



Final Report



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<http://informatica155.wixsite.com/tcalisboa>

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Objectives

Erasmus+ beneficiaries from Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Higher Education (HE) Institutions, from new and ongoing projects, met at a Transnational Cooperation Activity (TCA) in Lisbon, 22nd to 24th May 2019.

The TCA focused on the impact of Erasmus+ on internationalisation of VET and HE Institutions - Promoting best practices in Impact & Dissemination.

In general, TCA are an instrument available to the National Agencies (NAs) to support the Erasmus+ Programme to accomplish its objectives. The purpose of these activities is to add value and increase the quality of the overall Programme implementation and contribute to increase the systemic impact of the Programme.

This TCA aimed at supporting Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Higher Education (HE) Institutions in the process of strategic internationalisation. Participants had the opportunity to discuss different aspects of the internationalisation process, such as strategies, cooperation networks, VET and HE Charters, recognition, and project impact, evaluation and dissemination of results.

The TCA specific objectives were:

- To make recommendations to HEI and VET institutions and NA on how to improve Internationalisation under the Erasmus+ Programme;
- To create networking opportunities for new participants in the Programme, and promote new cooperation networks;
- To increase knowledge of efficient tools and methods for internationalisation of VET and HE institutions; and
- To provide opportunities for sharing of knowledge, good practices and experiences related to different aspects of high-quality internationalisation strategies on VET and HE institutions.

Organisation

This TCA was organized by three Erasmus+ National Agencies: the Agência Nacional Erasmus+ Educação e Formação - ANE+E&F (PT01); Fundacja Rozwoju Systemu Edukacji – FRSE (PL01); Istituto Nazionale per l'Analisi delle Politiche Pubbliche - INAPP (IT02); and Istituto Nazionale di Documentazione, Innovazione e Ricerca Educativa - INDIRE (IT01) (Annex 1).

Before the TCA, the following communication activities took place:

- Informail sent to all beneficiaries;
- TCA webpage developed: <http://informatica155.wixsite.com/tcalisboa>
- Regular posting about TCA on Facebook;
- PT E&T NA webpage: news about the TCA; banner with link to the TCA page; and TCA countdown timer;
- Press release sent to all national and regional media that have been publishing Erasmus+ news.

During the TCA, the following communication activities took place:

- Web streaming of the TCA on 23rd May;
- Posting of TCA news on PT NA webpage, Facebook and Instagram.

Participation

Erasmus+ beneficiaries from 67 VET and HE institutions, from 17 countries, actively participated in the TCA (Annex 2).

Activities

The TCA took place in three different places: Lisbon Story Centre, Thalia Theatre and Lisbon Oceanarium. In addition, participants enjoyed a Lisbon tour and had the opportunity to visit the Museum of the Fundação Oriente, where they had dinner and listened to Luisa Amado, one of the best Portuguese guitar players, and her ensemble.

On the first day, TCA participants were welcomed by the organising NAs on the Lisbon Story Centre, where they were acquainted with the history and culture of the Portuguese capital. Lisbon is a city full of authenticity, where old customs and ancient history intermix with cultural entertainment and high-tech innovation.

On the second day, three roundtables took place in the Thalia Theatre, which is on the grounds of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education. The first roundtable was about different approaches to Internationalisation strategies for VET and HE institutions. The second roundtable was about the impact of VET and HE Internationalisation on academic recognition of studies and internships. Finally, the third roundtable discussed best practice projects on Internationalisation of VET and HE institutions.

On the second day, participants gathered at the Lisbon Oceanarium, which is one of the best and largest in the world and located in one of the Portuguese R&D campus. Ten Working Groups discussed five main topics: (i) Internationalisation strategies; (ii) cooperation networks; (iii) VET and HE Charters; (iv) recognition; and (v) project impact, evaluation and dissemination of results.

Main Conclusions and Recommendations

Some of the main issues identified by the participants, and recommendations made are summarized below.

Approaches to the Internationalisation of VET and HE institutions

- Internationalisation strategies are being developed at national level. Internationalisation is good for employment, better societies, and forming European and global citizens.
- There is a clear relationship between the internationalisation strategy and the educational success of VET and HE institutions.

- What kind of results do we want to reach with internationalisation? This question should be the basis for strategy and institutional development when participating in Erasmus+, and organising international activities and cooperation projects.
- A good internationalisation strategy should always rely on indicators and evaluation processes to support its evolution. Make it formal, with clear targets and analysis of the outcomes.
- The Erasmus+ Programme is a crucial instrument for the development of VET institutions and HEIs, and their internationalisation. Erasmus+ has a main role in defining the internationalisation strategy of the institutions. Without Erasmus+, most institutions would not have an internationalisation strategy. Erasmus+ needs to be more strategic to combine different approaches and implement internationalisation - schools as a living lab - and involve more companies and municipalities and local governments in projects.
- European VET and HEI are educating global citizens; therefore, foreign languages and English courses must be taught. Traineeships that promote cultural and linguistic competences are also vital.
- Internationalisation strategies should focus both on European countries and countries outside Europe.
- VET institutions should be encouraged to bet on mobility of staff, trainers and non-trainers to improve schoolwork methodologies and motivate trainees to participate in international activities.
- VET institutions should bring people from the academic and labour worlds to assist in the development of their internationalisation strategies.
- VET needs to ensure project sustainability with long-term financing. VET would need continuous and sustained funding to implement internationalisation strategies, as it happens on HE, where HEI have Erasmus+ projects approved annually. VET should also have something like the Bologna process.
- The Programme should also further promote mobility of VET students and increase internships. Internships are not yet well-organized regarding content and expected results.
- Specific workshops on how to use ECVET to prepare mobilities should be organized. Erasmus+ has been having more impact on students than staff – it is important to increase staff participation in the Programme. An institutional internationalisation strategy should make teacher mobility obligatory and invest in the development of language skills for teachers. Recognition of qualifications is also important to staff in mobility programmes.
- Internationalisation experiences for teachers and staff have the ability to open minds and get them better prepared to motivate students. Some countries are financing simultaneous double exchanges of teachers and staff. Calendar issues may be an issue for staff mobility.
- Internationalisation experiences for teachers and staff have the capability to open minds and get them better prepared to motivate students. In institutional internationalisation strategies, staff mobility should be mandatory; and institutions and Erasmus+ should invest in increasing language skills of teachers.
- The Internationalisation Strategy has to involve the main stakeholders, who increasingly play a relevant role.

- For incoming participants, take the internationalisation home, using specialists in key areas that add value to the curricular offer of the institutions.
- The Erasmus+ Programme is a part of the European agenda to create European citizens. Erasmus+ needs to work with other sources of funding to have more activities with more quality. The use of complementary resources for funding and to increase mobility opportunities requires creating synergies between the various Community Programmes - ESF, INTERREG, H2020, Creative Europe - as well as national funds, local governments and municipalities, and private sector to complement funding for institutions and increase mobility.
- Flexibility is the starting point for an internationalisation strategy. The human factor is key – flexibility from staff is the only way to achieve a successfully Internationalisation.
- It is necessary to simplify administrative procedures to have joint / double degree programmes.
- More internationalisation events are necessary to bring together various stakeholders, listen to people and design new and better VET and HE policies.

Impact of VET and HE Internationalisation on academic recognition of studies and internships

- Recognition continues to be a central theme requiring cooperation, dialogue and reflection.
- Recognition exists for student mobility but for staff mobility, in general, there is no system, it depends on the institution.
- There are two main credit systems: ECTS and ECVET – the former is widely implemented in national legislation and the latter at institutional level.
- It is necessary to promote and improve Europass as a recognition tool of formal/non-formal and in-formal learning outcomes.
- Good practice: agree a plan of grading students before mobility. The system to be used for grade transfer should be defined before the mobility started and should be communicated to mobile students. More transparency, easy to go on mobility and immediate recognition.
- It is necessary to look at learners' outcomes and results; to improve agreements between organizations and define what is intended for learner's outcomes and internship content; and to have academic recognition for competences and qualifications obtained abroad, and more funds to guarantee equal opportunities to all students.
- The comparison between systems will allow the improvement of competences and recognition. A better understanding about this subject should be achieved among countries. There is work to be done on comparability between competences and expected results/ qualifications gained from the mobility period: what should be learned and in what terms? (duration/time, etc.); if this is done in an objective and measurable way (with a grid assessment), it should be possible and easy to compare and recognize learning/teaching mobilities in both the VET and HE sectors.
- Cultural and E&T system differences between countries are an issue. Tools such as ECVET and ECTS are a resource, not an end; for a good use, it requires mutual knowledge about the context where teaching and learning opportunities take place.

Lessons from best practice Erasmus+ projects

- Mobility projects have the capability to improve school attractiveness and is an answer to the needs of labour market.
- A best practice project is involved in the mobilities since the beginning: in fact, the project should be connected to every competence developed. involvement of the institutions should go behind the project and its budget.
- Establishment of informal networks, and continuity of networks after the project ends, capacity building and development of international curricula are all important components of best practice projects.
- Best practice projects create a local culture - involve municipalities and local stakeholders and develop a local partnership as essential to the success of the project.
- Erasmus+ can be an important instrument to municipalities and have a business impact.

- Local authorities want to attract investments and best practice projects and institutions should provide human resources.
- A VET dual system has a competitive advantage and promotes the cooperation with local companies.
- The basis of success in international project management lies in communication. Listening (partners, students and staff) is key to the process of continuous improvement
- It is easier to have always the same partners, but new ones enrich the consortium.
- It is important to have a fixed framework as a basis for the project but also to allow each partner to create a project that is appealing to motivate learners in their specific contexts.
- It is also important to previously learn about the courses before mobilities takes place.
- Better dissemination of the projects is required to increase informal networks that guarantee continuity, create new opportunities and develop capacity building opportunities for the organizations.
- Promote the participation of beneficiaries in international events, to stimulate new partnerships and sharing of best practices.
- In addition to the number of participants in mobility and partnerships, best practice projects mentioned the following areas for measurement:
 - Performance of the E&T institution on internationalisation reflects the higher impact of the Erasmus+ Programme.
 - Local government and business involvement and participation in the Erasmus+ projects.
 - The real success of a consortia will be when partners get new partners and become partners of others.
- When visiting students abroad, their achievements and progresses should be assessed. It is important to review ECTS of outgoing students, for example, with a periodicity of 3 months every year.
- VET institutions and HEI should follow-up on the participants: what is the impact of mobility on the academic / professional path? and reinvent and develop strategies to increase their level of national and international attractiveness.
- Different instruments may be used for measurement, depending on the kind of project and key-action:
 - internal meetings to review and identify best practices of previous projects to improve present and future projects;
 - contact surveys;
 - final surveys for students, staff and stakeholders;
 - past mobility survey, one month after the end of the project (not the mobility), analysing what are the impacts of this opportunity on the life of the participant;
 - surveys about student careers post mobility, for example each 2 years: impact on international careers and salary v. impact on national career and salary (60% of Erasmus+ alumni have international careers).

Evaluation

Participants answered [mentimeter](#) questionnaires to assess their expectations and the status of Internationalisation in their institutions, and to evaluate the TCA, including organization and content (Annex 6). The results of the evaluation were the following:

- 68% of represented institutions have internationalisation strategies, but 60% say staff are not acquainted with these strategies.
- 81% of represented institutions are involved in cooperation partnerships, but only 64% evaluate them.
- 80% of the participants know the requirements for VET Charter and ECHE, and 58% agree with the development of Charters for all sectors.
- 57% of the represented institutions have a credit system.
- 76% of represented institutions evaluate the impact of their mobility and partnership projects, and 81% incorporate the results of these projects into new projects.
- The TCA was valued for the networking opportunities it provided. Location, organization, support provided, social programme, agenda and Working Groups got good marks, above 4/5.
- Of 64 participants who replied to the question, 58 considered that the TCA met or surpassed their initial expectations.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. Organisation

	Organizing Committee	
Italy	Istituto Nazionale di Documentazione, Innovazione e Ricerca Educativa – INDIRE (IT01)	Sara Pagliai
Italy	Istituto Nazionale di Documentazione, Innovazione e Ricerca Educativa – INDIRE (IT01)	Lara Faroni
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Portugal	Agência Nacional Erasmus+ Educação e Formação – ANE+EF (PT01)	Joana Godinho

Annex 2. Participation

Participating institutions
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Aalborg University
Abdullah Gull University
Agência Nacional Erasmus+ + Educação e Formação
Amar Terra Verde
Angelus Silesius University of Applied Sciences in Walbrzych
Apro Formazione S.c. a r.l.
Associação Torrejana de Ensino Profissional
Avrupa Birliği Eğitim ve Gençlik Programları Merkezi Başkanlığı
Cámara de Comercio e Indústria Italiana para España
CENFIM
Centro de Promoção Social de Carvalhais
Consorzio Degli Istituti Professionali
Coordinating Council of Portuguese Polytechnics
Daugavpils Construction Technical School
De Geer Upper Secondary School
DGERT
Engina SRL
Escola Profissional do Montijo
Escola Superior de Educação João de Deus
Escola Superior de Enfermagem S. Francisco das Misericórdias
Friesland College
Foundation for the Development of the Education System
IES Villaverde
IGOT – University of Lisbon
Instituto Politécnico de Bragança
Instituto Universitário Militar
Istituto Nazionale Documentazione Innovazione Ricerca Educativa
Jan Amos Komenski State School of Higher Vocational Education in Leszno
Karkonoska Państwowa Szkoła Wyższa w Jeleniej Górze (Karkonosze College in Jelenia Góra)
Kaunas Technical Vocational Education Centre
Klaipeda Tourism School
Kolping Berufsbildung gGmbH
Nationale Agentur beim BIBB
National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education and Training
Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa w Ciechanowie
Pedago – Instituto Superior de Ciências Educativas
Piva Antwerpen
Pombal Prof – Sociedade de Educação e Ensino Profissional, SA
QBS Gewerkstatt
Recep Tayyip Erdogan University
Rezekne Art and Design Secondary school
ROC Midden Nederland
Ruiz Costa & Filhos, Lda
Send
Servicio Español para la Internacionalización de la Educación

Sivitanidios Public School of Trades and Vocations
Studio Risorse S.R.L.
Szent István University
Tallin Health Care College
Technisch Instituut Sint-Vincentius
Tingvalla Upper Secondary School
Turismo de Portugal
UAS Nysa
Universidade dos Açores
Universidade do Porto
Università Ca' Foscari Venezia
University of Chemical Technology and Metallurgy
University of Copenhagen
Universität Liechtenstein
University of Palermo
University of Theatre and Film Arts
University of Sassari
Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun)
Upplands Bro Upper and Adult Secondary School
Wrocław University of Science and Technology

Participating countries
Belgium
Bulgaria
Denmark
Estonia
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Italy
Latvia
Lithuania
Liechtenstein
Netherlands
Poland
Portugal
Spain
Sweden
Turkey

Annex 4. Roundtables

RT1: Approaches to the Internationalisation of VET and HE institutions

- Education is at the centre of Italy's development strategy. A strategic plan is coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to develop internationalisation, simplify processes and decrease bureaucracy, promote Italian agencies and enterprises, and valorise Italian language and cultural heritage.
 - Despite the importance of developing language skills in English, promoting national languages and culture is essential in internationalisation strategies for European languages not to die.
 - Italy focus on strategic areas, the Mediterranean, North Africa and Middle East, and China. An internationalisation strategy is being developed for these regions.
 - New countries and new priorities contribute to new projects and to language skills development.
 - Erasmus+ vs. Erasmus+ ICM are both relevant and strategic.
 - Integration of migrant population and inclusion are a priority in the Italian internationalisation strategy.
 - Projects with migrant populations should develop sector networks to facilitate recognition of different qualifications.
 - Improve communication - people do not know how to get information, and invest more in LLL and in ICT to communicate better as well.
 - At national level, governments should develop a strategy to ensure the continuity of cooperation.
 - Erasmus+ NAs want VET and HE to work together. VET should work closely with HE, as it can benefit from HE experience in internationalisation processes.
 - With 20 different VET systems, mobility and internationalisation projects have been funded also under the European Social Fund (ESF), focusing on ET2020 and SGD goals and targets.
 - Synergies with European Programmes such as ESF, and national and local partners should be developed for other sources of funds to complement the Erasmus+ financial support.
 - It is necessary more stability with local, national and international stakeholders.
 - It is also necessary to develop common patterns for portability of credits.
 - National support is necessary for standardization, which is not ready yet and recognition has not been possible.
 - There are problems for cooperation in ECVET.
 - Communities should adapt to an international dimension.
 - More funds for scholarships, for national and foreign students, are necessary.
 - ICM has strategic relevance, as well as double / joint degrees.
 - ICM allows international students to learn Italian language and culture.
 - Erasmus+ is not enough, even being a good Programme that allows staff to be more international.
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- Poland is developing a country internationalisation strategy, which would not have been possible without Erasmus+.
 - The Programme is acting on main issues step by step.
 - Weak language skills, low financing and different staff perceptions about the importance of internationalisation are some of the initial issues.
 - Focusing on quality and more funding to attract national students to move abroad on Erasmus+ mobility.
 - VET and HE are separated in Poland, meaning different institutional approaches and strategies towards internationalisation of institutions, sectors and courses.

- In Poland, internationalisation is obligatory both for VET and HE, and institutions are receiving national funds to further develop internationalisation strategies and projects.
- Institutions need to improve staff language competences, and offer more courses in English.
- VET needs more practical experiences and training and work-learning environment. Its international strategy focus on involving more enterprises as a way to provide the practical experience and training that VET needs; and aims at the integration of economic agents and stakeholders and more partner diversity.
- Regional and local approaches and policies, and the use of other sources of financing as other European funds, increases international mobility.
- H2020 education and training should have different calls to support internationalisation processes, for example, to develop languages skills for VET.
- Language should not be an issue for incoming students from partner countries.
- Closer cooperation between research and economy is necessary to increase the use of communication technologies to promote knowledge transfer.
- It is important to have an integrated strategy with different partners.
- The Erasmus+ projects should have a regional perspective and impact in the community.
- The government should take into account the many good internationalisation practices of Polish HE and VET institutions.
- Recognition standards are being implemented in many study areas.
- ECTS (based on workload) and ECVET (based on competencies / qualifications) are not compatible / adaptable / cannot use the same reference. It is not possible for these two systems to cooperate / work together / find synergies; both must be independent.

- In Portugal, the main challenge is integration and coordination of several perspectives into a common strategy for internationalisation of HE and VET, bringing together the perspectives and policies of several ministries.
- Several ministers develop different approaches and policies and interact with education and training institutions with different perspectives: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Instituto Camões, for example, promote projects targeting Portuguese speaking countries, while the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and Ministry of Education develop multi-layered approaches that need to be integrated.
- Different actors, levels and instruments for the internationalisation of institutions: government defines a transversal strategy involving several bodies/sectors/areas, which requires coordination and strategic alliances.
- To attract Portuguese communities abroad and foreign students to study in Portugal is a government priority and coordinated strategy.
- The Accreditation Agency (A3ES) requires HEI to have courses with an international dimension.
- Recommended to have a national strategy for VET and HE, and another for schools.
- Higher Education counts with several sources of financial support, as internationalisation is also related to research.
- There are several cooperation projects and strategic partnerships that support R&D internationalisation: Brazil & Latin America, H2020. The H2020 Programme is the main source for financing research and internationalisation.
- For cooperation and curricula, different programmes promote different approaches with Portuguese speaking countries.
- Erasmus+ is the main source for international student mobility, especially for polytechnic institutions.

- Internationalisation of VET varies by sector and areas.
- Erasmus+ is the main resource for internationalisation of VET, for example, of the tourism or electronics sectors.
- Courses in English allow institutions to receive international students. For example, China is growing as a sending country.
- Recommended to increase international activity in our institutions as an objective through physical mobility; virtual mobility; and internationalisation at home.
- International meetings such as this TCA, with more countries and students, are necessary.
- If we want to diversify, we must reach and involve more people, to listen more and define better policies adapted to new publics, e.g. millennials, migrants.
- Recommended the development of ECVET, involvement of more companies in Erasmus+, and less bureaucracy and administrative processes.
- A study on impact of Erasmus+ on internationalisation of VET in Portugal should be carried out.
- Relevance of other actors at local and regional level (e.g. municipalities) as a solution to local communities.

RT2: Impact of VET and HE Internationalisation on academic recognition of studies and internships

- Mobility is a key issue for the future. The longer the mobility, the longer the benefits. Mobility is one way for internationalisation but there are other ways.
- Young students should be prepared for global citizenship and careers; some countries and institutions have strategic training areas totally focused on internationalisation, such as tourism.
- One should have in mind the actual requisites and the global social needs to better prepare future generations and the future workforce; there should be a link between institutions and its economic and social context, as well as an inclusion approach – to assure that less benefited individuals or from disadvantaged backgrounds, have the same access and opportunities in E&T.
- More than to sum up credits, there should be equivalence of qualitative expected results – the focus must be on what to expect to be able to do (qualitative content) rather than on the number of training hours or other quantitative measure. This is the fundamental difference between ECVET and ECTS systems, and the reason for some of the difficulties for a larger implementation of this kind of certification tools in the VET sector.
- Italy gives extra marks for mobile students.
- Italy is an important bridge on E&T between EU and Eastern countries, namely through Erasmus+. The Programme is important for understanding different cultures and E&T systems.
- Especially students have a welcome attitude towards those coming from different countries, regions and cultures. They have an integration attitude.
- However, cultural differences can be an obstacle to have recognition.
- Language is an important matter and it is integrated on institutional strategies.
- Internationalisation is a seed for future cooperation and projects; usually, one mobility or exchange turns into a new project in the next year.
- Internationalisation requires a stable network of institutions and financing; poor financing often implies changing partnerships, which is bad for the sustainability of international project networks, as opposed to following a project to project logic.
- As compared to the HE sector, VET internationalisation is more challenging essentially due to the greater instability of this sector.

- The VET Charter is an improvement and an added value for internationalisation, as it implies a strategy and some stability in project partnerships, at regional, national and international levels.
 - ECVET is efficient on grades and learning outcomes comparability, and on mobility preparation as well. 24% of VET institutions use ECVET but the number increases to 90% with VET Charter.
 - Incoming and outgoing staff mobility is important to improve competences and share knowledge.
 - VET staff that participate on Erasmus+ are training professionals and not administrative staff.
 - The organization of staff double exchanges (two teachers from the same area, in the same period, move to each other's HEI) has been a major contribution for HEI internationalisation.
 - Staff recognition is an issue that should be tackled, as staff mobility is central for institutional internationalisation.
 - There are difficulties in comparing academic modules and giving equivalence across different HEI and countries, but Italian HEI have had a flexible comprehensive approach on academic recognition.
 - ECTS is used by HEI and is based on learning outcomes and workload. Many teachers base recognition on the study plan and grades obtained; but flexibility must exist to look differently to learning outcomes and final results.
 - Staff must have the competences that allow them to know which competences must be obtained by the trainees and the number of hours that are necessary to achieve those competences.
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- In Poland, education sectors should learn from each other because all face the same issues.
 - Student mobility is very important but academic staff should also go abroad.
 - Sometimes, language is a barrier so HEI have to deal with this.
 - Erasmus+ is linked to the 2020 and 2030 goals on education and training. The Erasmus+ Impact Study of HE Mobility shows great outcomes, which are a major contribution to internationalisation and the quality of E&T systems across Europe.
 - During mobility, students and apprentices get to know what they want to do professionally in the future (vocational aspect).
 - Students improve competences/skills for employment, social cohesion and inclusion. They gain a social package made of experience and knowledge that allows them to develop empathy towards others, consciousness and citizenship – social cohesion and inclusion aspect.
 - Students find a job more easily: mobility gives them more flexibility and skills to adapt do the labour market and to an occupation (employment aspect).
 - Staff improve learning/ teaching skills during mobility periods (learning how to teach aspect).
 - Erasmus+ is also helping institutions to achieve sustainability.
 - ECVET is being implemented; more international cooperation is needed to further improve implementation and to minimize cultural challenges that interfere on recognition (the so-called human factor).
 - After 30 years of Erasmus+ there are still issues with recognition of studies by HEI.
- Some HEI are doing very well on recognition because they have a common understanding about Erasmus+ and the implications of academic recognition on HEI internationalisation; and recognition procedures are understood and acknowledged by the academic community in each HEI. This is a key element for the success of such measures and instrument.

- In Portugal, E&T needs and objectives require a growing articulation between the VET and the HE sectors.
- Some VET schools are key players in their regions, with links to Polytechnic Institutes and aiming to work closely with Universities.
- The VET sector is less experienced than HE on internationalisation, and the mobility volume is much less expressive.
- However, VET institutions are more aware of internationalisation opportunities, namely through Erasmus+ and student mobility.
- Quality in E&T, in mobility experiences and in recognition, requires good cooperation between VET providers. Recognition for VET is different from the HE system.
- Some VET students would like to have global careers but financing is necessary. These opportunities must be open to all and not only to rich people.
- An internship abroad is important to have better competences and have better experiences interns can apply when returning home.
- Among trainees, the contact with other work standards (experiencing other ways of doing and working), in an international environment, is an excellent preparation for future employment and for an easier adaptation to the labour market.
- A common understanding of ECVET is essential for Erasmus+ and for fully benefitting from its opportunities.
- ECVET is being implemented in Portugal since 2007 (recommendations and skills catalogue). The credit catalogue provides a double classification (academic and professional); each unit has its own points/credits. It is grounded on ISCED framework, which is based on training unities; each unity comprehends a set of competences/skills and expected results. If there is an agreement between VET providers about standards and contents of each unit, then the recognition is guaranteed.
- Adults can also assess VET qualifications. Adults with experience on the labour market can obtain academic and professional qualifications by a formal recognition of their own experiences.
- Internationalisation is a key priority for all Portuguese HEI, as a way of academic recognition and as a financial source through the attraction of international students. Increasing the number of international students is very important for HEI, especially for smaller ones.
- Erasmus+ is key for HEI internationalisation, and ECTS is critical and fundamental for the mobility of students.
- Regional policies are also relevant in HEI internationalisation strategies. Regional strategies tend to attract more VET students that can progress to HEI to continue their studies.
- There is a cross-border cooperation between HEI and regions. Mobility patterns between Northern HEI from Portugal and Spain, for instance, give a geographic perspective on internationalisation and the importance of the role of networks.
- HEI are global actors in regional and local contexts, relating to policy, and to social and economic needs and targets set for the regions. HEI are in many cases a driving force for socioeconomic development of small and medium cities and regions.
- By attracting international students, staff and potential residents and workers, they are promoting in many ways the social and economic development of such region.
- Erasmus+ is especially valuable for HEI, but it is even more valuable for students and staff going on a mobility period. Erasmus+ is less relevant for HEI involved in research, as mobility and exchanges are common among staff from research centres or international projects. Staff mobility is very important but

often they get funds from research, so it is difficult to involve them in Erasmus+. Non-academic staff are even more difficult to motivate.

- There should be flexibility on the approach of recognition: HEI must be flexible when establishing a learning agreement or a teacher curricula programme, according to the expected results.
- Some courses with a higher connection to labour market with a more specific outcome may require a more complicated recognition procedure however with some flexibility even those are recognised.
- From the cultural point of view, teachers have an important role on student recognition, as they are the direct actors on such procedures.

RT3: Best practice Erasmus+ projects

- In Italy, interest in mobility projects is growing. Having specific funding for internationalisation is one of the main institutional objectives, also to attract national funding.
- Mobility and internationalisation are the main goals for E&T, and Erasmus+ is an important instrument for the institutions.
- European projects give guidelines to implement a project: learn new things and gain experiences, given the opportunity, and test new programmes focused on employment and E&T.
- Importance of synergies involving different kinds of institutions: including municipalities, involve local public institutions (which is very difficult in Italy) and schools.
- New networks give the opportunity to schools to promote their own informal networks.
- However, project team stability is very important for achieving goals and having an impact.
- It is important that consortium show similarities between the partners.
- Experience abroad is important for the development of students and teachers.
- It is important to give mobility opportunities also to vulnerable students.
- For projects targeting people from difficult social contexts, the first challenge is to develop a local culture around the project.
- Student representativeness is growing, and language centres are being established.

- Poland is a pioneer in dual education. In 2011, the first university implemented dual studies; now, Poland has 103 dual courses, especially with Eastern countries. In all 103 projects, municipalities cooperate, as well as sports clubs and companies.
- A state school for Higher Vocational Education implemented a dual system with the support of a German Hochschule and were pioneers in introducing dual education in Poland. The school benefited from the fact that Dutch industries are based in Poland, so it managed to implement short-term programmes.
- The dual system has a competitive advantage and promotes cooperation with local companies. The aim is to graduate people (young students) to meet the needs of local markets. 45 companies cooperate in Erasmus+ exchanges, giving the students a labour market opportunity.
- VET institutions partners of our partners are a key of the success.

- In Portugal, internationalisation is supported both by Erasmus+ (important to organise mobilities); and national government cooperation with other countries.
- Internationalisation helps professors, researchers and colleagues to develop ideas.
- It is crucial listening and adopting measures to become innovative, and to attract international students and workers to mobility in Portugal.

- The tourism sector wants to attract more students than it sends, as it happened in the past. The sector is now reinforcing the strategy to attract new students to Portugal and to create a network of international partners.
- Tourism organizes internationalisation by providing support to students; and integrate them in decisions about their future careers.
- Companies are getting more involved in the process as well, to promote more work experience, e.g. internships during training).
- It is essential to involve companies on Erasmus+ projects to promote a dual system, as well as to find a way to involve more and more students and workers. For this, it is necessary to reinforce language skills.
- Partners should participate in the project from the very beginning to pursue the same goals and innovative subjects, Qualifications Catalogue-oriented.
- Learners are market-oriented and developing marketplace needs and prospective analysis.
- Different institutional levels of internationalisation led to the establishment of a HEI Working Group on internationalisation, which is a space to reflect about the process: experts on internationalisation, start-ups on internationalisation and a privileged place for providing information and clarification.
- A stable team and working with all departments and schools in a HEI concerning their specific conditions and publics for internationalization is essential.
- A HEI which had difficulties in attracting national students (region not attractive), engaged in attracting international students by having 11 degrees in English. The general engagement is very important in the region, which has an international perspective. Attracts many students from and to Spain, as this HEI is near the border.
- When students return from mobility, they are totally different, surely more independent.
- ICM: 20% of students stay to study or to work, among other reasons because the E&T system its quite attractive.
- There is however a need for more support, such as student accommodation, where cooperation with municipalities is very important.

Annex 5. Working Groups

▪ **WG1 and WG2: Internationalisation strategies**

- TCA participants discussed their institutional strategies and the different ways in which countries and institutions are tackling this challenge.
- All participating countries and institutions are at different stages of internationalisation. Most institutions have an internationalisation strategy; however, there are different levels of implementation, often due to the geographical location of some institutions.
- Most participants mentioned that their institutions have an internationalisation strategy, but it is not always detailed, nor include indicators and evaluation procedures, and it is not known by the all stakeholders.
- The internationalisation strategy must involve the main stakeholders. Some stakeholders (students; partners; teachers; companies; local bodies; parents) are not aware of the strategy of their institution, although widely publicized, and are reluctant to learn about it – it is necessary to change some mentalities.
- In many cases, the internationalisation strategy is integrated into the institution's overall strategy – with clear and well-defined objectives that facilitate its application – and in the school educational project, since the preparation of students for the world of work and for the future, helping to develop skills of the 21st century, is the core business of educational institutions.
- A best practice is to involve municipalities into supporting internationalisation strategies (good examples from Lisbon, Nysa etc.)
- The Erasmus+ Programme tends to be identified as the funding source for the internationalisation process, but institutions should look for other sources of funding as well.
- The Erasmus+ Programme can act as an incentive for the development and implementation of an internationalisation strategy through mobility and / or partnership projects. However, an internationalisation process must extrapolate the domain of the Programme, creating alternative forms of financing.
- Public authorities should be responsible for setting goals that support the internationalisation of institutions.
- National and local authorities can also help the internationalisation process of VET institutions, especially in their areas of competence, namely accommodation for foreign students / teachers.
- There is a clear relationship between the internationalisation strategy and the educational success of educational institutions.
- Success is measured by the application of questionnaires and, in some cases, through group interviews with participants in Erasmus+ mobility activities: the difference between who did not participate and those who participated in the Programme, with the latter experiencing more visible personal growth than immediate employment.
- Public policies should give greater flexibility to VET institutions, as VET institutions are more limited by national policies.
- The public education indicators of internationalisation should be adopted by VET institutions, once adapted to their own context and reality.
- HE institutions should closely cooperate with VET institutions to share experiences and benchmarking and create cooperative networks.
- Improvement of language skills (identified as an obstacle) should be encouraged to facilitate participation in the Erasmus+ Programme or others.

▪ **WG3 and WG4: Cooperation Networks**

- Participants shared their experiences of participation in international cooperation networks, which they considered very important for getting in touch with other institutions.
- Reasons to participate in international cooperation networks: more updated education, higher quality, exchange, benchmarking, and brand building.
- International cooperation networks create added value and ROI. More taxpayers, more opportunities for company growth, less cost for unemployment for local towns and better life for citizens.
- Projects should be aligned with national policies to be more successful. If the selection of partner countries and institutions considers institutional and national priorities, it is more likely to get approved. Sometimes projects are designed to be aligned with national demand.
- Institutions have partnerships with the best European institutions in the sector, which are those that serve what other institutions are searching for.
- Some of these partnerships include partner institutions in countries outside Europe, if it is necessary (e.g. a public school had the need to contact other schools with experience in working with refugees).
- Some partnerships involve companies, and institutions aim at increasing the number of internships.
- For success, involve also companies, work with minorities or excluded groups, find partners that fits you!
- Make clear what every partner has to do in the partnership.
- More transnational events should be organised to get more contacts for future partnerships.
- Many institutions are worried about any kind of the investment getting lost when their students decide to work abroad.
- Potential partners have looked for a nursing school in Poland for years because of its good ratings; and as it is located near the Czech Republic and German borders, it has many applicants. They have established cooperation networks without a project, and their major concern is that students leave to other countries in search of better salaries.
- A participant from a school that has VET and Adult Education students considers that cooperation networks are established in events such as a TCA. Through international events, schools get in touch with other institutions to exchange information for future partnerships. Everyone needs a partner that is stronger to leading the project.
- There was the example of an institution which has coordinated a project for the first time, with a budget of more than half a million euros, and everything went according to what was expected. The secret to success was that everyone involved knew well the rules.
- A public school that works mostly with refugees from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. has projects to teach immigrants and insert them into the labour market. Because of the nature of this kind of projects, the school partnered with the local municipality to help student integration.
- A military HEI participates in international cooperation networks for student and teacher mobility.
- A famous partnership project produced a book only with images to teach mothers how to help their children learning how to write and read.

▪ WG5 and WG6: VET and HE Charters

- All sectors should have a Charter system, as it would facilitate access to the Erasmus+ Programme: “you don’t have to repeat yourself every year, with the application”. Even if an institution does not get the funding, it will have the advantage of an easier application process.

- Applications for Charters should be maintained, and new applications should be made in the next Programme.
- A Charter should be given per sector: one charter for all activities/actions available in the sector.
- The preparation of the VET Charter should be similar to the HE Charter.
- Quality requirements for the new charters should be revised to avoid some artificial requirements.
- VET Charter and ECHE renewal for 2021-2027 should follow a light process (e.g. EPS review only). Assessment of Charters should be maintained as it is: ECHE by the European Commission and VET Charter by National Agencies.
- WG participants know the requirements for obtaining an Erasmus+ VET Charter, but only one has it (GR). PT and LV participant institutions did not have the time or resources to dedicate to submit a VET Charter application.
- Concerning the institutional impact, the number of students has increased with the VET Charter. The institution became more detailed and dedicated to finding good partnerships in the labour market; and to design mobility experiences for all vocational fields.
- Criteria for selection of participants and their preparation also improve after obtaining the VET Charter.
- One participant proposed mixed charters, allowing institutions dealing with more than one sector to apply for both sectors at the same time (e.g. School Education, VET and Adult Education).

▪ WG7 and WG8: Recognition

- A credit system makes comparison and transfer of qualifications easier. So it makes it easier to realize mobilities and measure and transfer the learning outcomes.
- VET is much more complicated than HE due to different national/regional education systems.
- For VET institutions, using credits is optional. ECVET is used on ERASMUS+ projects but it is not ready in most of countries. Although the European Commission introduced it in 2009, no country integrated it into their system. The reason would be the huge variety of VET systems among countries. There is much previous work that needs to be done in new partnerships to stabilize recognition in the VET sector.
- HE uses credits – ECTS are mainly used for the recognition for student mobility for studies and partly for traineeships. Diploma Supplement is used for the recognition of traineeships. Also, Europass is a tool for recognition of recent graduates' traineeships and is used by some HEI.
- However, different HE levels present a constraint for recognition and application of different types of credit systems – transfer of grades may be problematic in some cases.
- Recognition of staff mobility depends on the institutional approach; some HEI use it in their staff evaluation and count it as a promotion tool. But, in general, there is no formal system for staff recognition, although staff mobility adds value to participant's professional experience and has positive effect on their employability.
- The impact on institutions: chain of positive changes – mobility caused a need for systemic solutions on recognition and when the solutions are implemented, it can change the mindset of the institution and increase mobilities.
- While regulating different aspects at European level, regional/ national context and heritage should not be forgotten and neglected.

▪ WG 9 and WG10. Project impact, evaluation and dissemination of results

- Participant institutions measure the impact of projects, including Erasmus+ projects, on institutional internationalisation in the short-, medium- and long-term.
- Evaluation is based on the internationalisation strategy – it means every project is evaluated: (i) short term evaluation – 1-2 years perspective: comprehensive analysis of each mobility project; (ii) medium-term evaluation – 2-3 years perspective: finding new countries and courses for new mobilities; and long-term evaluation – 6-7 years perspective: general improvement of internationalisation due to new EU mobility Programmes.
- Tools that are used to assess the impact of the projects implemented in each institution include surveys about skills and intercultural competences, Mobility Tool+ and more sophisticated tools (BENs), participant presentations, opinions and interests of participants of mobility projects, analysis of the internship mobility certificates, analysis of skills tests and individual portfolio, media coverage. Recommendations from others and reasons for choosing the school are also used to evaluate project impact, as well as evaluating partners (checklist of the incoming/outgoing)
- PR instruments are used to promote positive project results and attract new participants: promotion of success story” projects, seminar/ workshop for potential applicants, and dissemination of evaluation results on the NA website.
- Project Results Evaluation are incorporated into future projects, for example through inclusion of project final products into new projects.
- Best practice projects on internationalisation of VET and HE should get financial bonuses.
- Recommendations: involve stakeholders from the beginning by reaching them; establishing students ambassadors; communicate with the media in all channels; use regular annual reports from companies for highlighting internationalisation; get in touch with your NA; strengthen bridges between the HE and VET sectors; secure resources for dissemination purposes

Annex 6. TCA Evaluation

Initial Questionnaire

Does your institution have an internationalization strategy formally defined?

Mentimeter



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Do all staff in your institution know the internationalization strategy?

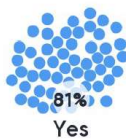
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Does your institution have an international network of cooperation partnerships?

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Does your institution have partnerships with the best European institutions in the sector?

Mentimeter



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Does your institution usually evaluate the international networks in which it is involved?

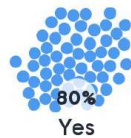
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Do you know the requirements to obtain an Erasmus Charter / VET Charter?

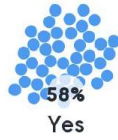
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Do you agree with Erasmus Charters for all sectors?

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Does your institution use a credit system?

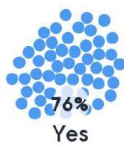
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Does your institution assess the impact of its projects?

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Does your institution incorporate evaluation results into new projects?

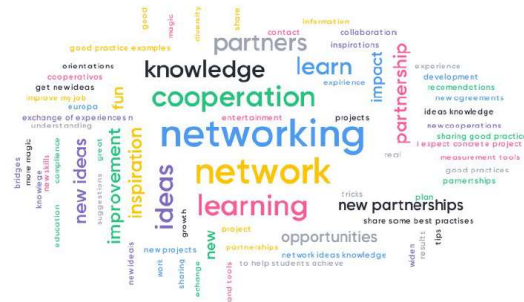
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Describe in two words what you expect from this TCA, please.

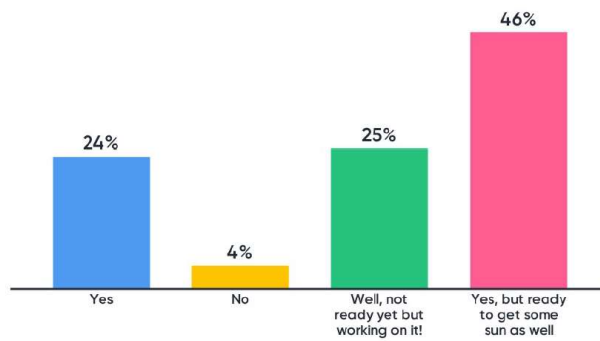
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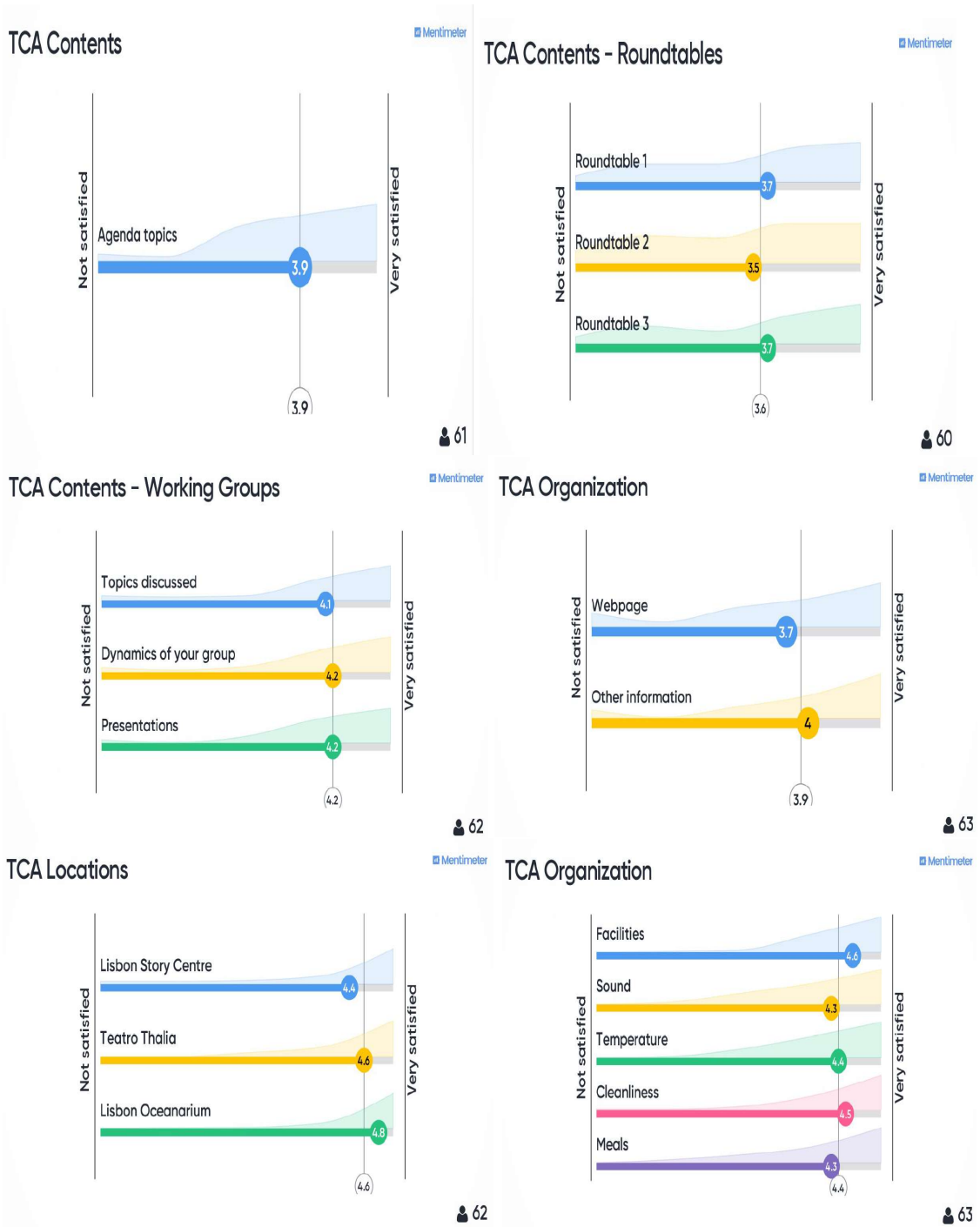
Are you ready to work?

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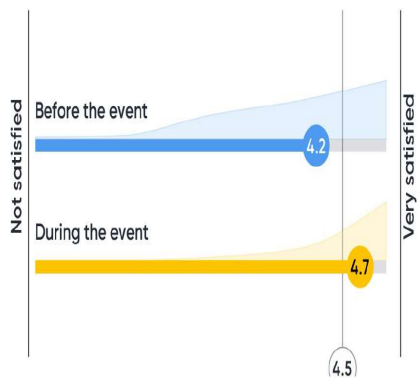


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Final Questionnaire



Support provided



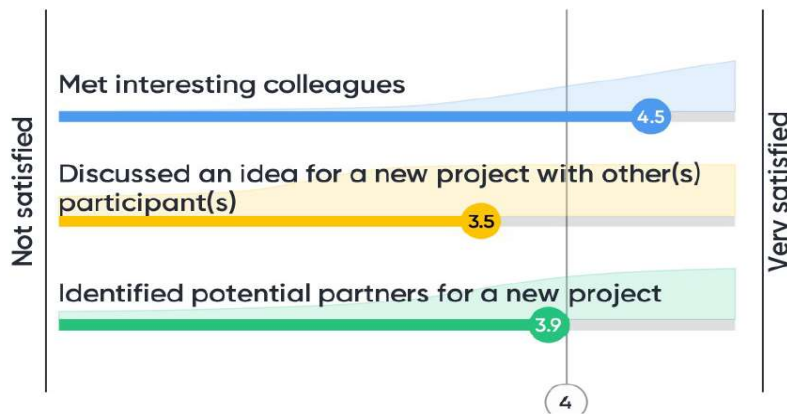
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Social Programme



64

Networking – During this TCA, I



4

57

My expectations regarding this TCA were:



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Networking - Please let us know the topic you discussed with other participants for a possible future project

Mentimeter

53

Mobilities, more mobility experiences
Mobility, internships and DD
Exchange students under credit curricula
Exchange of staff
Erasmus+ mobility, traineeships, cooperative transectoral projects
Internships, hospitality nternships
Student exchange for work practice
Outgoing trainee learning
Traineeship opportunities for HEI students
Cooperation on students and teacher exchanges
Cooperation, partnerships, networks
New partnership in HE
VET and HE project
New KA2 project
Project with refugees
Job shadowing and KA202
Charters, ECHE for HE and VET
Recognition of competences and inclusion of NEETS, migrants in the labour market
Recognition of foreign qualification
Certification
How to prepare right good proposals
Next year TCA in Poland
Future of Erasmus+
Inclusion
Digitalisation
Dual education
National VET school system
VET international strategies
Something on the social area
How to change life

Expectations: Please justify

Mentimeter

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My expectations were networking, cooperation and fun. I wanted to learn abot internationalisation strategies of the institutions and their styles. I wanted to learn how Erasmus+ affects it
Networking, information about internationalisation strategies in other countries, cooperation, having fun
Hoping to exchange information about strategies and the future of VET Charter opportunities
Strengthen international strategies among VET institutions

Knowledge about specific themes of strategies and action plans, best practice examples, cooperative learning with the participants
Sharing best practices, sharing experience, networking, consultations
Establish new agreements, learn
Tools, tips and tricks, new partners
Diversity ❤️ Europa ❤️ Connection
Meet interesting people
Networking, meeting new people, benchmark ideas
The subject of TCA was carefully chosen. The discussions were beneficial for me. Networking and new ideas will help me a lot
I learned a lot, interesting topics well addressed, connecting people
I learned a lot about VET institutions and exchanged experience and good practices with other representatives of HE institutions, exchanged contact information with potential partners and got to know about future expectations for new ECHE 2021-27.
I have got good ideas from this TCA, would have liked to get more
New experiences and I have made many new contacts
Great networking opportunity, networking was very good, good networking and sharing
Good for contacts, wonderful interaction, adults have problems to communicate with each other, we must be more like children :)
New contacts, dissemination of HEI and projects, more project presentations
Met other professionals in the area, shared experiences, extended cooperation network
I found 2 new partners and have met new friends
Many countries, bridging sectors
Everything is running well, good work, excellent group
Fruitful activity. Excellent organisation. Thank you Erasmus+.
Everything has been perfect, you've done a great job
It was a good experience to repeat again with more fun
+ on impact and dissemination
Could have been more interactive, few discussions and ideas shared
I wanted to see more dynamics on the best practice presentations and understand more about other sources of financing that could complement Erasmus+ Projects
Problems with Erasmus+ for VET School were not discussed very well
More practical solutions were missed
Networking possibilities were limited
Too general, not enough time for peer learning.

How did you prepare yourself for the activity?

 Mentimeter

 54

Reading implementation of international strategies of our organisation
I have talked to my international office and collect some documents about our internationalisation strategy
Working on our strategy
Analysis of my former projects and activities
Had a meeting with me colleagues and revised our work
Organized the main topics for discussion

Working group to discuss topics beforehand
We organised some information to bring to the WG
Sharing ideas with colleagues from my office, reading institutional documents, collecting information on the topics to be discussed
Organising NA discussed all themes
Familiarisation with VET charter
Discussion points from previous TCA experience
Checked the discussion topics
I did homework, lot of work, lot of note taking, didn't sleep
Explored the website of the event
I read, about the event, email and information on web, discussion topics, all papers, reports
Studwudziestoośmiokrotnej the general numbers and national documents
Read the Programme during my trip
I learnt Portuguese
Read your e-mails and repeat Portuguese language 😊
Checked participants via Google, searched Google maps
Some reading and oh God I have to go because my boss told me to

Describe any difficulties you encountered before and during this TCA

Mentimeter

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None, everything was super
The registration process required a gmail account - is this legal with gdpr?
To identify potential partners, participants list was not complete and available on time.
Too many places during TCA, reach the different avenues, transportation
Breaking the ice is not easy
Keeping focus
Switching between different languages
Too much listening
Wake up...seriously, sound of live session is too low
The organization of the roundtables and working groups was not clear
Tables talked too close to each other
Not many toilets for the ladies
Too much food, ate too much
Following the GIRO
It was short notice from my NA and I had to do things in haste
My husband stayed alone...
Get back home... love lisboa 😊😊

