



#WORKING WITH EUROPE COMMENT#

IS EDUCATION AND LEARNING A EUROPEAN PRIORITY?

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Education, learning, competence development and innovation capacity - in formal, non-formal and informal contexts - are high on the European agenda. It is the key to growth, global competitiveness, sustainable futuring and a vibrant, innovate Europe.

So the story goes...

Erasmus+ is one of the few programs directly addressing those policies and visions, missioned to develop and share innovation across the entire education and learning field.

Horizon addresses many educational innovation challenges, but the results do not often reach educational practice and mostly remains with academia's knowledge circles.

This means that Erasmus+ should be a top priority in Europe.

The reality, however, is that it is not.

The program, its budget resources and its obscure national practices are systematically devaluating and marginalizing practical educational innovation in Europe.

Few projects are granted, and those granted are in many cases forced to work on castrated budgets.

Example: a project approved with a very high score will create entrepreneurial learning in teacher education - to allow new generations to act entrepreneurial in primary and secondary schools.

This mission is of tremendous importance to Europe and its future, along with similar project initiatives.

Nevertheless, the project budget was cut by more than 40% by the National Agency, leaving 160.000 euro for a 2 year project with a large European partnership.

As in all Erasmus+ projects, partners are expected to implement a project on a budget of 250 euro per month.

In my country this will buy 1 work day.

But hey, for this sum you will also need to manage the project. So, 150 euro left per month to implement the important and complicated project. In my country that means ½ a work day per month.

At the same time almost all Intellectual Outcomes were deleted from the project in this example, as in many other cases, to make sure that the project does not produce sustainable results.

It seems as things are out of proportion.

In Horizon you can apply for a 10 million euro grant for a cultural heritage project.

Cultural heritage and many others things are important, but innovation in education and learning will have a far more dramatic long-term impact on Europe's competitiveness than any cultural heritage or similar project.

The extremely messy and inconsistent Erasmus+ management by the National Agencies obviously just makes thing worse.

We are increasingly forced to believe that education and learning is mostly high on the European agenda at rhetoric level.

Erasmus+ projects are approaching the levels of the old learning partnerships; nice projects with little impact.

Of course we might celebrate the fact that there is no co-financing in these small Erasmus+ projects. Not true. There is no formal co-financing, but we all know that European professionals work at least 3-4 times at much in the projects than allowed by the funding.

The co-financing, or simply: the financing, from European schools and other institutions is giant, but not visible.

Still, I would like to insist that education and learning is the single most important investment in Europe' future.

What to do?

It's simple:

Re-centralize Erasmus+

Multiply the funding by 10 or 20

Increase max funding to at least 500.000 euro for a 2 year project

Then Europe will start practicing what it is preaching...

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