



GENERAL RESULTS

Erasmus+ Implementation Survey 2016

*After the success of the 2014 broad public consultation and the 2015 Erasmus+ implementation survey, the Lifelong Learning Platform launched the 2016 Erasmus+ Survey on 7 July in three major EU languages (English, German and French). For this year's Erasmus+ survey, the numbers are impressive: **734 responses** were received from applicants in **32 countries - all 28 EU Member States and Iceland, Turkey, Norway and former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**. The purpose of this year's survey was to evaluate how the third round of applications for the Erasmus+ programme was experienced by the beneficiaries. The consultation was closed on the 15th of September. The following report presents a summary of the respondents' assessment of the Erasmus+ Programme implementation in 2016.*

*The results show how the various beneficiaries of the Programme **value the Erasmus+** as a great opportunity to work with their peers across Europe and to implement innovative projects in the field of education, training and youth. This annual survey aims to **provide decision-makers with an evaluation from the direct beneficiaries, on what works well, what could be improved and what is lacking** in the programme. The respondents of the 2016 survey particularly appreciate the simplified architecture of the Programme, mainly referring to the use of lump sums. However, some figures are striking such as the fact that only every fifth of respondent believes that the rules are applied in a harmonised way across National Agencies. Also, among most frequent concerns among respondents were the complexity of the bureaucratic procedures and the technicality of the documents, which hinder the chances of smaller organisations and seem to favour the larger ones. Moreover, the majority of beneficiaries believe that more funding is needed for the Erasmus+ Programme as a whole, and at the same time there is an urge for fairer distribution of budget amounts between the Key Actions and the specific budget items. The Lifelong Learning Platform hopes these results will guide decision-makers in finding solutions to improve the programme that is considered to be a success story of the EU by many.*

Contents

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS	3
Q1: On whose behalf did you apply for an Erasmus+ action?.....	3
Q2: In which country did you apply for Erasmus+?.....	4
Q3: Did you involve partners from partner countries?.....	5
Q4: For which Erasmus+ Key Action did you apply?	5
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE PROGRAMME?.....	6
Q5: Is the Erasmus+ programme guide user-friendly and clear enough?.....	6
Q6: Are the objectives and important features of the Erasmus+ programme adapted to your reality?.....	7
Q7: Are you satisfied with the simplified architecture of Erasmus+?	8
Q8: Are the differences between Key Actions clear enough to you?	9
Q9: Compared to the previous Lifelong Learning Programme, do you think Erasmus+ is innovative?	10
CREATING PARTNERSHIPS	11
Q10: Relevance to find partners (eTwinning, EPALE, membership in EU networks, National Agencies)	11
Q11: Did you easily manage to build your project consortium?	12
APPLYING FOR ERASMUS+ PROJECTS	12
Q13 Do you have any comments or suggestions to improve mobility practicalities?	13
Q14: Were the application forms user-friendly and coherent enough?.....	13
Q15: Funding rules of strategic partnerships (KA2): are these budget items clear to you ?	14
Q16: Budget: what do you think of the new lump sum system?	15
Q17: What do you think of the new PIC number system?	16
RELATIONS WITH NATIONAL AGENCIES & THE EACEA	17
Q18: Do you think the rules are applied the same way by different National Agencies? ..	17
Q19: What is your opinion on the decentralisation from the Executive Agency to the National Agencies?	18
Q20: If you applied for the EACEA (centralised calls) was the Agency available and helpful?	18
SUCCESS RATES AND REPORTING MODALITIES (2016).....	19
Q21: Did you receive sufficient feedback on your project evaluation?	19
Q22: Do you understand the reporting rules?	20
THE FUTURE OF THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME.....	21
Q23: Should the new programme be using lump sums?	21

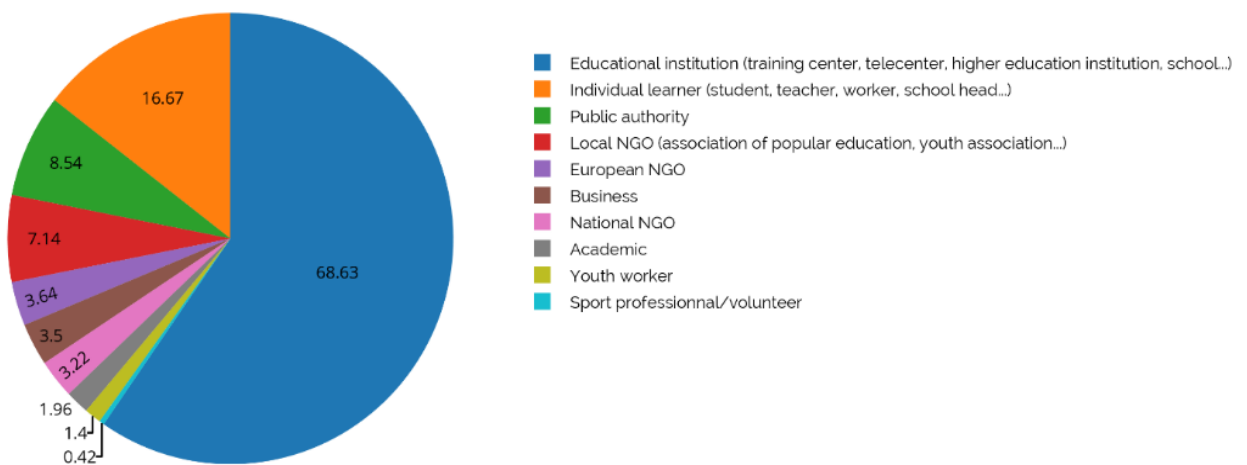
PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Q1: On whose behalf did you apply for an Erasmus+ action?

The main target group of the survey are our member organisations who are network organisations that operate at European level and their members who are active at national and local level. This target group comprises both **educational institutions (68.83%)** and **NGOs (14%)** at European (**3.64%**), national (**3.22%**) and local (**7.14%**) level. Altogether they represent **82.83%** respondents to the survey as they are the key beneficiaries of the programme, and at the same time its implementers and promoters.

20.45% respondents replied as well on **personal behalf** (students, teachers, school heads, academics (**1.96%**), youth workers (**1.40%**), sport professionals and volunteers (**0.42%**) etc.), expressing their level of satisfaction with the application processes they went through. The relatively high number of educational institutions and applicants on personal behalf is due to the large number of respondents in the survey who applied for KA1 - learning mobility. Last but not least, a smaller number of replies were received from **public authorities (8.54%)** and **businesses (3.50%)**.

On whose behalf did you apply for an Erasmus+ action?



Comparative analysis with the 2015 Erasmus+ Survey

In comparison with the 2015 Erasmus+ Implementation Survey results, the number of respondents has considerably increased namely from shifted from educational institutions (who have gone up from 35% to 68.63%). The **number of individual learners has increased** (from 10.5% up to 16.67%), becoming the group with the second largest share of replies. Public authorities have the same representation as last year (approximately 9%).

Out of 712 responses (against 250 in 2015), 3.5% represent businesses (against 5.4% in 2015); 1.96% academics (against 3% in 2015); and 1.4% youth workers (against 4% in 2015). However, these results do not imply a drop in participation given that the 2015 Survey collected a total

of 250 responses while these numbers triple in 2016 due to an increased “mobilisation” among the platform’s vast membership reaching out to a larger number of educational institutions and individuals. This is also why there is to a certain extent larger participation of educational institutions in the programme than of other groups.

Q2: In which country did you apply for Erasmus+?

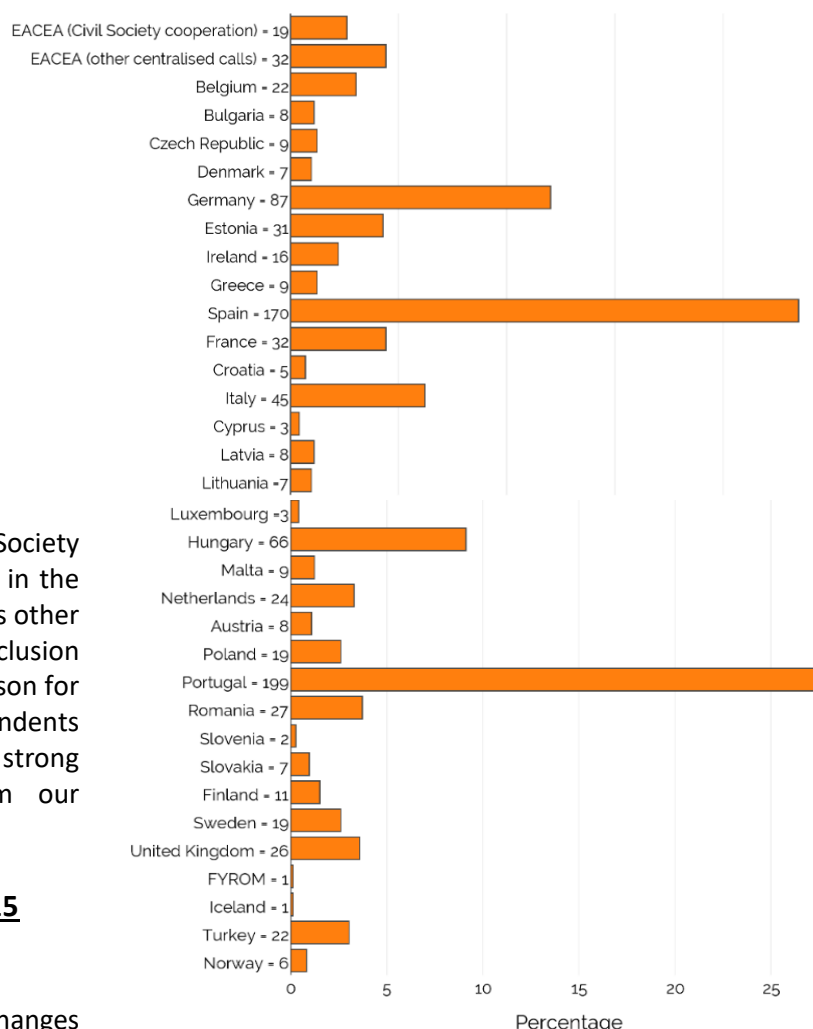
The survey gathered responses from respondents from **all EU countries as well as Iceland, Norway, former-Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.**

In 2016, respondents to the survey have mostly applied for Erasmus+ in Portugal (27.49%), Spain (23.48%), Germany (12.02%), Hungary (9.12%), Italy (6.22%) and France (4.42%).

4.42% of the respondents submitted their application to the Executive Agency for centralised calls. The last group includes European NGOs beneficiaries of Key Action 3 Civil Society Cooperation call for operating grants in the Education and Youth strand, as well as other Key Action 3 calls such as the Social Inclusion call in 2016. There is no particular reason for the increase in the number of respondents from Portugal apart from the strong dissemination of the survey from our Portuguese members.

Comparative analysis with the 2015 Erasmus+ Survey

Percentage-wise, we notice several changes in the country of application. This year survey’s respondents mostly applied in **Portugal** (27.49%), **Spain** (23.48%) and **Germany** (12.02%) while last year the top three countries were **Germany** (18%), **France** (10%) and **Belgium** (9%). This result could imply that the 2015 rejection rate in Germany and France might have influenced the increasing number of applications in Portugal.



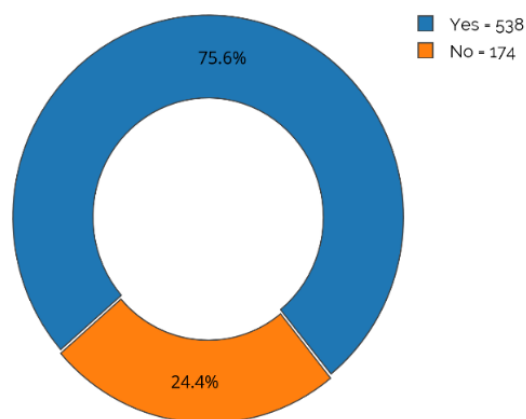
Q3: Did you involve partners from partner countries?

Out of 734 responses, the vast majority of **75.6%** stated that they did involve project partners from non-EU partner countries, while a less than one fourth did not.

Comparative analysis with the 2015 Erasmus+ Survey

In 2015, the percentage of respondents who confirmed involving project partners from non-EU partner countries was of 68%. This number increases by 7.6 points in 2016. On the whole, these results reflect a **strong willingness to partner beyond EU Member States**. In addition, it reflects the increasing number of applications for Key Action 1 International Mobility from educational institutions.

Did you involve partners from partner countries?



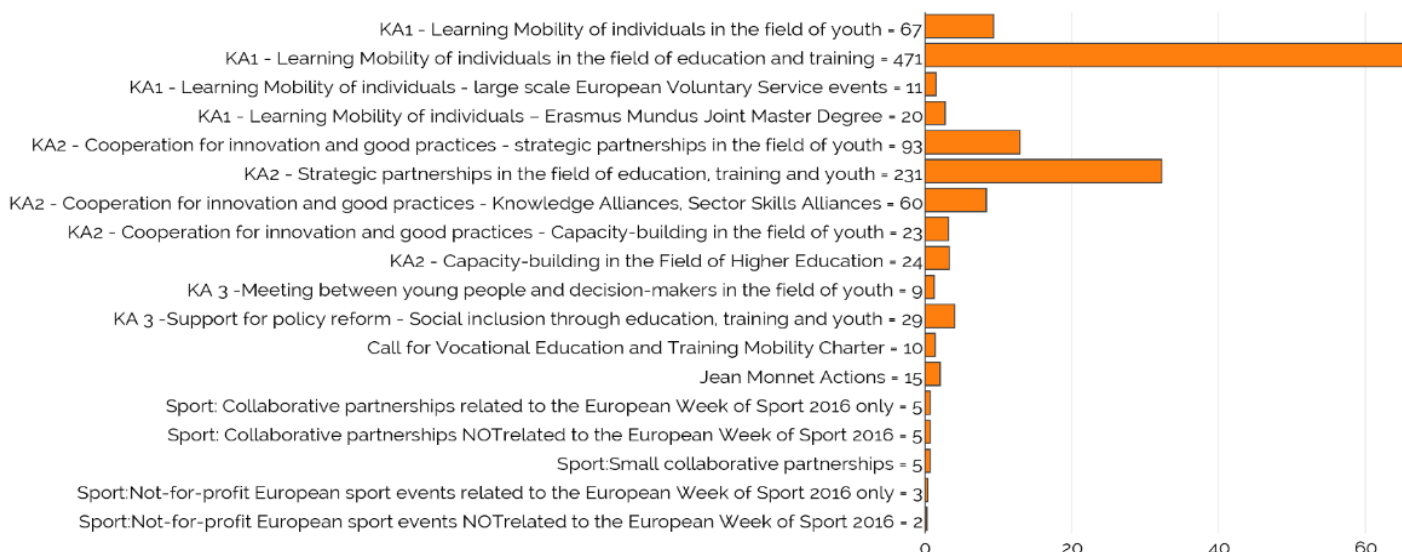
Q4: For which Erasmus+ Key Action did you apply?

Overall, participants in the consultation applied within all Erasmus+ Key Actions. **Key Action 1 - Learning Mobility of individuals in the field of education and training** gathers the highest number of applications representing **65.8%**.

The second highest number relates to applications under **Key Action 2 – Strategic partnerships in the field of education, training and youth**, representing **32.2%** of responses.

Key Action 2 - Cooperation for innovation and good practices - strategic partnerships in the field of youth represents **13%** and **Key Action 1 – Learning Mobility of individuals in the field of youth** **9.4%**. The number of total actions selected is larger than the number of respondents

For which Erasmus+ action did you apply?



(1098) suggesting that many participants applied for more than one Key Action of the Erasmus+ programme.

Comparative analysis with the 2015 Erasmus+ Survey

The **2016 results are somewhat different to 2015**, where the tendency implied a majority of applications made to **Key Action 2** – Cooperation for Innovation and Good Practices for Strategic Partnerships.

In 2016, the number of respondents applying under **Key Action 1** – Learning mobility of individuals for Higher education **increased by 50.8 points**, as the survey was broadened to a larger public and individuals participating in KA1.

This significant difference corresponds to the background of this year’s respondents (cf. Q1): the number of respondents representing educational institutions has increased almost twice. The survey shows that approximately the same number of NGOs participated in the survey (from 107 in 2015 to 100 in 2016). However, it is worth noting though that there was a much higher outreach to members’ members as there was a high increase in the number of replies from educational institutions in the survey (implying higher education mobilities).

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE PROGRAMME?

Q5: Is the Erasmus+ programme guide user-friendly and clear enough?

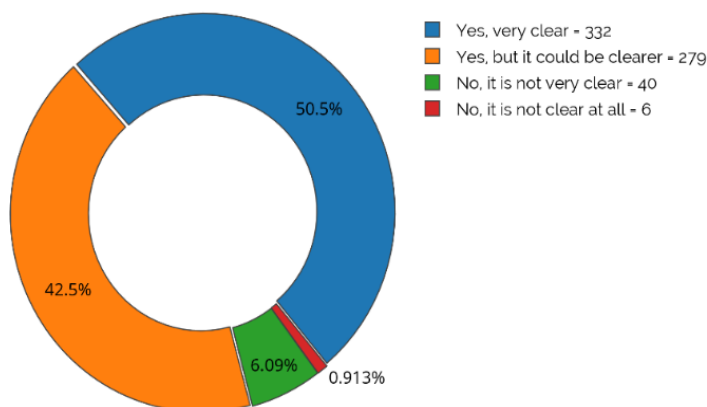
Out of **657 valid responses** to this question, **50.7%** show overall satisfaction regarding the clarity of the Erasmus+ programme guide. However, a significant **42.5%** indicate that there is still room for improvement regarding the Programme Guide user-friendliness. **7%** find the Programme Guide unclear and not user-friendly.

Further comments target **the length, technicality and repetitiveness** of the document.

Suggestions include creating **separate guides for the different actions**.

Applicants generally highlight **the role of National Agencies in explaining and clarifying the guide**, even though their availability and even helpfulness differs across Europe. Uneven conclusions on this point

Is the programme guide clear enough?



suggest there is still room for improvement regarding the **advisory role of the National Agencies**.

Moreover, another issue that was raised was the delayed delivery of the Guide's translation from English to other EU official languages, which in many cases constituted a challenge for the applicants.

Respondents also point out that even if the Guide is clear regarding the application phase, there is **not sufficient information regarding the steps that lead to a successful application**. Taking that into account, the creation of an additional guide for successful project applications was suggested.

Another recommendation among participants was the **development** of a forum and a more straightforward **FAQ section as part of the guide**, covering some technical issues such as budget estimation.

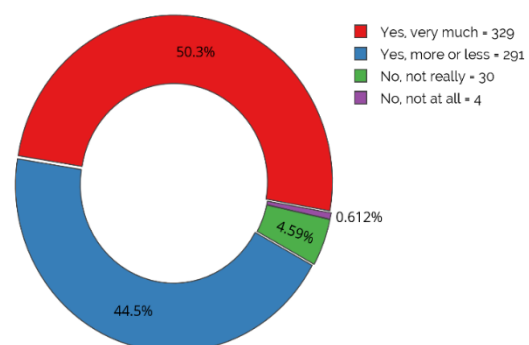
Comparative analysis with the 2015 Erasmus+ Survey

Although responses show a significant increase in satisfaction regarding the Programme Guide, from 22.75% in 2015 to **50.5%** in 2016, concerns are similar to last year and suggest improvement regarding the length, technicality and repetitiveness of the document, the efficiency of the different National Agencies in providing support, the delay of the delivery of the translated guide and the vague, open to different interpretations language at some parts of the guide. However, since there was a change in profiles of respondents and an increase in respondents who applied to KA1, the increase in satisfaction should be taken with caution.

Q6: Are the objectives and important features of the Erasmus+ programme adapted to your reality?

Half of the respondents (50.3%) state that the objectives of the Erasmus+ Programme are **very much adapted to their reality**, meaning that they address their needs and that the programme supports its beneficiaries in their work (only a sum of **34** answers or **5.1%** respond negatively). However, a significant **44.5%** thinks that there is room for improvement regarding the link between the programme objectives and the local circumstances on the ground (local context).

Are the objectives of the Erasmus+ programme adapted to your reality?



According to the respondents, adult learning needs additional focus in the programme. The **language issue** was also raised, as in many cases and especially regarding VET students, it becomes an obstacle. Furthermore, there was criticism towards the general nature of the priorities and towards the fact that they seem to **hinder activities that deal with non-formal education**. Indeed, respondents commented on the need for further emphasis on the **lifelong**

learning approach. Last but not least, the **link between the objectives and the evaluation process** was frequently questioned.

Comparative analysis with the 2015 Erasmus+ Survey

The 2016 survey shows an increase of the already high percentage of responses that consider the Erasmus+ programme objectives adapted to at least some extent to their realities: from a sum of **86% in 2015 to 94.8% in 2016.**

Criticism that persists: **on content**, namely regarding primary and secondary schools, education of seniors, **the role that non-formal education should play**; **on procedure**, namely regarding the general language and the link with the project evaluation process.

Q7: Are you satisfied with the simplified architecture of Erasmus+?

Out of 655 eligible answers, **45,6% are very satisfied** with the simplified architecture of the programme. A total of **14,9% are not really or not at all satisfied**; **39,5%** believe there is room for improvement.

The most common criticism was directed at the **length and technicality of the documents**: from the application forms to the grant agreements and the accounting.

Some respondents comment that the structure of **KA1 actions in 2016 is more confusing** regarding identification of beneficiaries and targets, compared to the previous calls (in 2014 and 2015). Also, many point out the different interpretations by different National Agencies, for example regarding the accounting requirements. The development of **more efficient centralised guidelines for NAs** was recommended.¹

Furthermore, criticism was also directed towards **unit costs system and the lump sum system rates not being in line with actual costs in the different countries.**

Concerns are expressed regarding the bureaucratic procedures that are still too complicated and lead to the **programme favouring large organisations** that have the capacity and resources to cope with them, while hampering small organisations and small school units. Some respondents argue that the new architecture of the programme is not simplified in fact.

Participants regret that the simplification of the programme's architecture, especially for KA2, has not **yet promoted cross-sectoral cooperation.**²

Finally, respondents agree that **in order to develop high quality projects, more funding is required** and particularly for more centralised calls.

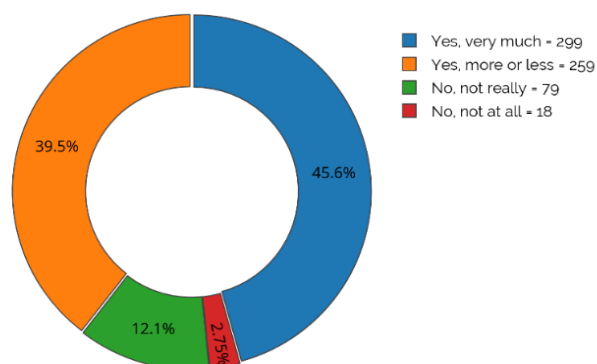
¹ Erasmus+ Civil Society Coalition, *Report on the implementation of Erasmus+* (July 2016) A call for a partial centralisation of the management of KA2 projects at the EACEA level (5%) and the need for better coordination between the National Agencies was stated, p. 1-2.

² Erasmus+ Civil Society Coalition, *Report on the implementation of Erasmus+* (July 2016). "Extend the possibility to submit cross-sectorial strategic partnerships under KA2 to NGOs (e.g. partnerships between schools and NGOs)", p. 1.

Comparative analysis with the 2015 Erasmus+ Survey

In 2015, **77%** of respondents were **satisfied** to some extent with the new architecture of Erasmus+: in 2016 this percentage increases by 8,1 points, climbing up to **85.1%**. However, input from respondents on possible improvements reflects to a large extent the feedback received last year, particularly when it comes to cross-sectoral engagement and lifelong learning approach, and complicated application processes.

KA1, KA2, KA3: Are you satisfied with the simplified architecture of Erasmus+?

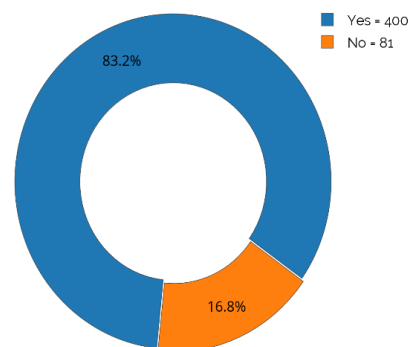


Q8: Are the differences between Key Actions clear enough to you?

For the vast majority of participants (**83.1%** out of 481 valid responses), differences between the different Key Actions are clear. Only 16.8% of respondents seem to have difficulties distinguishing between them.

This high percentage of positive answers can either be attributed to the efforts of simplification, but also that respondents are this year naturally more experienced regarding the Erasmus+ programme application procedures.

Are the differences between Key Actions clear enough to you?



Many respondents comment that although the general differences between the Key Actions (KAs) are clear, difficulties persist regarding the **differences between sub-actions**. For example some respondents regret that two different sub-actions such as KA1 mobility for VET and KA2 school partnerships have very different rules even though they support very similar type of projects. This difficulty may have a direct consequence on the evaluation of the projects by the National Agencies.

Comparative analysis with the 2015 Erasmus+ Survey

From 69% positive answers in 2015, we notice an increase by 14 points this year (83,2%) in how well participants understand the differences. No major differences between the two years regarding the results.

Q9: Compared to the previous Lifelong Learning Programme, do you think Erasmus+ is innovative?

Out of 620 valid responses, only 16,8% believe that the Erasmus+ programme is not really, or not at all innovative compared to the previous Lifelong Learning programme against **83,2% respondents who find Erasmus+ to at least some extent innovative.**

In general, respondents tend to argue that the Erasmus+ programme is **very similar to the previous Lifelong Learning Programme** with minor alterations.

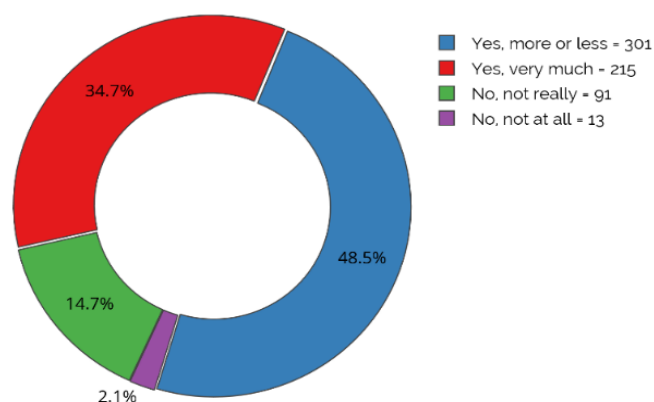
Concerns are raised regarding **less flexibility and extra bureaucratic burdens**. Even among the positive comments such as the use of lump sum, the criticism is that it seems that the **programme prioritises reporting** rather than actual development of innovative methods of learning. Also, many argue that previous programmes such as Leonardo were more research and innovation oriented, as they encouraged pilot projects.

Moreover, respondents also regret the **replacement of individual applications by institutional applications**. This hinders in their opinion teacher mobility for example.

Some also point out that the decentralisation to National Agencies makes it difficult to track if an innovative project has been submitted in other NAs during the same call.

Last but not least the need for an increase in budget was frequently highlighted, in order to develop high quality, innovative partnerships and projects.

Compared to the previous Lifelong Learning programme, do you think Erasmus+ is innovative?



Comparative analysis with the 2015 Erasmus+ Survey

In 2015, 50% of the participants stated that Erasmus+ is more or less innovative, but only 13% thought it is very much the case. Even though this year traces a significant increase of the positive answers, participants' comments highlight similar concerns: **less flexibility, extra bureaucratic burden, the replacement of individual applications by institutional applications**, all are problematic points for participants who believe in general that the programme is new, but not necessarily innovative. In order for the programme to be more innovative, the need for more funding (especially for KA3) and flexibility was highlighted.

CREATING PARTNERSHIPS

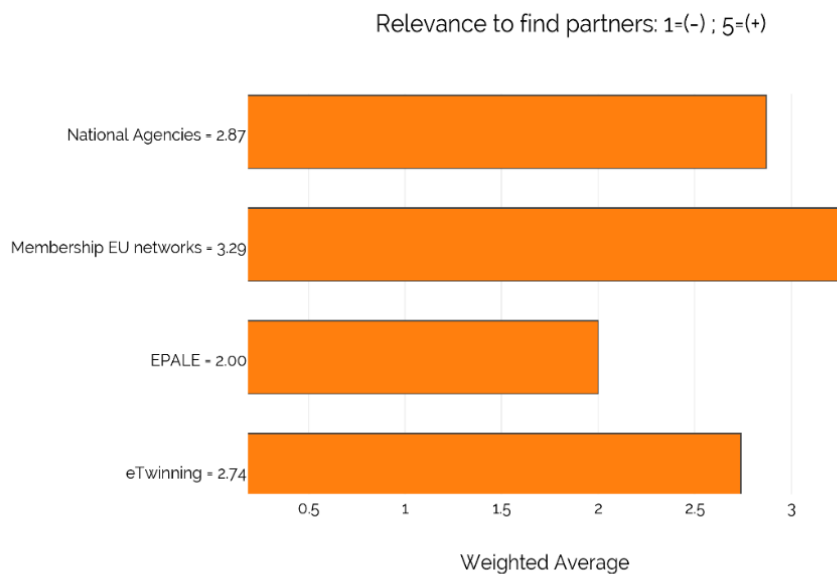
Q10: Relevance to find partners (eTwinning, EPALE, membership in EU networks, National Agencies)

1 = I don't agree at all and 5 = I totally agree

Membership EU networks are according to respondents the **most popular** and useful way to find project partners with a weighted average of **3,29/5**. They are followed by **National Agencies** partner searches (**2,87/5**) and the **eTwinning** platform (**2,74/5**). The **EPALE** platform (**2/5**) is ranked least popular.

Most respondents point out the fact that they prefer building their project consortium with **partners they already know** through their contacts, networks, previous projects or training providers. Some of the comments address the fact that while **eTwinning** seems to be more relevant for **schools**, there is a need for the development of a **special item for vocational training**. In general, it seems that the European Commission online tools need further adjustment and improvement. Also, **the School Education Gateway** is frequently mentioned as regards to finding good teacher training schools.

Last but not least the overall use of **internet** (mailing lists, social media, and individual online research) is mentioned as a very important tool for finding project partners.



Comparative analysis with the 2015 Erasmus+ Survey

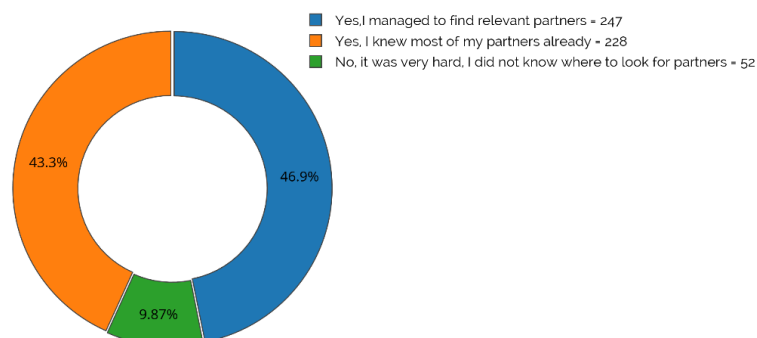
There are similar findings with the 2015 survey: EU networks are still the most popular tool for finding project partners among the respondents. This confirms the promotional role this group of organisations plays at bot at EU and national level.

The EPALE platform sees its relevance slightly decrease in the weighted average going from 2,52/5 in 2015 to 2/5 in 2016. This decrease could be explained by the launch of the **School Education Gateway**, which can be explained by the background of this year's respondents who are in majority representing educational institutions.

Q11: Did you easily manage to build your project consortium?

Responses show that participants did indeed manage to build their project consortium easily in majority because they already knew their partners (43,3%). 46.9% respondents managed to find relevant partners regardless of it. Every tenth respondent had bigger difficulties in finding partners.

Did you easily manage to build your project consortium?



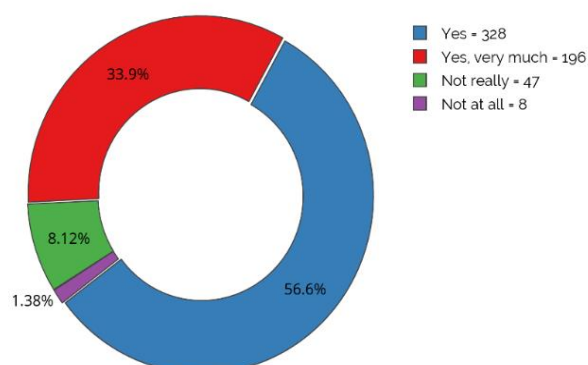
APPLYING FOR ERASMUS+ PROJECTS

Q12: What do you think of the eligibility criteria for participants? Are they adapted to your reality?

The large majority of respondents (90,5%) believe that the eligibility criteria are to a large extent adapted to their reality, meaning that the programme targets well its intended **beneficiaries** through eligibility criteria. Less than one tenth 9,5% are not satisfied with them. It is thus possible to conclude that respondents appreciate the programme is open to a diversity of stakeholders.

Do you think the eligibility criteria for participants are adapted to your reality?

Again, one of the most common concerns among respondents is that the eligibility criteria seem to **favor large organisations and educational institutions**. **Difficulties** regarding grants for **individual teacher training** were also mentioned.³ Also some pointed out that the eligibility period of 12 months to complete mobility after graduation in VET is problematic and thus should be adjusted to 18 months. Last but not least, cases such as music schools are rarely taken into account.



³ Erasmus+ Civil Society Coalition, *Report on the implementation of Erasmus+ (July 2016)*. "Allow individual applications for KA1 mobility projects in the school sector", p. 3.

Comparative analysis with the 2015 Erasmus+ Survey

There has been an increase of the percentage of participants who think that the criteria are adapted to their reality: from 72% in 2005 to 90,5% in 2016. However some common concerns can be spotted, especially regarding their complexity, the difficulties related to **individual applications** and the fact that the criteria seem to hinder the chances of small organisations.

Q13 Do you have any comments or suggestions to improve mobility practicalities?

Most of the respondents' comments were directed at the **re-calculation and fairer distribution of travel expenses geographically** and the design of the distance calculator. Also the overall need to reduce the bureaucracy was a frequently addressed among the 262 eligible responses as well as vague budgetary procedures. Namely, respondents that teachers who go on mobility get demotivated with the amount of papers they need to go through in order to go on mobility. Some mentioned that it would be useful if applications are reviewed faster. Furthermore, it was criticised that the minimum stay in KA2 is five days, which is difficult for full-time employees.

In the VET field, an increased language support should be supported, as VET students do not have English language (or foreign languages in general) as (strong) part of their curricula. That is one of the reasons that numbers related to VET mobility are so low.

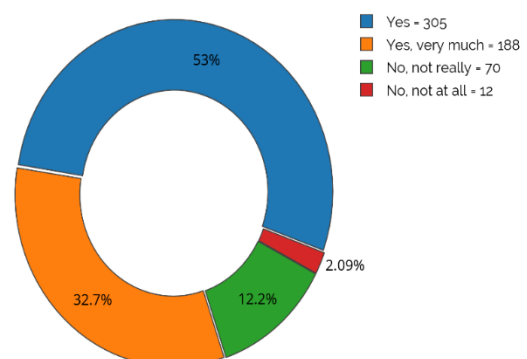
Finally there is a need to increase the budget, but also to make sure that funds are given the same way in terms of percentage to all the partners, which does not seem to be the case with all the National Agencies.

Q14: Were the application forms user-friendly and coherent enough?

A large majority of **85,7%** of respondents are generally **satisfied with the user-friendliness** of the application forms, they managed to go through them.

Nevertheless, more than half (53%) actually believe that there could be room for improvement. Among the most common points of criticism were the repetitiveness, technicality, complexity and length of the form. Many participants suggest that **reducing the overlap of different sections**, would also make the application somewhat shorter, more coherent and more user-friendly.

Were the application forms user-friendly and coherent enough?



Moreover, some respondents raised **another concern** directed to the **KA2 application forms**, where **the budget needs to be filled in the PDF format**, instead of attaching an **Excel sheet (which is perceived as simpler by some)**.

Last but not least, there were many comments regarding the size and overall usefulness of the PDF file as it is filled in, something that makes it difficult for lower performance computers to run it.

Comparative analysis with the 2015 Erasmus+ Survey

The user-friendliness of the application forms slightly improves between 2015 and 2016, going from 75% to 85,7%.

Q15: Funding rules of strategic partnerships (KA2): are these budget items clear to you (1 = not at all – 5 = very clear)?

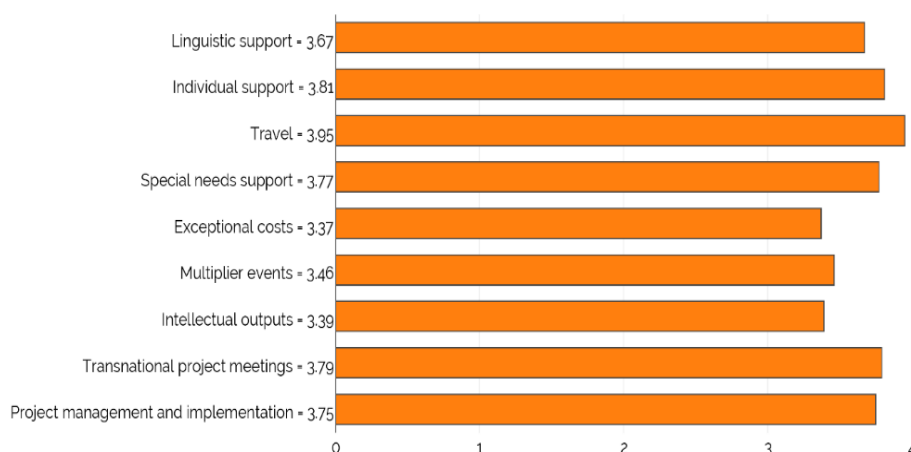
The clarity of the funding rules of strategic partnerships is assessed **relatively positive, comparable to results of the year before**.

The clearest budget item is Travel Costs; the **least clear** are Intellectual outputs and Exceptional costs.

Many respondents indicate the **need to clarify** what an Intellectual Output is (and how it is related to the budget) and also what the Exceptional Costs entail. Some add that clarification is neither provided by National Agencies and that this **uncertainty means there are very important disparities between the Agencies**.

Another point that was raised was that the **level of funding is not sufficient**, especially when regarding the Travel Costs but also the **Management Costs**. This leads many respondents to regret having a unique level of funding when **salaries vary greatly from one European country to another**. That is how, for instance, the daily salary of a teacher is higher than their actual daily rate in school, so therefore they are not very motivated. What is more, for example, the rate that website designers receive (technician rate) is way too low for them to be interested in it.

Funding rules of strategic partnerships (KA2): are these budget items clear to you?



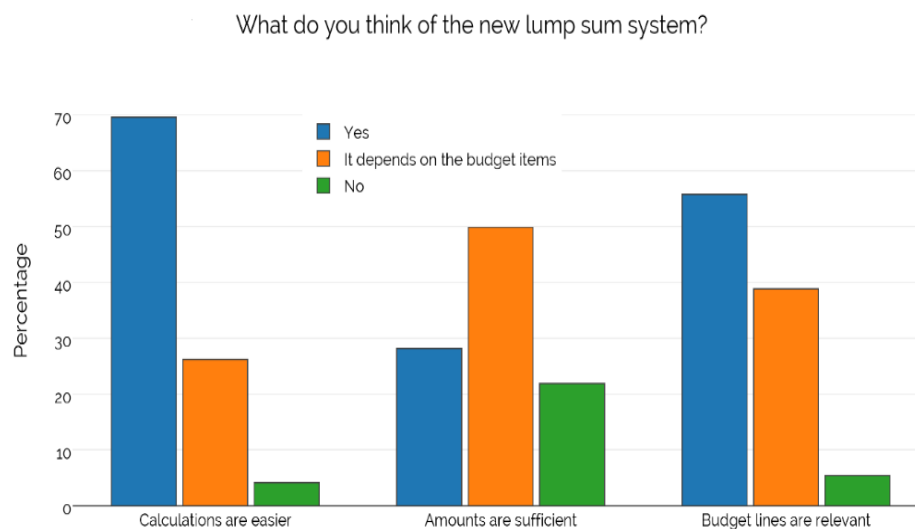
Q16: Budget: what do you think of the new lump sum system?

Results show that the majority of respondents appreciate the fact that **the lump sum system makes calculations easier**: 69.62% answered “yes”, the majority stating that it allows organisations to spend less time producing financial reports.

When asked about the **sufficiency of the amounts** though, half of respondents (49,9%) answer that it depends **on each budget item** (21,9% answered with a flat “no” ; 28,1% believe that they are indeed sufficient).

Combined, a **majority of 71,8% is not fully satisfied** with the amounts granted in the lump sum system. A very large number of respondents highlighted once again the unfairness when it comes to covering travel costs in different places and insufficiency of travel costs although calculations are indeed easier to be made.

As far as the **relevance of the budget lines** is concerned, 55,8% find them relevant; 38,8% state that it depends on the specific budget items; only 5,4% do not. Respondents commented that it should be possible to move a higher percentage of the budget from one line into the other. Some commented that strategic partnerships are too demanding for the level of funds and support that is received.



Comparative analysis with the 2015 Erasmus+ Survey

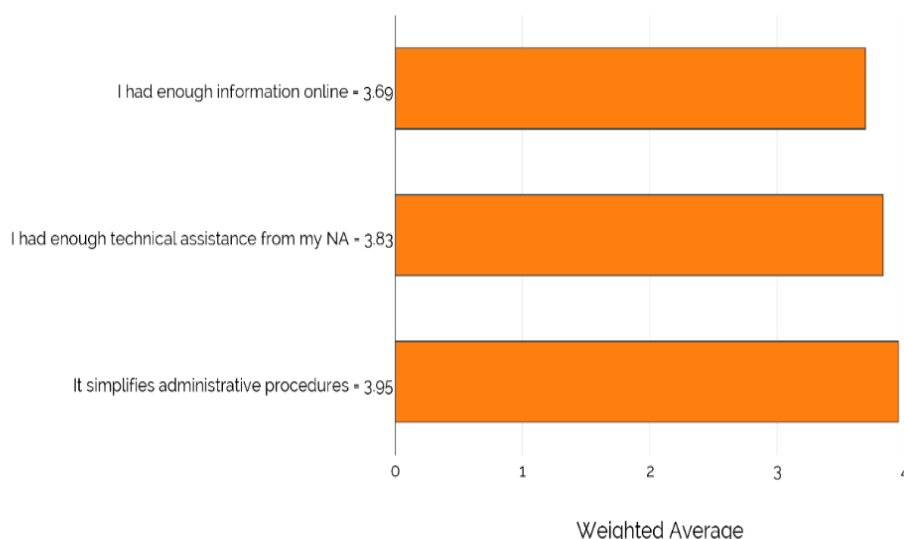
The survey of 2015 showed similar results than in 2016. Both surveys show that **beneficiaries believe that the sums should be increased** and that there are geographic inequalities when it comes to the pay for the work done and in particular when it comes to travel costs. Overall the lump sum seems to be a positive change in the programme.

Q17: What do you think of the new PIC number system?

The PIC number system is **overall appreciated by respondents**. In average, they agree that it **simplifies administrative procedures** (3,95/5) and that they had enough assistance from National Agencies (3,83/5) and information online. They also appreciate the new system because of the transparency it confers to the programme and consider it especially useful when one applies to several EU projects.

However, there were some **problematic points** highlighted, especially for many **small companies** who do not have a PIC number and host for example participants in mobility schemes. The system is complicated for the first registration and that hinders the chances of small companies to participate in projects. This affects, in particular, mobility for traineeships.

What do you think of the new PIC system? (1= I disagree completely ; 5 = I agree completely)



Also, there were some complaints directed to National Agencies for **delays in delivering the needed technical assistance** at some cases, which is problematic as most problems are encountered at the beginning of the process of obtaining a PIC.

Comparative analysis with the 2015 Erasmus+ Survey

Both surveys showcased that the PIC number system is **overall appreciated by the beneficiaries**. Its positive aspects are the simplification of administrative procedures and transparency. The points of criticism both years were that NAs can be slow at delivering technical assistance and that for **small companies** that want to register for the first time, the system is complicated.

RELATIONS WITH NATIONAL AGENCIES & THE EACEA

Q18: Do you think the rules are applied the same way by different National Agencies?

In order to understand the result on this question we should clarify that due to the new structure of the programme and its decentralisation, most respondents apply in different countries and work with partners from different countries thanks to whom they become familiar with the different interpretation of rules among NAs .

235 out of 550 respondents (42,7%) state that they do not know if the rules are applied the same way across the different National Agencies. What is an impressive finding however is that of the remaining 57,3%, the majority, **believes that they are not actually applied in the same way**.

Respondents comment on many **differences** between National Agencies starting with **the way they provide information** to the general public, which is the consequence of the increasing decentralisation of the programme, among other things. Whereas the British or the Portuguese National Agency for instance is said to be very efficient in that area, other Agencies are criticised for delivering their own interpretation on the Programme guide.

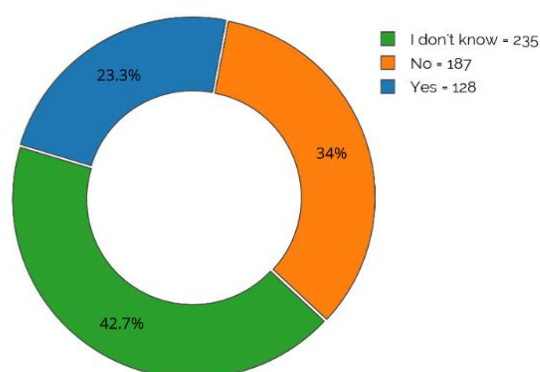
This is the case for instance on NAs interpretation of the Commission's rule of a "working relationship": major differences are found on **the determination of staff** (should a person necessarily be employed? Can volunteers be included in timesheets? etc.).

Participants also point out that **proof-record documents required by Agencies varies greatly**: boarding passes or just invoices of travel, original partner mandates or copies, etc. Also, reports are done at different times and funds are given in different percentages and at different times.

The combination of different interpretation of these rules and different technical approaches carry consequences on **the evaluation of projects**. Respondents stressed that the evaluation procedure itself diverges greatly from one National Agency to another. In some Agencies

extensive feedback is provided whereas in others applicants just receive their results, making it difficult for them to improve future applications and projects, and also means their potential reluctance to apply for such funding.

Do you think the rules are applied in the same way by the different National Agencies?



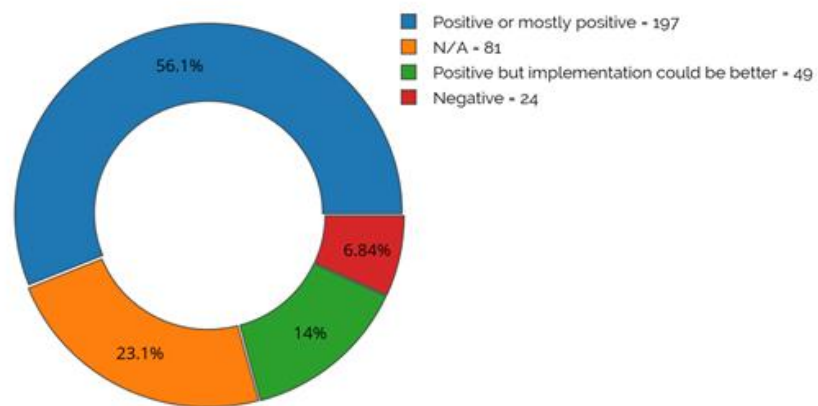
Comparative analysis with the 2015 Erasmus+ Survey

Even though there has been a significant increase of the percentage of respondents that believes the rules are applied in the same way across the different NAs (from only 6% to 23%), they still remain a minority.

Q19: What is your opinion on the decentralisation from the Executive Agency to the National Agencies?

More than half of respondents (56,1%) have a positive or mostly positive opinion about the

What is your opinion on the decentralisation from the Executive Agency to the National Agencies?



decentralisation from the Executive Agency to the National Agencies as the good side of it is that National Agencies are “closer” to the beneficiaries. However, some commented that there should be more calls at centralised level, regardless of the decentralisation.

14% believe that this decentralisation could however be better implemented. Among the comments, many argue for the need to have more uniform rules and also that the Executive Agency should keep better track of the NA’s activities, both in terms of implementation of the rules and regarding the selection process.

24 out of 351 respondents (7%) reply negatively, and these are mainly organisations that have worked with the EACEA before and found that experience better.

Q20: If you applied for the EACEA (centralised calls) was the Agency available and helpful?

Almost 75% of respondents appreciate the EACEA’s **availability and helpfulness**. One respondent even appreciated the central agency’s support in a dispute with their respective National Agency which was unjustly withholding overdue project funds from them!

SUCCESS RATES AND REPORTING MODALITIES (2016)

This section aims to assess the success rate of the respondents in 2016 as well as their experience of the reporting rules for those who were successful in their applications.

Q21: Did you receive sufficient feedback on your project evaluation?

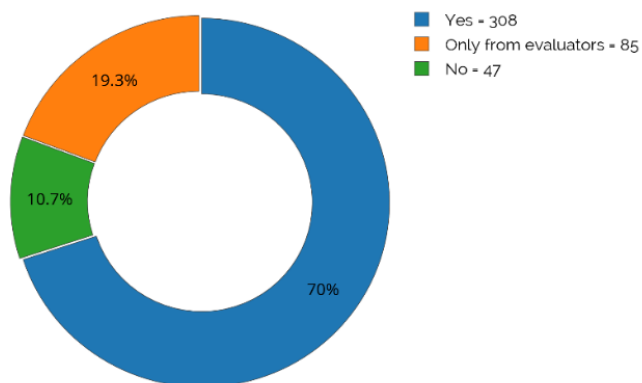
A significant 30% of the answers state that they did not receive sufficient feedback on the evaluation. What's more, many respondents were **not satisfied with the feedback they received**.

If some respondents say they received feedback in form of an interview, the majority consider that the comments they received were not clear or coherent and the **explanations are very generic or not relevant** at all for their project.

Some regret not receiving any feedback apart from the evaluation sheet written by the experts.

Another issue is applicants receiving feedback in the NA's official language even though the application was submitted in English for instance and that the projects are transnational.

Did you receive sufficient feedback on your project evaluation?



Also, many respondents consider that one and even two evaluators for one project is not enough and urge for more.

Many answers reflect a **lack of trust among respondents** regarding the evaluation. Some have suggested the evaluators do not follow the Programme Guide as their feedback is in contradiction with the document or sometimes even with the other evaluators. Respondents argue that evaluations should systematically contain comprehensive feedback and hints for future applications.

Comparative analysis with the 2015 Erasmus+ Survey

The percentage of positive answers regarding the sufficiency of the feedback that beneficiaries received on their project evaluation has doubled this year: from 34% in 2015, to 70% in 2016.

Q22: Do you understand the reporting rules?

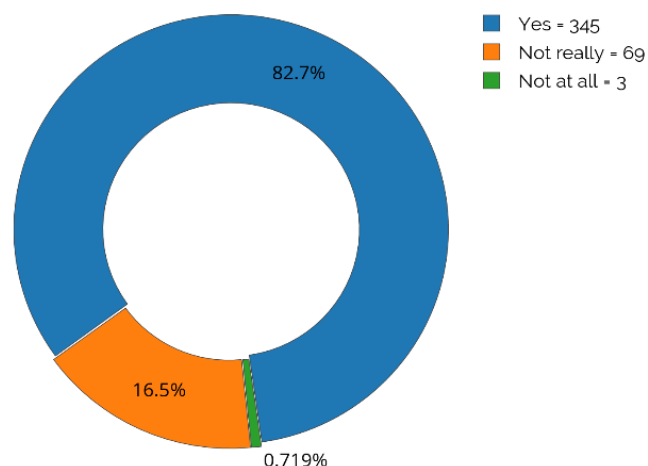
A clear majority of respondents (**82,7%**) understands the reporting rules.

However, many underline how **confusing** these rules are. Some respondents proposed that some both successful and unsuccessful examples of previous project reports could be made available to applicants so that they can better understand what is needed from them.

The need for clarity focuses on the **Mobility Tool**, regarding technicalities on what should or should not be included in the various reports.

They also state that reporting rules are too complicated and that the submission of so many online documents and hard copies becomes a heavy **administrative burden** (one respondent reported being required to report on activities hour by hour, which has led them to more time being spent on reporting than carrying out the actual activity).

Do you understand the reporting rules?



Comparative analysis with the 2015 Erasmus+ Survey

The number of positive answers regarding the clarity of the reporting rules increase **from 67% in 2015 to 82,7% in 2016**.

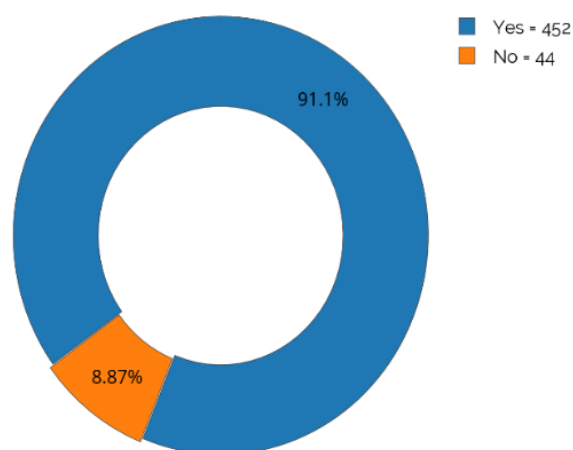
Some common concerns remain from one year to another. For instance the administrative burden and complexity of rules (which is a significant obstacle for small organisations) and the lack of availability of many tools were pointed out in both surveys.

THE FUTURE OF THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME

Q23: Should the new programme be using lump sums?

An overwhelming 91% of respondents say they are in favour of the lump sum system of payments. This is a sharp increase from last year when only 45% of our respondents said they are happy with this system.

Should the new programme be using lump sums?



The Lifelong Learning Platform is an umbrella association that gathers 39 European organisations active in the field of education and training, coming from all EU Member States and beyond. Currently these networks represent more than 50 000 educational institutions (schools, universities, adult education and youth centres, etc.) or associations (involving students, teachers and trainers, parents, HRD professionals, etc.) covering all sectors of formal, non-formal and informal learning. Their members reach out to several millions of beneficiaries.

Lifelong Learning Platform

Rue de l'Industrie, 10 – 1000 Brussels – Belgium

Tel. : 02 893 25 15

info@lllplatform.eu



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union