



INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020

MULTI-COUNTRY

EU4Youth: Western Balkans Youth Window under Erasmus+

Action summary

The Erasmus+ Programme is one of the key instruments of the European Union for achieving its objectives in terms of young people's personal, socio-educational and professional development.

Under Erasmus+ Key Action 2, which fosters cooperation for innovation, exchange of good practices, and capacity building in the field of youth, the *Western Balkans Youth Window* promotes sustained development of youth organisations in the region and practice of youth work using non-formal learning. This action facilitates Erasmus+ partners in the Western Balkans to increase the overall participation of young people and youth workers in Erasmus+ non-formal learning projects, as well as to allow organisations located in the Western Balkans Erasmus+ partners to apply directly for EU grants under the framework of Erasmus+ Programme.

This is a recurrent action in view of providing dedicated support to the relevant IPA II beneficiaries who do not benefit from the full extent of the Erasmus+ Programme. The action is implemented by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency of the EU (EACEA).

| Action Identification | | | |
|--|--|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Action Programme Title | IPA II Multi-country Action Programme 2020 – part 1 | | |
| Action Title | EU4Youth: Western Balkans Youth Window under Erasmus+ | | |
| Action ID | IPA 20120NEAR>EACEA.03/MC/Youth Window | | |
| Sector Information | | | |
| IPA II Sector | 9. Regional and territorial cooperation | | |
| DAC Sector | 11420 – Higher education (Youth) | | |
| Budget | | | |
| Total cost | EUR 3 million | | |
| EU contribution | EUR 3 million | | |
| Budget line(s) | 22.020401- Multi-country programmes, regional integration and territorial cooperation | | |
| Management and Implementation | | | |
| Method of implementation | Direct management | | |
| <i>Direct management:</i> Implementing Agency | Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) | | |
| Implementation responsibilities | Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) (co-delegated by Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations) | | |
| Location | | | |
| Zone benefiting from the action | Western Balkans (Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro) | | |
| Specific implementation area(s) | N/A | | |
| Timeline | | | |
| Final date for contracting including the conclusion of contribution/delegation agreements | At the latest by 31 December 2021 | | |
| Final date for operational implementation | 72 months from the adoption of the Financing Decision | | |
| Policy objectives / Markers (DAC form) | | | |
| General policy objective | Not targeted | Significant objective | Main objective |
| Participation development/good governance | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | x |

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

| | | | |
|---|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Aid to environment | x | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gender equality (including Women In Development) | x | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Trade Development | <input type="checkbox"/> | x | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health | x | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| RIO Convention markers | Not targeted | Significant objective | Main objective |
| Biological diversity | x | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Combat desertification | x | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Climate change mitigation | x | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Climate change adaptation | x | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

1. RATIONALE

PROBLEM AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Education is a key tool for equipping and empowering young people with the right skills and values. However, the effectiveness of traditional education in preparing young people with the competences needed for a demanding and rapidly changing labour market is questionable. Nowadays, young people face rising levels of knowledge and multiple skills requirements including 'soft skills', such as confidence, teamwork, self-motivation, networking and presentation skills. These transversal skills and attitudes – that likely increase young people's achievements in school settings, as well as improve their adaptability to the rapidly evolving change in demands for jobs and skills – cannot be acquired through formal education sector alone but can be developed through out-of-school activities in non-formal learning settings.

Development of social capital among young women and men, their empowerment and their active participation in society are accompanying challenges. Young people are less likely to vote than adults are and their voices are less often heard in political debates. In relevant IPA II beneficiaries, participation of young people in political elections remains low: Republic of Albania (45%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (63%), Kosovo (71%), Montenegro (52%), Republic of North Macedonia (64%) and Republic of Serbia (57%)¹. Some of the main causes for this are insufficient opportunities for participation, social exclusion and discrimination, mistrust in institutions, insufficient youth-targeted information, and inadequate tools for reaching out to young people.

In this context, the Western Balkans similarly to the European Union need to extend and broaden learning opportunities for young people, including supporting the acquisition of skills through non-formal educational activities. Non-formal learning includes various structured learning situations, which do not have the level of curriculum, syllabus, accreditation and certification associated with 'formal learning', but have more structure than that associated with 'informal learning', which typically takes place spontaneously. Learning can take place everywhere: in schools but also in associations, on social media or in social life.

The European Union encourages people-to-people contacts, in particular among the young generations, as an important dimension of its relations with third countries. People-to-people contacts are important in promoting mutual understanding, as well as social, cultural and economic development. They are a particularly important tool in the European perspective context where the advancement requires embracing common European values; these can be instilled through a culture of dialogue and exchange represented by people-to-people contacts.

The Erasmus+ Programme is one of the key instruments of the European Union for achieving its objectives in terms of young people's personal, socio-educational and professional development. The Erasmus+ programme has a youth dimension, which offers opportunities for young people and youth workers in the area of non-formal learning. Such a youth dimension is also open to young people, youth workers and youth organisations from the Erasmus+ partners in the Western Balkans.

In view of reinforcing their level of participation in youth activities, the proposed action aims to continue successful work carried out under previous Western Balkans Youth Windows. The proposed action will support the Erasmus+ partners in the Western Balkans in two ways:

- by increasing the number of Erasmus+ non-formal learning projects involving the participation of organisations and participants – notably young people and youth workers - from the beneficiaries;
- by allowing organisations from the beneficiaries to be project coordinators and apply directly for EU grants under the framework of Erasmus+ Programme.

¹ http://www.alda-europe.eu/public/publications/141-Balkan_Platform_Comparative_Study.pdf

By supporting specific IPA II beneficiaries who are Erasmus+ Partners², the action will enable access to this Erasmus+ actions, which is seen as a bridging measure. The action will take into account the objective of preparing the beneficiaries to become Erasmus+ Programme Countries.

OUTLINE OF IPA II ASSISTANCE

Under Erasmus+ Key Action 2, which fosters cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices and, more specifically, capacity building in the field of youth, the Western Balkans Youth Window will promote the sustained development of youth organisations in the region and the practice of youth work using non-formal learning, as appropriate, by supporting:

- activities encouraging cooperation, networking and exchanges of practices in the field of youth, such as seminars, conferences, workshops, meetings, training courses, study visits, job-shadowing, and notably activities involving young people with fewer opportunities, aimed to develop competences and skills that increase their employability or self-employment prospects, foster their active participation in society and reinforce their mutual understanding, sense of solidarity and tolerance;
- youth exchanges and the participation of young people in volunteering activities (with a special attention paid to the involvement of young people with fewer opportunities) and the mobility of youth workers between Erasmus+ Programme Countries and relevant beneficiaries from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro. Professional development activities for youth workers, that raise the quality, the international dimension and recognition of their work are also supported;
- cooperation activities that foster networking between civil society organisations, public authorities and institutions active in youth fields to strengthen their capacities, establish or reinforce their cooperation on a trans-national cross-border / boundary basis within the organisations from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro on the one side and those from other Erasmus+ Programme Countries on the other.

The following stakeholders will benefit from the action:

- **Young people:** youth is a period of transition, generally agreed as the passage from a dependent childhood to independent, autonomous adulthood;
- **Youth workers:** professionals who work with young people in a wide variety of non-formal and informal contexts (e.g. within youth organisations, municipalities and youth centres);
- **Non-governmental youth organisations:** these organisations should be present at every level of decision making, from the local level to the international level and represent a whole range of youth groups.
- **Organisations specialising** in specifically supporting youth from minorities and vulnerable groups: these organisations should be present at every level of decision making, from the local level to the international level and represent a whole range of youth groups coming from minorities and/or vulnerable groups.

RELEVANCE WITH THE IPA II MULTI-COUNTRY INDICATIVE STRATEGY PAPER AND OTHER KEY REFERENCES

Financial assistance will be granted in line with the areas identified as priorities in the revised Multi-country Indicative Strategy Paper (MCSP) 2014-2020³. Furthermore, financial support for capacity building projects

² North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey are Erasmus + Programme Countries and therefore not covered by this action.

³ COM (2018) 3442, 31.05.2018

in the field of youth non-formal learning – including a flexible range of activities such as capacity building activities and mobility activities for young people and youth workers – will support the implementation of the enlargement strategy for the Western Balkans and Turkey, as well as the Western Balkans Strategy of 6 February 2018 for “*A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans*”, and the Sofia Priority Agenda of 17 May 2018⁴. The action is in line with relevant EU policies, the applicable macro-regional strategies and the South East Europe (SEE) 2020 Strategy priorities of Smart Growth and Inclusive Growth.

LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Since 2000, organisations and young people from the Western Balkans have had the possibility to participate as partners in certain activities supported through the EU's Youth programme (2000-2006).

From 2008-2013 and from 2015 onwards, organisations from the Western Balkans had the opportunity to become coordinating organisations for youth projects and to apply directly for a project grant through a dedicated Western Balkans Window within the EU's Youth, Youth in Action and Erasmus+ programme.

The evaluation study “*The impact of the cooperation with south-east Europe within the Youth in Action programme*” from 2012 confirmed the programme’s significant impact on young people’s competences and attitudes in the area of intercultural learning, self-esteem, communication in foreign languages and ability to plan and organise actions, as well as awareness of learning processes. The results of the study particularly stressed the deconstructing of prejudices among young people from the programme beneficiaries towards young people from South East Europe and vice versa. Approximately 76% of respondents believed that the Youth in Action programme had contributed to positive changes in the development of youth work in their region. More young people were confirmed to take part in youth organisations and a number of new organisations had been developed as a result of the programme.⁵

⁴ COM (2018) 65 final, Sofia Declaration, 17 May 2018, available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/34776/sofia-declaration_en.pdf

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/reports/youth-work-nonformal-learning_en.pdf

2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

| OVERALL OBJECTIVE(S) / (IMPACT(S)) | INDICATOR'S NAME | OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS | | | SOURCES & MEANS OF VERIFICATION | |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|--------------------|
| | | BASELINES (INCL. VALUE & REFERENCE YEAR) | MILESTONES (INCL. VALUE & REFERENCE YEAR) | TARGETS (INCL. VALUE & REFERENCE YEAR) | | |
| To increase employability of young people from targeted IPA II beneficiaries. | PISA results | Reading (2018) Albania, 405 Bosnia and Herzegovina, 403 Kosovo,353 Montenegro, 421 Mathematics (2018) Albania, 437 Bosnia and Herzegovina, 406 Kosovo,366 Montenegro, 430 Science (2018) Albania, 417 Bosnia and Herzegovina, 398 Kosovo,365 Montenegro, 415 | Improved overall results by 1% (2021) | Improved overall results by 4% (2024) | -PISA results | |
| SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE(S) / OUTCOME(S) | OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*) | | | | SOURCES OF VERIFICATION | ASSUMPTIONS |
| To foster non-formal learning activities that support building mutual understanding and employability of young people (including young people with fewer opportunities) from the targeted IPA II beneficiaries. | x Extent to which the non-formal learning opportunities in the targeted IPA II beneficiaries have been improved. | Findings of reports (2020) | Findings of reports show clear improvement (2021) | Findings of reports show clear improvement (2022) | -official statistics of central administrations; -surveys of professional evaluation organisations; -reports of international organisations. | |
| OUTPUTS | OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*) | | | | SOURCES OF VERIFICATION | ASSUMPTIONS |
| Output 1: Degree of cooperation between youth organisations from targeted IPA II beneficiaries with organisations from the Erasmus+ Programme Countries, as well as the exchange of expertise and know-how between them in the field of youth and non-formal | (i) Number of joint projects supported annually under the Western Balkans Youth Window (disaggregated by the number of projects that support young people with fewer opportunities) (ii) Number of hosting organisations (youth and other) | 44 (2017) 38 (2018) 32 (2019) | 35-40 (2020) | 40-45 (2021) | -general statistics on the implementation of the programme by EACEA; -official statistics of central administrations; | |

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|--|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|
| education strengthened. | from targeted IPA II beneficiaries participating in joint activities under this Western Balkans Youth Window. (iii) Number of sending organisations (youth and other) from targeted IPA II beneficiaries participating in joint activities under this Western Balkans Youth Window. | 160 (2019) 780 (2019) | 180 (2020) 800 (2020) | 200 (2021) 1000 (2021) | -surveys by specialised organisations. | |
| Output 2: Degree of involvement of young people (including young people with fewer opportunities) from targeted IPA II beneficiaries in international youth cooperation to acquire socio-economic skills. ⁶ | (i) Number of young people (sex-disaggregated) participating in youth exchanges. (ii) Number of young people (sex disaggregated) participating in volunteering activities. | 4,977 (2019) | 5,500 (2020) | 6,500 (2021) | -reports from beneficiaries of joint projects; -reports of EACEA. | |
| Output 3: Degree of involvement of youth workers from targeted IPA II beneficiaries in joint projects with youth organisations from Erasmus+ Programme Countries | Number of youth workers (sex-disaggregated) from targeted IPA II beneficiaries participating in joint projects under this Western Balkans Youth Window. | 1,000 (2008) | 1,500 (2020) | 1,550 (2021) | -reports from beneficiaries of joint projects; -reports of EACEA. | |
| Output 4: The operational capacity of organisations in targeted IPA II beneficiaries with regard to the management of international cooperation projects supported by European Union funds improved. | Number of joint projects managed by youth organisations from targeted IPA II beneficiaries. | 38 (2008) | 40(2020) | 42 (2021) | -reports from beneficiaries of joint projects; -reports of EACEA. | |

⁶ Special emphasis will be given to promoting equity and inclusion by facilitating the access to activities for participants with disadvantaged backgrounds and fewer opportunities compared to their peers for reasons such as: disability, educational difficulties (e.g. early school leavers, young people with low school performance), economic obstacles, cultural differences (e.g. immigrant or refugees), health problems, social problems (e.g. people facing discrimination because of gender, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation, geographical obstacles (e.g. people from remote or rural areas).

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Main activities

In order to reach the objectives of the action, organisational development and capacity building projects in the field of youth will be implemented with the aim to strengthen youth cooperation between Erasmus+ Programme Countries and the targeted IPA II beneficiaries, as well as cross-border cooperation within Erasmus+ partners in the Western Balkans.

The projects can target issues such as:

- promotion of strategic cooperation between youth organisations and public authorities;
- fostering cooperation between youth organisations and organisations in the education and training fields, as well as with representatives of the business and the labour market;
- strengthening the capacities of youth councils, youth platforms and local, regional and central authorities dealing with youth;
- supporting Youth Exchanges and the participation of young people in volunteering activities (with a special attention paid to the involvement of young people with fewer opportunities) and the mobility of youth workers (including those belonging to vulnerable groups); and
- enhancing the management, governance, and internationalisation of youth organisations in the targeted IPA II beneficiaries.

Activities will include outreach to youth from disadvantaged, minority or vulnerable groups, seminars, conferences, workshops, meetings, training courses, study visits and job-shadowing to allow for cooperation, networking and exchanges of practices, as well as capacity building. These activities should support active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity amongst young people, and foster key skills and competences.

The proposed action will work at the levels of young people, youth workers and organisations active in the field of youth, including youth from disadvantaged, minority or vulnerable groups, who offer non-formal learning and mobility activities "out-of-school" or through leisure time activities. These organisations are instrumental for reaching out to young people and in particular young people with fewer opportunities.

Project promoters will be expected to plan, organise and evaluate the results of their activities.

Expected results

- strengthened cooperation between youth organisations from targeted IPA II beneficiaries with organisations from the Erasmus+ Programme Countries, as well as the exchange of expertise and know-how between them in the field of youth and non-formal education;
- improved involvement of young people from targeted IPA II beneficiaries, including young people with fewer opportunities, in international youth cooperation to acquire socio-economical skills that could facilitate young people's employability and their integration in society;
- increased involvement of youth workers from targeted IPA II, including youth workers belonging to vulnerable groups, beneficiaries in joint projects with youth organisations from Erasmus+ Programme Countries;
- improved operational capacity of organisations in IPA II beneficiaries, notably youth organisations and youth organisations of vulnerable groups, NGOs and National Youth Councils, in particular with regard to management of international cooperation projects supported by European Union funds.

RISKS

Risk 1. Uneven delivery of the grant scheme across the Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro: Variation in the capacity and commitment of civil society organisations across the region may lead to an uneven pattern of grant awards (for example, between urban and rural areas). Grant scheme management should take measures to ensure equity of access for interested stakeholders, particularly focusing on young people with fewer opportunities and participants who traditionally have been underrepresented in such schemes, and provide opportunities ensuring that NGOs' needs for capacity building are effectively addressed.

Risk 2. Difficulties encountered in reaching key target groups: The majority of young people in Western Balkans do not participate in organised activities. Furthermore, among certain disadvantaged groups, a considerable degree of isolation from mainstream social engagement is observed. Consequently, there is a risk that the programme will not be able to involve these key beneficiaries into its activities. This will be mitigated through the focus of the grants scheme on engaging with disadvantaged youth and through the support to be provided by the SALTO South-East Europe Resource Centre in reaching out to this category of young people.

CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency of the EU (EACEA) is responsible for the management of parts of the EU's funding programmes in the fields of education, culture, audio-visual, sport, citizenship, and volunteering, including the Erasmus+ Key Action 2 and the Western Balkans Youth Window. Based on the implementation of previous Western Balkans Youth Windows, EACEA has proven to possess the relevant institutional framework, structures and knowledge for the successful implementation of the proposed action.

3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Western Balkans Youth Window will be implemented by the EACEA under the supervision of the European Commission (the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture and Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations). Regular information on the implementation progress and results will be provided by the Agency to the European Commission and the relevant Committees.

Furthermore, the *Erasmus+ Sport, Youth and EU Aid Volunteers* Unit of the EACEA will provide support to the target public of the Programme, the beneficiary organisations and the participants engaged in project activities.

The SALTO⁷ South East Europe (SEE) Resource Centre, supported by the Erasmus+ Programme, will promote information about the Window and the involvement of young people, youth workers, youth organisations and other youth stakeholders in joint activities of participants from Erasmus+ Programme Countries and the targeted IPA II beneficiaries. In this context, SALTO SEE will offer training and project partner finding activities for youth leaders and youth workers and will contribute to the training of volunteers in South East Europe and the production and dissemination of resource material. SALTO SEE is based in the Erasmus+ National Agency of Slovenia. SALTO SEE's activities are complemented by Contact Points in the Western Balkans that ensure proximity of support for those interested in organising or carrying out youth projects under Erasmus+.

⁷ SALTO stands for "Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities"

METHOD(S) OF IMPLEMENTATION AND TYPE(S) OF FINANCING (SEE ANNEX IMPLEMENTATION – BUDGET)

The action is co-delegated to EACEA. It will be implemented in direct management by EACEA on the basis of the Erasmus+ Call for Proposals.

The indicative duration of the grant contracts will be from 9 to 24 months.

4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)

The European Commission may carry out a mid-term, a final or an ex-post evaluation for this action or its components via independent consultants, through a joint mission or via an implementing partner. In case a mid-term or final evaluation is not foreseen, the European Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner. The evaluations will be carried out as prescribed by the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations guidelines for evaluations. In addition, the action might be subject to external monitoring in line with the European Commission rules and procedures.

Implementation of the Western Balkans Youth Window will be monitored on a permanent basis by the EACEA through analysis of progress reports, financial statements and final reports prepared by the beneficiaries as well as through monitoring visits.

In addition, the outcomes of the Western Balkans Youth Window will be monitored in the context of Erasmus+ surveys launched periodically and targeting samples of beneficiaries and participants.

5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

In terms of gender equality, young women and men are expected to participate proportionally to their share of population. In many areas, however, young women participate less than what would be expected. They are at a particular disadvantage or at risk of discrimination in the labour market (employability, transition from education to work, unemployment, low pay and precarious employment as young mothers and lack adequate work-life balance measures), and often choose fields of studies that may translate into lower employment rates. Measures to redress inequalities among young women and men will be implemented in the selection of participants.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

An important priority of the youth actions supported under Erasmus+ is to give all young people equal opportunities to access the activities supported through the programme. These actions are open to all young people, not having regard of their educational background or their status.

MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

Young people have been hit particularly hard by the economic crisis of 2008 and its aftermath. Today, many young people face long-term unemployment, discrimination, and situations of social exclusion

and poverty; this leads to their socio-economic marginalisation. The Erasmus+ Programme is taking active measures to counter this by helping some of the most vulnerable people in society: those young people who have fewer opportunities compared to their peers⁸.

Equity and inclusion will be particularly promoted by facilitating access to activities for participants with disadvantaged backgrounds and fewer opportunities compared to their peers. The projects supported under the Erasmus+ Western Balkans Youth Window will offer young people with fewer opportunities the possibility to take part in transnational activities. The involvement of young people with fewer opportunities will be taken into account in the award criteria of the respective Calls for Projects. Specific training related to the involvement of young people with fewer opportunities will be provided. Funding provisions will allow covering additional costs related to young people with fewer opportunities and also, more specifically, to participants with disabilities.

ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY (AND IF RELEVANT OTHER NON-STATE STAKEHOLDERS)

Non-profit or non-governmental organisations are the largest group of eligible applicants. These may be organisations of young people, organisations concerned with policies and initiatives relevant to young people, or a combination of the two.

As projects are based upon partnerships this means that non-profit or non-governmental organisations from different eligible beneficiaries are engaged in joint discussions and activities. Projects should stimulate young people and their organisations, including organisations that act as advocates for young people, to reflect on the essential characteristics of European society and, above all, encourage them to play an active role in their communities. To feel European, young people must become aware of the fact that they play a role in the construction of the current and future Europe. Therefore, a project with a European dimension should not only 'discover' Europe, but also - and most importantly - aim to build it through increased civil society action.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)

Issues on Environment and Climate Change are by the nature of this activity not directly applicable. However, since the activity is covering youth and several sectors it could be considered that environment and climate change will be duly addressed.

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| Climate action relevant budget allocation: EUR 0 |
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6. SUSTAINABILITY

The interest from youth organisations of the Western Balkans in applying for youth projects reflects their needs to enhance their capacity through participation in cooperation projects and activities with other European and Western Balkans. In addition, the skills and knowledge acquired and developed by young people through their participation in cooperation projects and activities will have a positive impact on their personal and social development also in the mid- and long-term.

7. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

Communication and visibility will be given high importance during the implementation of the action. The implementation of the communication activities shall be funded from the amounts allocated to the action.

⁸ The work on social inclusion in the context of youth is supported by [Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity Strategy](#)

All necessary measures will be taken to publicise the fact that the action has received funding from the EU in line with the EU communication and visibility requirements in force. All stakeholders and implementing partners shall ensure the visibility of EU financial assistance provided through IPA II throughout all phases of the programme cycle.

Visibility and communication actions shall demonstrate how the intervention contributes to the agreed programme objectives, as well as the benefits of the action for the general public. Actions shall be aimed at strengthening general public awareness and support of interventions financed and the objectives pursued. The actions shall aim at highlighting to the relevant target audiences the added value and impact of the EU's interventions and will promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

Visibility and communication aspects shall be complementary to the activities implemented by the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations and the EU Delegations in the field. It is the responsibility of the implementing partner(s) to keep the EU Delegations/Office and the European Commission fully informed of the planning and implementation of the specific visibility and communication activities.

All projects funded under the Erasmus+ Programme must develop measures aimed at ensuring the visibility of their project and of the Programme. Measures and actions should aim to show the link between the funds invested and the policy priorities behind them whenever relevant.

The implementing agency will, if relevant, develop a consolidated communication and visibility plan for the Action based on an agreed communication narrative and master messages customised for the different target audiences (stakeholders, business community, civil society, general public, etc.).

Effectiveness of communication activities will be measured inter alia through public surveys, if relevant, in the IPA II beneficiaries on awareness about the action and its objectives, as well as the fact that it is funded by the EU.