



BEYOND BORDERS

Neighbours together

BEYOND BORDERS KICK-OFF EVENT FINAL REPORT

 21-23 June 2022

 Paris, France



Final Report

Written by Max Fräs

CONTENTS

02

Background &
introduction

05

Stories of cooperation -
Sara's story

07

History of
cooperation

10

Current opportunities
& realities of
cooperation

14

Insights from SALTO
regional consultations
(EuroMed, EECA,
Western Balkans)

17

Cooperation priorities
identified by meeting
participants

01.

Background & Introduction

01.

Background & Introduction

“Beyond Borders - Neighbours Together” is an initiative promoting strategic cooperation between SALTOs and National Agencies for Erasmus+, youth field, and the European Solidarity Corps, with a focus on cooperation between Programme and neighbouring partner countries (third countries not associated to the Programmes) within the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes.

During the last generation of Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, the regional SALTOs and National Agencies increasingly identified the need to concentrate and coordinate the existing resources in a more strategic way in order to reinforce the opportunities for partnerships and the impact of projects involving partners from neighbouring regions and to increase the visibility and recognition of the relevance of this dimension of the Programmes among different stakeholders.

Beyond Borders was created in 2021. It is coordinated by SALTO SEE together with SALTO EECA and SALTO EUROMED and the National Agencies of the Czech Republic, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, and Slovenia. The overall objectives of “Beyond Barriers” are to:

- > Further develop the cooperation in the youth field between Programme and Partner countries within Erasmus+ and the ESC, in particular to
 - enhance opportunities for sustainable partnerships and joint projects;
 - develop regular and targeted support for projects and partnerships;
 - strengthen the impact of the projects involving partners from neighbouring regions;
 - increase support for the development and recognition of youth work in the Partner regions;

- > Further explore the links between the Programmes, relevant policies and strategies;
- > Increase the visibility and recognition of the relevance and added value of this dimension of the Programme among different stakeholders.

The **Kick-off Event** in Paris in June 2022 was the place to officially launch Beyond Borders and to explore and develop collaboration initiatives for interregional cooperation.

The **main aim** of the Kick-off Event was enhancing the visibility and value of the cooperation between Programme and Partner countries within Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps. The specific **objectives** were to:

- > Engage stakeholders in shaping priority areas of cooperation between Programme and Partner Countries, within the framework of the “Beyond borders - Neighbours together” partnership.
- > Capitalise on the experience of existing projects, initiatives and expertise for mutual learning and future cooperation.
- > Increase the understanding of how different stakeholders can benefit from opportunities for cooperation between Programme and Partner Countries.

The Kick-Off Event **brought together over 100 participants** with different profiles and coming from various contexts and with different experiences, including:

- > Representatives of experienced organisations from both Programme & Neighbouring Partner Countries under the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programme;
- > Representatives of organisations interested in getting (more) involved in this cooperation;
- > Institutional stakeholders (especially representatives of the EU Delegations in the relevant countries, European Commission and National Agencies for Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps).

The event programme was built around elements of reflection on past experiences, including both success stories and challenges in cooperation with partner regions, analysis of current realities as well as forward-looking elements such as identifying common priorities in cross-regional cooperation.

The event represented an important stepping stone of the Beyond Borders partnership. The insights from consultations carried out Neighbouring partner regions in 2021 (see point 4. below) as well as the priorities for further cooperation identified by the participants during this event (see point 5. below) represent an important input to defining the future priorities and activities of the Beyond Borders partnership. The structure of the partnership will still be developed. It should include further consultative elements and moments involving the youth work community of practice in Programme countries and the Neighbouring Partner regions.

TUE 21.06	WED 22.06	THU 23.06
09:30 Welcome, Where did we come from 🤝	09:30 Milestones achieved 🏔️ so far	09:30 Keynote: 🎤 Is cooperation the answer?
11:30 Origins of the cooperation between programme & neighbouring partner countries	12:00 Opportunities for cooperation	11:30 Planting the seeds of networking & cooperation
🍴 Lunch break		
14:30 Stories of quality cooperation projects	14:30 Garden of initiatives and activities for cooperation	14:30 Looking into the future 🧑🏫
17:00 The launch of "Beyond Borders - Neighbours together"	17:00 Free time	16:30 "Beyond borders" further plans, Closure
Evening: World Music Day 🎵		Evening: dinner out

GRAPHIC 1 - Kick-off meeting programme

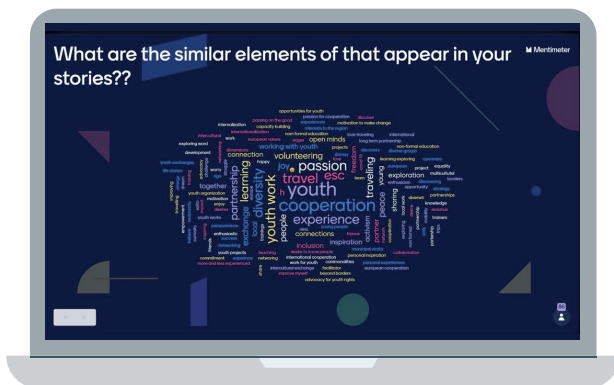
02.

**Stories of
cooperation**

02. Stories of cooperation: *Sara's story*

The Kick-Off Event departed from the basic premise that all organisations and stakeholders working on cooperation between Programme and Partner countries share a similar vision of equal and quality cooperation. This was confirmed and visualised in the word cloud identifying common elements of the participants' stories of cooperation shared on Day 1 of the Kick-off Event.

The key words shared include passion, youth (work) and cooperation, encapsulating the feelings and experiences of co-operation between partner and programme countries. Some terms such as multicultural learning, diversity, inspiration, equality, connection and peace feature across the word cloud, but as various expressions have been used, they are not instantly visible.



GRAPHIC 2 - Word cloud

The Kick-off event was a springboard for sharing stories of cooperation between partner and programme countries. One such story came from Sara Bertolino, a facilitator, trainer and project writer from Giosef Torino (Italy). It is a very good illustration of the various influences and motivation factors behind cooperation between partner and programme countries: from very local considerations (young people and their family background) to Pan-European and regional (links between various parts of the Mediterranean Sea region) to global (social justice).

Sara shared her reasons for cooperation with neighbourhood countries as someone based in a programme country - the main reason is social justice, and joint fight for greater justice in countries of the region. Another important reason is a political choice - cooperation with the neighbourhood is an important priority for Sara's organisation, Giosef.

In Sara's experience, the available tools for cooperation within Erasmus+ and ESC do not always allow for peer cooperation, and additional work is needed to allow for a more grassroots approach to cooperation. Giosef highly prioritises inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities and acting in respect of inclusion principles is high on the organisation's agenda. Finally, Giosef strongly believes in intercultural learning, and cooperation with partner countries is a great opportunity for this.

Sara pointed out numerous benefits of cooperation. One is the possibility to explore the shared heritage of all three shores of the Mediterranean Sea. This helped her organisation to work with their own heritage and biases, and challenge them. Giosef work a lot with gender and intersectionality; through the intercultural dimension, the level of deeper analysis is much greater than doing it separately or at country level - cooperation with partner countries helps Giosef and the young people they work with challenge discriminatory behaviour. Finally, cooperation with partner countries helps to strengthen local work - Giosef are based in a multicultural area of Torino; the majority of young people have a background in the south Mediterranean; cooperation with partner countries is a great opportunity for them to link with their roots.

When discussing the possible benefits of a new platform for cooperation with partner countries, that the Beyond Borders project aims to promote, Sara noted that it should be a good source to find trustworthy partners; it could provide a push to programme countries to step out of their comfort zone and start interregional cooperation (or work with other regions). Finally, Sara noted the many inequalities to tackle between programme and partner countries such as visa, income levels, obstacles to mobility, all of which have to be addressed jointly.

03.

History of cooperation

03. History of cooperation

The story of youth cooperation between Erasmus+ Programme and Partner countries supported by the EU youth programmes is long and winding, as illustrated by the timeline prepared by SALTO Resource Centres, shared and discussed during the Kick-Off event (see timeline, Annex 1).

The timeline starts in the year of 2000. That's the symbolic beginning of cooperation - the beginning of the Youth Programme. Youth work or cooperation between partner programme countries, has not started in the year 2000 - youth work in Europe and beyond has a much longer history, but the end of 1990s were an important moment and the launch of the programme is recognised as the symbolic start of an era of joint work under one roof.

Throughout the 1990s, there was a big political change in Eastern Europe and Caucasus and Southeast Europe. In 2000, when the EU Youth Programme was established, partner countries entered the stage in the sense of what we are talking about now - three regions, Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Southeast Europe. Even though it's a bit of an artificial division, sometimes, the countries inside one region have much less in common than with some other countries, for example, inside the European Union. The first SALTO was established for EuroMed but the European Union was only half of what it is now, it was mainly the western part of Europe. So also for different cultural, political, geographical reasons, the focus was more on the (14:19) countries in North Africa, Middle East. And SALTO EuroMed also a bit for all these reasons, has appeared on the scene of our youth programmes. But then with the big enlargement in 2004, the focus changed towards the east, towards Southeast Europe and Eastern Europe and Caucasus. So in 2002, the SALTO for Southeast Europe was established and in 2003, SALTO Eastern European Caucasus. The period of the Youth Programme, the period of 2000 to 2006, was a

moment when regular cooperation was developing. In Southeast Europe, Thessaloniki Summit of 2003 gave the perspective for the southeast European countries to join the European Union, but 20 years on, only one country from that list became an EU member - Croatia.

The developments in Eastern Europe and Caucasus were also quite dynamic and back then governments and the European Commission put a lot of attention to partner countries. There was a lot of excitement and new energy. This was partly translated into the new Youth in Action Programme, launched in 2007 and running until 2014. During this period, the statistics for cooperation for all the three partner regions, was doubled or even tripled in some areas. The regional SALTOS were part of the process, with various initiatives and support activities and measures organised in cooperation with other SALTOS, National Agencies and other partners, and a first interregional cooperation framework within Erasmus+ (including activities "Let's meet", "Let's work with neighbours" and "Let's evaluate with neighbours").

Even though the three partner regions were more or less equally involved in the Erasmus+ programme in the youth field, there were also regional particularities. EuroMed had its Youth Programme between 1999 and 2016. In Youth in Action, there was the Western Balkans Youth Window and the Eastern Partnership Youth Window with a similar approach allowing smaller organisations from the region to apply for projects together with their partners from Programme countries.

New political realities were translated into more cooperation. The Union for the Mediterranean was established in 2008 and in 2009, the Eastern Partnership was launched, a big political framework that also influenced the youth work with the partner countries. Later on, turbulent times have come to different regions with the Arab Spring in 2010 and Russia's first invasion of Ukraine in 2014.

What happened later - 2014 to 2018 - could be referred to as a 'stagnation period' for the programmes. Erasmus+, launched in 2014, was an integrated programme, aiming to join the formal sector and non-formal sector and try to give more possibilities to the

beneficiaries. It was an important step, but in partnership terms it translated into fewer participants and beneficiaries of the partner countries to activities projects. There was progress in some areas, for example EVS accreditation in the EuroMed region since 2014, or admission of new programme countries such as North Macedonia, or the new Tunisian Youth Window. The EVS Programme was slowly extinguished and volunteering was moved to the new European Solidarity Corps programme in 2018.

All of the above developments illustrate that Erasmus+, European Solidarity Corps and all other programmes reflect the EU's political situation and political developments based on the priorities and on the decisions that are being made in a much larger context, beyond the youth field.

In the last few years, the EU focused a lot more on itself. In the 1990s and beginning of the 2000s, the enlargement spirit loomed large and Europe was looking outside into a larger Europe. Since then, there has been a big shift inward because of unemployment, migration, Brexit and other challenges.

This has obviously come to the attention of all the regional SALTOS. When regional SALTOS met jointly back in 2019, the idea arose that

the preparation for a new programme (2021-2027) would be a good moment to look at where partner and programme country cooperation is, and to see how to improve it. The first steps in 2019 included a meeting with all the colleagues from the National Agencies, analysing statistics for partner countries and giving recommendations for the future of how the programmes, how they can become more accessible for neighbourhood cooperation again.

When the new programme - Erasmus+ 2021-2027 - was launched, it opened different possibilities for partner countries, also in sports, for instance, or vocational training. In the field of youth, however, opportunities remained restricted, and many recommendations coming from the sector, including from SALTOS, remained unfulfilled. The new programme gives opportunities but also has certain limits.

And it is mainly within those limits that all stakeholders working with partner countries can step up the level of cooperation and support that we can give, including by increasing the visibility of cooperation, and involving different stakeholders and institutions. This is what Beyond Borders strives to achieve.

04.
**Current
opportunities
& realities for
cooperation**

04.

Current opportunities & realities for cooperation

4.1. Opportunities for cooperation involving neighbouring partner countries

Both Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps provide a range of opportunities for cooperation between partner and programme countries.

Erasmus+ Youth - Learning Mobility in the Field of Youth (Key Action 1 - KA1)

Under this Action, youth organisations from programme and partner countries can cooperate within three types of actions:

- > Mobility of young people - Youth exchanges
- > Mobility projects for youth workers
- > Youth Participation projects

Within KA1 Actions, organisations based in Programme countries can act as applicants and consortium members (partners), and organisations based in Partner countries can act as consortium members only.

Youth Exchanges are short-term mobilities, where groups of young people from two or more countries meet and explore together a topic of their choice. They have several aims, e.g.: they can foster intercultural dialogue and learning and the feeling of being European; develop skills and attitudes of young people; strengthen European values and break down prejudices and stereotypes; raise awareness about socially relevant topics and thus stimulate engagement in society and active participation.

Young people from both programme and partner countries can participate in Youth Exchanges, and Youth Exchanges can be held in both Programme and Partner countries.

Mobility projects for youth workers are both short and long-term mobilities that support the professional development of youth workers and thereby the development of quality youth work at local, regional, national, European and international level, through non-formal and informal learning experiences (such as training courses, seminars, job-shadowing, peer-learning and networking activities). Mobility projects for youth workers also have several aims, including: contributing to high quality individual practice as well as to the evolution of youth work organisations and systems; building a community of youth workers that can support the quality of projects and activities for young people in EU programmes and beyond; developing local youth work practices and contributing to capacity building for quality youth work of the participants and their organisation; and having a clear impact on the participating youth workers' regular work with young people.

Youth workers from both Programme and Partner countries can participate in Mobility projects, and activities can be held in both Programme and Partner countries.

International **Youth Participation Activities** can be various kinds of international activities which provide young people with opportunities to engage and learn to participate in civic society and to learn about European values and fundamental rights. Youth Participation Activities also aim to bring together young people and policy makers.

Erasmus+ Youth - Cooperation among organisations and institutions (Key Action 2 - KA2)

Cooperation Partnerships should be innovative and high-quality cooperation projects contributing to achieving European (EU) policy priorities. They can involve several partners from different sectors and include different kinds of activities. Partners from Partner countries can participate, if their participation represents an additional value for the project.

Capacity Building projects in the field of Youth (CBY) are international cooperation projects based on multilateral partnerships between organisations active in the field of

youth in Programme and Partner countries. They aim to support international cooperation and policy dialogue in the field of youth and non-formal learning, as a driver of capacity building, sustainable socio-economic development and well-being of youth organisations and young people, especially in the Partner countries. Important objectives are to support the development and recognition of youth work in Partner countries, e.g. by fostering the development, testing and launching of schemes and programmes of non-formal learning mobility in Partner countries; to contribute to the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2027) including the 11 European Youth goals; and to enhance synergies and complementarities with formal education systems and/or the labour market.

Within CBY, organisations based in Programme countries and Partner countries in the SouthMed and Western Balkan regions can act as applicants and consortium members (partners). Youth workers and young people from both Programme and Partner countries from these regions can take part in the activities, and activities can be held in both Programme and Partner countries.

European Solidarity Corps

The European Solidarity Corps (ESC) enables young people to volunteer in an organisation in another country for a period of up to one year, either individually or as part of a volunteering team. The ESC aims to bring together young people to build a more inclusive society, supporting vulnerable people and responding to societal and humanitarian challenges. It offers an inspiring and empowering experience for young people who want to help, learn and develop and provides a single entry point for such solidarity activities throughout the Union and beyond.

Young people from both Programme and Partner countries can take part in ESC volunteering opportunities, and youth organisations in both Programme and Partner countries can support young people in registering for the scheme, in receiving them or sending them abroad.

Young people express their willingness to

participate in ESC by registering on the **European Youth Portal**. Registration is possible as of 17 years of age but participants must be between 18 and 30 years of age at the start date of the activity (35 for humanitarian activities).

Detailed information on both programmes can be found in the Programme Guides, which are updated on an annual basis. Guides for 2022 are available here:

- > [Erasmus+ Programme Guide](#)
- > [European Solidarity Corps Programme Guide](#)

4.2. Current realities of Programme and Partner country cooperation

Pierre Séailles (European Commission DG EAC B3) provided an update on recent developments and concluded with a few thoughts on the need to provide evidence to programme countries of the benefits they can reap from the cooperation with non-programme countries.

Youth Actions with Partner Countries

Following President von der Leyen's announcement that 2022 would be the European Year of Youth, activities are conducted throughout the year to increase awareness, knowledge, and visibility of youth-related issues and to promote opportunities that the EU is offering to young people across the EU and beyond.

Youth Action Plan

Its vision: young people as change makers and essential partners in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on climate change, the green transition and digital transformation.

Its aim: to ensure that EU external action contributes to youth empowerment, leadership and participation at political, social and economic levels. It will make youth engagement a core element of EU's foreign policy and public diplomacy. It will facilitate young people's meaningful inclusion in decision and policy making.

In terms of geographical scope, the Youth Action Plan will **cover all regions, including of course neighbouring partner countries**. In terms of content, it will put forward youth related actions structured along the main priority topics for EU external action or following the key areas of the 2030 Agenda and the European Consensus (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership).

- > In the context of **European Year of Youth** DG NEAR will also organise the EU4Youth Days 2022, with a conference day and a knowledge sharing day that will involve participants from all NEAR regions mid-October and plans to focus on the theme of supporting youth in building resilience, in the face of war and conflict, climate change and the COVID-19 impact. All youth stakeholders from partner countries will be invited to join, either in presence or online, since the event is planned as a hybrid event.
- > Later in the year there will also be the publication of the upcoming **EU Action Plan on Youth in External Action** to guide the EU's further engagement with and for youth in the world, that will cover the period 2022-2027. This is in follow-up to the June 2020 Council Conclusions on Youth in External Action. While DG International Partnerships is in the lead for this process, the European External Action Service and DG NEAR are associated.

International dimension in E+ KA1 Youth

As regards the share of 25% of the budget that can be spent on projects with Partner countries (third countries not associated with the programme), a reflection is ongoing in the Commission to apply a new approach under the call 2023. This new approach should have the benefit of transparency and clarity and allow a consistent approach across all NAs for the remaining years of the programming period. The input from the stakeholders will duly be taken into consideration in the next steps of this reflection.

The new Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps of the European Solidarity Corps:

In this new strand of the European Solidarity Corps, the participation in each project of at least one host organisation from a non-programme country is compulsory. This provides valuable opportunities for hosting organisations in partner countries that have been awarded the specific Quality Label.

In conclusion, the importance of gathering convincing evidence of the benefits of cooperation also for programme countries, notably through the sharing of best practices, was highlighted, in order to dispel the perception of some stakeholders in programme countries that such cooperation would inevitably be a burden and would bring no tangible benefits to them.

05.

Insights from SALTO regional consultations

**(EuroMed, EECA,
Western Balkans)**

05.

Insights from SALTO regional consultations (EuroMed, EECA, Western Balkans)

In 2021, all three regional SALTO Resource Centres commissioned research and evaluation of the experiences and expectations of young people and, in particular, youth organisations in all three Partner regions regarding partnerships and cooperation within Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, and its relation to the overall situation and development of youth work and volunteering. Information on how the consultative process was managed in each region is available from the respective regional SALTO Resource Centre.

A comparative analysis of all three reports shows there are significant overlaps and synergies between the themes and issues encountered by the youth organisations and young people in all three regions. The analysis also shows that SALTO Resource Centres' work is valued and much needed, youth organisations and young people say across all three neighbouring regions.

The analysis has revealed seven areas where joint conclusions and recommendations arise across the regions:



1. Recognition of youth work & volunteering

Youth work is seen as the essence of youth cooperation. Volunteering is also seen as beneficial to youth development. There is a shared concern across all three neighbouring regions about the value attributed to youth work and volunteering, as well as the recognition and validation of both.



2. Youth participation & youth policy development

Promotion of greater youth participation in policy making and greater youth civic participation are seen as essential to impactful cooperation. Support for policy reform should always duly consider youth participation.



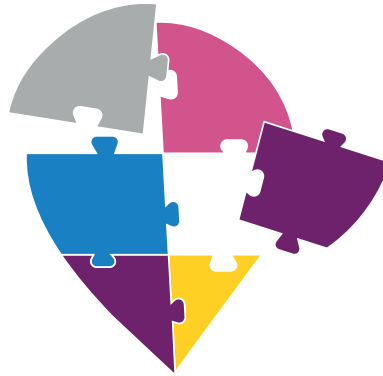
3. Stakeholder cooperation & coordination

All major stakeholders both within the EU and outside of it should work more closely to assure the Programme's success.



4. Exchange of good practice

There is a need for exchange of good practice in the field of youth and youth policy (covering youth work, non-formal learning, volunteering and other fields) between countries, organisations and communities.



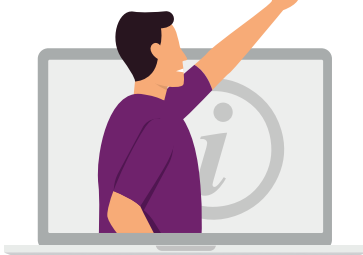
5. Inclusion & diversity

Diversity is seen as a great asset of the youth sector and a factor conditioning democratic participation. There is a need for greater inclusion to allow for greater diversity in the youth sector and outside it.



6. Capacity-building for youth organisations

Supporting youth organisations through various capacity-building measures is beneficial and seen as an efficient way to develop youth work and participation.



7. Programme promotion & information

Young people are interested in European youth programmes (Erasmus+ and ESC) and want to know more. In order to increase the impact of European youth programmes, more has to be done to promote and inform young people about them.

The full comparative report of the consultation processes is available as a separate document.

**06. Cooperation
priorities
identified by
meeting
participants**

06. Cooperation priorities identified by meeting participants

Inclusion and diversity

All Kick-off Meeting participants were united in agreement that inclusion and diversity should be prioritised in cooperation between Programme and Partner countries, but had a range of different comments on its practical implementation in Erasmus+ and ESC projects.

Some participants noted that intersectional youth work can bring new tools when working with specific groups, but that diversity can mean different things in different countries.

In practical terms, some participants noted that it is hard to know in advance who will participate in a youth project and really hard to write something in the application about how diversity and inclusion will be managed. Participants agreed that inclusion is a main principle for each single project in E+/ESC, but that the percentage of participants with fewer opportunities is still very low, and that further efforts are needed to enhance inclusion and diversity.

Proposals to enhance inclusion and diversity included:

- > Support measures and capacity-building of youth organisations, including training and providing resources for youth organisations
- > Communication issues, including new tools and skills for communication (digital etc.) and memorandums of cooperation
- > Cross-sectoral cooperation should be strengthened, with European programmes building more cooperation with institutions (university, municipality), closer work with

NA, SALTO and Contact/Info Points and giving them support, and promotion of cooperation in EU countries and Erasmus+ offices

- > Awareness raising on the issue of inclusion for organisations and groups
- > Advocacy for compulsory quotas and rules for inclusion (note: be mindful of the possible side effects!), by decision-makers, business community, and CSOs

Recognition of youth work and volunteering

Participants stressed the importance of sharing good models of recognition and possible pathways to involve representatives of formal sectors and ministers in studies visits and other learning formats.

Similar ideas to improve recognition included comparative studies of recognition of youth work and volunteering among all countries and sharing examples of good practice from different countries including pilot projects for recognition of youth work and volunteering (e.g. framework or policy).

Some useful formats already in existence were quoted, such as youth workers convention and enabling youth work through certification programmes.

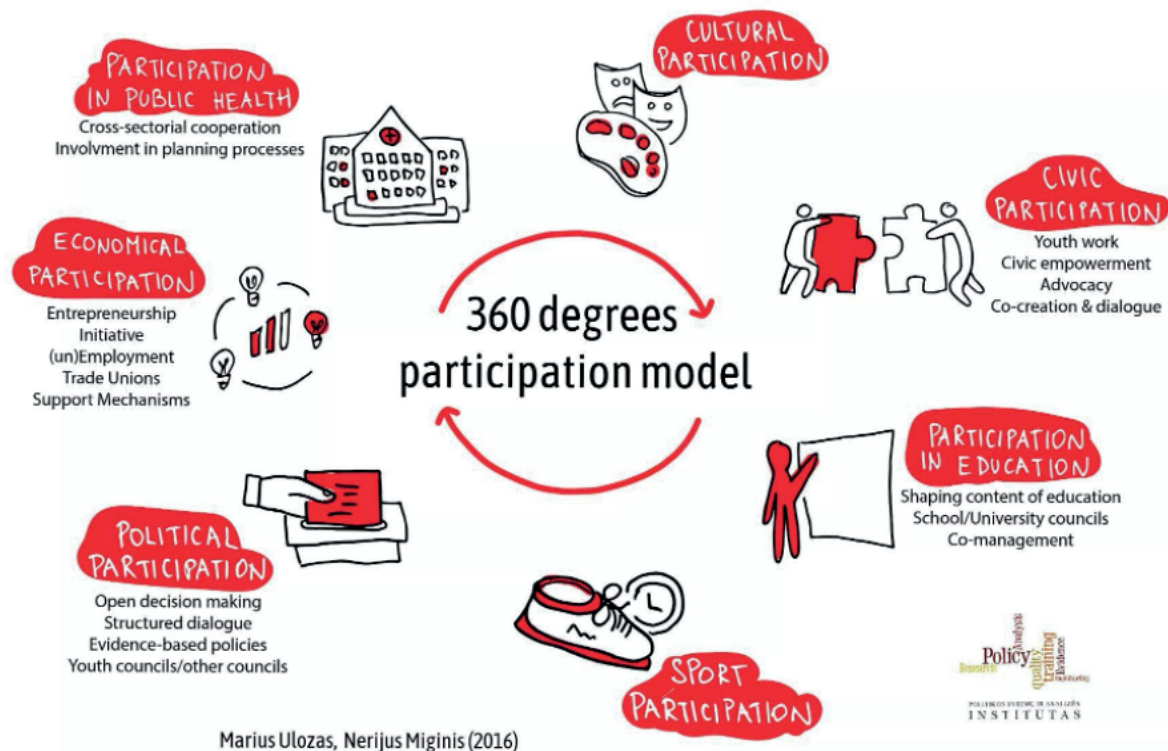
Multi-stakeholder approaches were also highlighted as an effective support measure, with recommendations to organise regional and inter-regional gatherings of different stakeholders including youth councils, local authorities, academics, politicians and trade unions to further develop youth work as a profession together.

Youth participation and youth policy development

Participants reflected on why participation is important. Conclusions included:

- > Participation helps exchange best practices, models, experiences;
- > Participation enhances the decision-making process;
- > Participation empowers youth.

As participation is a complex and multi-faceted process, participants referred to the 360-degree participation model (see below):



Suggestions for enhancing participation included:

- > promotion of youth-friendly approaches and services;
- > co-creation;
- > social innovations;
- > active participation and community mobilisation;
- > service-design involving the target audience into shaping the services.

The role of advocacy and campaigning in enhancing participatory approaches was also highlighted, with examples of advocacy campaigns and peer promotion as well as promotion campaigns by key Erasmus+ and ESC stakeholders.

When it comes to the overlaps between participation and policy-making, participatory policy-making approaches were highlighted as was the creation of online platforms with good practices published including horizontal cooperation of all levels and regions.

A number of existing practical tools from the world of Erasmus+ were also brought up, such as the idea of actively promoting the SALTO website (**SALTO-YOUTH website**;

SALTO-YOUTH Participation Resource Pool) to local organisations and using SALTO expertise to mainstream youth participation into other cooperation and development programmes.

European Solidarity Corps

Listing priorities for the European Solidarity Corps, participants focused on the importance of capacity-building of partner organisations, both those supporting young people in participation (sending) and those hosting volunteers in their community, but also on the promotion and communication aspect of the Programme.

One suggestion was for youth organisations, SALTOs and Programme and Partner country governments to raise awareness on differences which ESC volunteers bring. The importance of support measures of SALTO RCs, and local outreach through promotion in schools and universities with previous beneficiaries were also mentioned. In terms of communication activities, the importance of online activities, including live meetings, social media campaigning, and promotional videos with motivating success stories was also underlined.

Thematic priorities:



As part of the various discussions held during the event, participants identified a number of thematic priorities. A number of such thematic priorities are especially important in the context of Programme and Partner country cooperation, such as resilience, gender and peace-building. Some priorities are more global and cross-cutting, also being relevant in Partner country-only or Programme country-only work, such as sustainability and digitalisation.

In order to reinforce thematic work in cooperation between Programme and Partner countries, participants suggested creating online platforms to follow up the project participants after their mobility/project is finished. A number of capacity building measures were also suggested such as media literacy and critical thinking for youth workers.

Finally, stronger support for the production of communication material was suggested, including social media (TikTok) and storytelling via short videos in local languages.

ANNEX

**Milestones of Youth Cooperation with Neighbouring
Partner Countries in Erasmus+ and the European
Solidarity Corps**

2000 YOUTH PROGRAMME

- Support for first regular projects with Partner countries
- SALTO EuroMed was established
- EuroMed Youth programme I (1999-2001)

2002 ANOTHER REGION IN FOCUS

- SALTO South East Europe (Western Balkans) was created
- Thessaloniki summit – EU perspective for countries of the Western Balkans
- EuroMed Youth programme II (2002-2004)

2003 DECENTRALISATION

- Projects with partner countries supported by the National Agencies
- SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus (Eastern Partnership and Russia) was created

2005 DEVELOPMENTS

- Increase in numbers of implemented projects with partner countries
- EuroMed Youth programme III (2005-2009)
- Preparations for the new programme
- Establishment of Contact Points in South East Europe

2007 YOUTH IN ACTION

- Dedicated Key Action 3, significant development of cooperation
- "Let's" interregional series of events (2007-2010)
- Western Balkans Youth Window (2007-2013)
- Croatia changes from partner to programme country
- Beginning of EVS accreditation process in South East Europe

2008 EUROMED COOPERATION ENHANCED

- Paris summit for the Mediterranean launching Union for the Mediterranean

2009 EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COOPERATION ENHANCED

- Prague summit launching Eastern Partnership initiative

2010 IN THE BEST OF THE PROCESS

- Regular meetings of National Agencies' officers responsible for partner countries cooperation
- EuroMed Youth programme IV (2010-2016)
- Beginning of EVS accreditation process in Eastern Europe and Caucasus

2012 GETTING READY FOR THE NEW PROGRAMME

- Interregional Forum "Youth Cooperation Beyond Borders"
- Eastern Partnership Youth Window (2012-2013)

2014 ERASMUS+ YOUTH

- Big programme with less focus on partner countries
- Beginning of stagnation in cooperation with partner countries
- Western Balkans Youth Window (2014-2020)
- The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (North Macedonia) changes from partner to programme country
- Beginning of EVS accreditation process in EuroMed

2016 CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE

- Interregional "European Volunteering Forum" and seminar for regional EVS trainers' pools

2017 LOOKING FOR WAYS FORWARD

- National Agencies staff training on cooperation with partner countries
- Eastern Partnership Youth Window (2017-2019)
- Establishment of Info Centres in Eastern Europe and Caucasus
- Tunisian Youth Window (2017-2020)

2018 EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

- European Solidarity Corps replaces European Voluntary Service, open for partner countries
- Norway becomes a new neighbouring partner country in European Solidarity Corps

2019 STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES

- Serbia changes from partner to programme country
- Official recommendations by network of National Agencies on youth cooperation with partner countries
- Proposal for SALTO mandate, including regional SALTOs

2021 NEW ERASMUS+ YOUTH

- New opportunities with Participation Activities
- "Beyond Borders" strategic cooperation of National Agencies and regional SALTOs
- Consultations on perspectives regarding cooperation and youth work development in partner regions
- Capacity building in the field of youth without Eastern Partnership countries and Russia

2022 BEYOND BORDERS

- Beyond Borders Kick-off event
- Communication platform on cooperation between the programme and partner countries



BEYOND BORDERS

Neighbours together