erasmus+ opportunities are accessible to candidates who may encounter social, economic, cultural, or other barriers.

This document builds on the *Implementation Guidelines – Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy*. The strategy, developed in close cooperation with Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps National Agencies and external stakeholders, aims to widen participation and strengthen access for individuals with fewer opportunities.

The Erasmus Inclusion and Diversity Plan at B2 LSB, developed in collaboration with our Erasmus partner institutions, reflects and aligns with the core strategic principles outlined in these Implementation Guidelines.

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[1] Adopted from: Implementation guidelines - Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy (https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/document/implementation-guidelines-erasmus-and-european-solidarity-corps-inclusion-and-diversity-strategy).

Background

a) Policy framework and drivers

The European Union is firmly committed to the principles of equality and inclusion: "In all its undertakings, the Union shall uphold the principle of equality among its citizens, ensuring that they receive fair consideration from its institutions, agencies, and offices."

Ensuring inclusive opportunities for individuals who encounter barriers in education, training, and youth work is a central priority across several EU policy frameworks. These include the initiative to build a European Education Area, the EU Youth Strategy, and the European Youth Goals. Similarly, the European Pillar of Social Rights affirms that "everyone is entitled to high-quality, inclusive education, training, and lifelong learning." This vision is closely aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which seeks to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all."

The European Council has also highlighted that education and culture play a pivotal role in shaping inclusive and cohesive societies. With input from a wide range of stakeholders across the EU, the overarching objective is clear: to leave no one behind while fostering societies that are more inclusive, equitable, sustainable, and digitally empowered.

b) Societal context

European societies are becoming increasingly diverse across many dimensions, including culture, abilities, social backgrounds, identities, literacy levels, political perspectives, etc. This growing diversity highlights the pressing need to equip individuals with the skills and competences required to engage effectively in pluralistic environments. Formal, non-formal, and informal education all play a vital role in this process, helping to ensure that everyone receives the support necessary to overcome barriers and participate meaningfully in society.

c) Lessons from previous programmes

Between 1987 and 2020, EU programmes in education, training, youth, and sport supported more than 10 million participants. From 2014 to 2017, individuals with fewer opportunities represented an average of 11.5% of total participants[2] across all programme sectors.

While the Erasmus+ programme[3] has been more effective than its predecessors in engaging disadvantaged groups, the mid-term evaluation underlined the ongoing need to further widen access and strengthen inclusivity. Although strategic priorities were defined at the European level, their implementation differed significantly across countries.

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[2] Source : Report from the Commission [COM(2018)50] to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Mid-term evaluation of the Erasmus+ programme (2014-2020), page 2

[3] As the European Solidarity Corps was established as a programme in its own right in October 2018, a meaningful assessment of its inclusiveness can only be made during the 2021-2027 edition [13] See footnote n° 11

Objectives of the B2 LSB inclusion and diversity plan

The B2 LSB is committed to ensuring equitable access to Erasmus+ opportunities by addressing the specific barriers faced by different target groups. Diversity in all its forms is recognised as a valuable learning resource, and our goal is to create opportunities for meaningful interaction among individuals from varied backgrounds. In this way, we foster inclusive, high-quality educational experiences that not only support students with fewer opportunities but also contribute to building awareness and good practice in inclusion and diversity.

a) Inclusive selection process for Erasmus+ mobilities at B2 LSB

Together with our Erasmus+ partner universities, B2 LSB integrates Inclusion and Diversity Criteria into the Erasmus mobility selection process. This approach guarantees that students from diverse social, cultural, or economic backgrounds, as well as those facing specific challenges, have fair and transparent access to international learning experiences.

Applicants who encounter disadvantages are evaluated through a combination of **quantitative and qualitative criteria.**
- **Quantitatively, they may be awarded additional selection points within the scoring system of the Erasmus call.**
- **Qualitatively, they may be granted priority consideration during the decision-making process to ensure fair access.**

Each application is assessed by the responsible selection commission on an individual basis, taking into account both the applicant's formal eligibility and their specific personal circumstances. This process ensures that decisions are made in a transparent, fair, and needs-sensitive manner, strengthening opportunities for students with fewer opportunities to participate in mobility programmes.

To ensure fairness, candidates are required to provide supporting documentation with their application.

Definitions

a) Target groups

According to Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps regulations, individuals with fewer opportunities are defined as those who face challenges preventing them from fully benefiting from programme opportunities. These challenges may arise from economic, social, cultural, geographical, or health-related circumstances, as well as migrant backgrounds, disabilities, or educational barriers.[4].

In this context, diversity refers to differences across various dimensions, including ethnicity, religion, culture, language, abilities, educational background, economic status, and geographic location.

b) Barriers to Accessibility and Participation

Several factors contribute to restricted access to Erasmus programmes for individuals with fewer opportunities. The primary barriers include:

i. Disabilities
Physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that create obstacles to full participation[5].

ii. Health problems
Chronic illnesses or mental health conditions that hinder programme engagement.

iii. Barriers linked to education and training systems
Individuals who face challenges in progressing within education and training systems—such as those at risk of early school leaving, young people classified as NEET (not in education, employment, or training), or learners with limited skills—often encounter significant barriers along their academic and professional journeys. While personal circumstances may play a role, these obstacles are frequently rooted in systemic factors: education structures that impose constraints and fail to fully accommodate diverse learner needs.

Moreover, barriers to participation can also arise when academic programmes are designed in ways that make it difficult for students to access international learning or mobility opportunities as an integrated part of their studies.

iv. Cultural differences
Cultural differences, while enriching, can sometimes be perceived as barriers by individuals from all backgrounds, and they often pose even greater challenges for those with fewer opportunities. Such differences may significantly impact the learning process, particularly for people with migrant or

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[4] Although these texts are based on the political agreement between the co-legislators, the two Regulations are undergoing adoption procedure by co-decision at the time of writing, thereby implying that the text referred to for both of them should be considered as draft till they officially enter into force.

[5] United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html

refugee backgrounds—especially recent arrivals—as well as for members of national or ethnic minorities, sign language users, and those facing difficulties with linguistic adaptation or cultural integration.

Encountering foreign languages and unfamiliar cultural norms during academic or professional development programmes can discourage participation and reduce the extent to which individuals are able to benefit from these opportunities. In some cases, cultural barriers may even prevent potential participants from seeking support through educational programmes, ultimately limiting or excluding them from engaging in international learning experiences.

v. Social barriers

Challenges in social adaptation—such as limited social skills, involvement in high-risk or anti-social behaviours, previous criminal convictions, experiences with substance abuse, or broader patterns of social exclusion—can create substantial barriers to accessing education and professional development.

Further social obstacles may stem from family circumstances, such as being the first generation in a family to enter higher education, balancing studies with parental responsibilities (particularly as a single parent), serving as a caregiver or primary financial provider, or having lived, or currently living, in institutional care. These factors can make it significantly more difficult for individuals to access, engage in, and fully benefit from academic programmes and international mobility opportunities.

vi. Economic barriers

Economic disadvantage—such as low living standards, limited financial resources, dependence on social welfare, long-term unemployment, insecure work conditions, poverty, homelessness, debt, or other financial pressures—can present major barriers to accessing education and professional development. For many students, the need to work in order to support themselves further restricts their ability to fully engage in academic life.

Additional challenges may also result from the limited transferability of essential support services, particularly those aimed at learners with fewer opportunities. When students take part in study programmes away from home—especially abroad—ensuring continuity of support is often critical to their successful integration and academic achievement.

vii. Barriers linked to discrimination

Barriers to participation may arise from discrimination on the basis of gender (including gender identity and expression), age, ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, or through the combined impact of these factors, referred to as intersectional discrimination. In addition, access to education and professional opportunities may be further restricted by political instability or conflict-related circumstances.

viii. Geographical barriers

Living in remote or rural areas, on small islands, in peripheral or outermost regions, or in urban outskirts with limited infrastructure—such as poor public transport or a lack of essential services—can pose significant challenges. Similarly, students residing in less developed regions of third

countries may face additional restrictions in accessing educational and professional opportunities, which can make participation in academic programmes or mobility initiatives particularly difficult.

viii. Employed student and students with families

The majority of students at B2 LSB are employed and carry family responsibilities, with an average age above 25 years. In recognition of their specific circumstances and needs, these students are especially encouraged to participate in short-term mobility formats, such as Blended Intensive Programmes or two-month mobility opportunities. To ensure inclusion and accessibility, B2 LSB actively raises awareness among its students about the mobility options available through partner universities within KA131 projects, as well as KA171 projects.

The role of Erasmus institutions in project planning, implementation, and follow-up

All B2 LSB Erasmus partner institutions are expected to actively promote inclusion and diversity in their Erasmus projects. These institutions play a vital role in turning inclusion into practice, particularly through organisational development—strengthening their capacity to design and deliver inclusion-focused projects and embedding these principles across all areas of their work. Institutions are also encouraged to support participants consistently—before, during, and after their Erasmus experience—to ensure equal access and meaningful engagement.

The following guidelines are designed to support B2 LSB and its Erasmus partner universities in planning and implementing activities that promote inclusion and diversity:

a) Networking and capacity building for inclusion and diversity

Institutions should embed inclusion and diversity strategies in ways that reflect their specific contexts and needs. Staff who work directly with participants with fewer opportunities benefit greatly from collaboration with colleagues across the Erasmus network, where they can exchange good practices and co-develop more effective support mechanisms.

A central focus should be the organisation of Erasmus projects that explicitly promote inclusion and diversity. To achieve this, institutions may implement different forms of capacity-building support such as staff training, peer-learning activities, and job-shadowing opportunities. These measures help strengthen institutional readiness to respond effectively to diverse needs.

In Erasmus mobility projects, participating institutions should aim for balanced participation, ensuring that both students and staff with fewer opportunities are equally supported as outgoing and incoming participants. Projects should be designed to be fully accessible, addressing practical and logistical barriers to participation.

b) Fair and transparent selection of participants

B2 LSB and its Erasmus partner universities should guarantee that participant selection processes are fair, transparent, and inclusive. Application evaluations must be holistic, taking into account not only academic or professional qualifications but also motivation and individual circumstances. Equal access must be ensured, accompanied by tailored support adapted to participants' needs.

To broaden participation, institutions are encouraged to integrate flexible learning opportunities, such as virtual mobility, alongside traditional programmes. Exploring different mobility formats can make international opportunities more accessible to students with diverse profiles. By leveraging the full potential of Erasmus project structures, B2 LSB and its Erasmus partner universities can effectively meet the needs of underrepresented groups and encourage wider engagement in international learning experiences.

c) Awareness-raising and outreach

Erasmus opportunities should be widely known and easily accessible, especially for individuals who face barriers to participation. B2 LSB, together with its Erasmus partner universities, is committed to actively raising awareness of the programmes and support mechanisms available. Efforts must focus on reaching students with fewer opportunities in their own environments, adapting communication methods to their specific needs and circumstances.

To strengthen outreach and engagement, B2 LSB and its Erasmus partners should implement the following measures:
- Direct engagement through events and meetings – Organising in-person sessions tailored to specific target groups, such as dedicated information days for underrepresented students.
- Targeted promotional materials – Producing accessible materials in multiple formats (e.g., different languages, sign language, large print, easy-to-read formats, braille) and clearly communicating the additional financial support available for participants with fewer opportunities.
- Clear and inclusive communication – Using straightforward language, avoiding unnecessary jargon, and integrating visual aids wherever possible to enhance understanding.
- Testimonials and role models – Involving alumni who have successfully overcome challenges to act as ambassadors, sharing their Erasmus experiences through peer-to-peer discussions, student organisations, or public events.
- Collaboration with relevant organisations – Partnering with community-based institutions and professionals working in the field of inclusion to help identify and support students with fewer opportunities.

Each Erasmus partner institution, including B2 LSB, should adapt these approaches to its own context, student demographics, and institutional priorities to ensure the most effective inclusion and outreach outcomes.

d) Participant Preparation and support at all stages of the project

B2 LSB and all Erasmus partner universities must ensure that participants receive adequate preparation and continuous support before, during, and after their Erasmus mobility. Participant feedback should be actively collected and integrated throughout all project phases to guarantee that activities remain accessible, relevant, and effective.

i. Before the project
Institutions should streamline internal procedures to make the application and participation process as simple as possible. Prospective participants should be guided through administrative tasks (registration, documentation, reporting) and provided with personalised support, including language assistance, cultural preparation, and practical guidance. Students must also be clearly informed about where to access academic, administrative, and personal support during their mobility.

ii. During the project
Erasmus activities should be designed with inclusive teaching practices and provide support tailored to the needs of students with fewer opportunities. Institutions should offer services that promote social inclusion and encourage interaction among diverse groups. Each institution should appoint a dedicated staff member or peer mentor to guide participants throughout their stay. Given the significant impact of international mobility on disadvantaged students, special attention should be paid to reflection on learning outcomes and documenting skills and competences gained.

iii. After the project
Institutions should evaluate the participant experience to measure the impact of Erasmus mobility. Skills and knowledge acquired must be formally recognised, and students should be encouraged to stay engaged by contributing to local initiatives such as mentoring, peer training, or information sessions for future Erasmus participants.

e) Encouraging and supporting community participation

The Erasmus programme extends beyond individual participants, fostering broader social inclusion and intercultural exchange within the local community. Activities should be designed to address community needs, encouraging students to engage in civic participation during their mobility. Institutions should recognise and support such engagement, for example, through formal acknowledgement of voluntary contributions or the use of recognition frameworks to validate civic and intercultural competences.

Former Erasmus participants and local students who are not yet able to take part in physical mobility should also be actively involved in international activities, further strengthening the programme's reach and social impact.

Conclusion or towards an inclusive Erasmus+ at B2 LSB

At B2 LSB, inclusion and diversity are not only guiding principles but concrete practices embedded in all Erasmus+ activities. Together with our partner universities, we are committed to ensuring that students and staff from diverse backgrounds, including those with fewer opportunities, can fully access and benefit from international mobility. By addressing structural, social, economic, cultural, and geographical barriers, we strive to make mobility a realistic and enriching experience for all.

Our approach combines fair and transparent selection, targeted support before, during, and after mobility, and strong collaboration with partners and community stakeholders. Special emphasis is placed on awareness-raising, capacity building, and designing mobility formats that are flexible and accessible. Through these efforts, we aim to empower individuals, strengthen institutional cooperation, and contribute to building more inclusive, equitable, and cohesive societies in Europe and beyond