**Erasmus+ mobilities**

**Huge opportunities for teachers to study at language schools with all costs fully covered, including flights!**

For many years Europe has operated a system of funding to encourage the mobility of students and, to a more limited extent, teachers and other adults. Names such as Erasmus, Comenius, Leonardo, Grundtvig were all associated with separate funding streams for different sectors of education: students, teachers, vocational training and life-long learning. This has now all been brought together under the name Erasmus+.

**Background, history and some stats**

There is a before and after story concerning the Erasmus programme. The crucial year of change was 2014 when the budget was increased by 40% for the period 2014 – 2020.

The overall budget across Europe for Erasmus+ in 2014 was € 2bn and, for the complete 2014-2020 period, a staggering total of €14.7bn.

In 2014, 650,000 people - students, teachers, administrators - participated in E+ mobility projects. 70,000 organisations were involved in a total of 18,000 projects.

Even with this number of projects, many schools and teachers, even in countries such as the UK, Norway, Sweden and Germany, seem to know very little about the programme, how it works and the benefits it can offer, especially to teachers and through them to their students.

I will now try to point out a few of the reasons why there are misunderstandings about the programme and why many teachers are not making full use of the opportunities it offers.

**Myths and assumptions:**

* Erasmus+ is only for students- **WRONG**: it’s for students, teachers and administrative workers in education.
* With regards teachers, it’s only for language teachers and with a high level: **NO** – it is for all teachers of any subjects who need to teach in another language or who are involved in international projects. A teacher who is a beginner in a language can take a basic beginners course.
* It’s only for state sector education, not private: **NOT TRUE** – students, teachers and staff from private or state sectors of education can apply for programmes in private or state schools, universities or educational institutions. There are some restrictions such as University students can only get funding for mutually acceptable University programmes. There is no discrimination against the private sector either as senders or hosting organizations.

**Teachers, take note!**

Teachers of languages and any other subject can take language courses from beginner level to advanced level in **expert private sector language schools** in the EU. Everything is paid for: flights, course, accommodation and food. Programmes can be from 1-8 weeks duration and can be taken repeatedly in consecutive years to enable teachers to make considerable linguistic progress.

**How it works**

Individual teachers can no longer apply. Applications must be made by the sending school’s management, either the head teacher or a nominated department head or project manager. This person has to create a 2-year training programme to include, and explain and justify the inclusion, of all staff that the school wishes to send on a language course (mobility programme). This training programme must be in line with Erasmus+ priorities and, most importantly, the stated medium and long-term objectives of the sending schools.

There is a Europe-wide call for project applications each year with a closing deadline around the end of January. Projects are then given approval (or not) by May/June of the same year and projects can start within a few days.

The paperwork is fairly complicated and schools can miss out on gaining funding by ticking a wrong box or using incorrect terminology. This is where **educational consultants**, expert in the presentation of Erasmus+ applications, can help overloaded head teachers in the preparation of applications and give them a much higher chance of gaining funding for their teachers.

**What it covers**

The Key Action 1 mobility funding for Teachers is quite generous and covers all aspects of the actual stay:

* Flights and other transport costs
* Comfortable accommodation
* Meals
* Language course: anything from beginner to advanced with the optional possibility of methodology lessons, shadowing in local schools and other types of teacher contact.
* Cultural lessons and activities: if wanted, teachers may choose a programme which combines language with specific areas of culture which can be of specific and direct use in their classrooms to enhance the students’ learning experiences and outcomes, eg. Dance lessons, cookery lessons etc

**Typical cases**

Across Europe, the following are typical of the types of application that can be successfully justified and presented:

* **Switch training:** secondary schools finding a declining demand for French and increasing demand for Spanish can apply for their French teachers to take Spanish language courses so that they can begin to teach Spanish in the future.
* **Non-native speaker language teachers:** advanced language courses combined with methodology lessons or teacher observations.
* **Language courses for CLIL:** teachers of other subjects in bi-lingual, International and IB schools needing to teach their subjects **in** Spanish or French.
* **Drama or Dance Teachers:** they can combine Flamenco or Salsa classes with general Spanish - this gives then enhanced skills and cultural understanding which they can pass on to their students.
* **Adminstrative staff:** any staff involved in international projects, exchanges etc or dealing with multi-cultural/lingual students can justify applying for language courses.

**Benefits**

By enabling teachers to improve and enhance their skill levels and to become more relevant to the changing demand of their student body, the Erasmus+ programme aims to improve student outcomes across Europe. Teachers gain enormously from the possibility of studying at top language schools, something that was previously only possible for their richer students. An additional bonus is that by increasing teacher and student mobility and thus implicitly a better understanding of the different peoples and cultures of Europe, it serves to avoid national mis-understandings and enhances harmony.

To maximize the up-take of these fantastic opportunities for teachers, **Educational Consultants** have an important role in informing schools of the possibilities and helping overworked head teachers in presenting applications with a high probability of success.