

Q&A concerning Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps activities in light of the COVID-19 pandemic

- ❖ The COVID-19 outbreak negatively affects ongoing or planned activities under the Erasmus+ programme and European Solidarity Corps.
 - ❖ The European Commission's main objective is the safety and protection of all Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps participants, while fully respecting all the containment measures taken at national level. The European Commission is working to help beneficiaries and students, pupils, volunteers and other participants in the programmes deal with the consequences for them.
 - ❖ The Commission will continue to adapt its response to this unprecedented situation as it evolves, clarifying and simplifying the application of rules and procedures where necessary, in cooperation with Erasmus+ National Agencies and the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).
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- ❖ **Where should I turn with my questions about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Erasmus+ or European Solidarity Corps activities?**
 - **Individual participants** (students, teachers, young people, youth workers, volunteers etc.) facing difficulties should contact their home institution or organisation. Institutions and organisations should keep an open channel of communication with participants in their projects, even if their premises are closed. Please be aware that answers to queries on financial matters (refunds, eligibility of costs, conditions for grants, etc.) may take a bit more time due to reduced access to many institutions and organisations. The information below sets out answers to the most common questions posed by individual participants.
 - **Beneficiary organisations** (universities, schools, youth organisations etc.) should contact for support the agency which granted their project, either:
 - The [National Agency](#) in their respective home country, for most actions of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes. National agencies are present in EU Member States as well as North Macedonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Turkey, Serbia and the United Kingdom.
 - The [Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency \(EACEA\)](#), for Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps centralised actions, such as Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees, Jean Monnet, European Universities, Centres of Vocational Excellence, Capacity Building, European Youth Together or Volunteering teams in High Priority Areas.
 - **Other project partners** that are not project beneficiaries (universities, schools, youth organisations etc.) should liaise with the coordinator (project beneficiaries) of their project.

Questions raised by Erasmus+ /European Solidarity Corps participants

❖ I was on Erasmus+ or European Solidarity Corps mobility in another country, but had to return home. Do I get to keep my grant?

- If you are back home but a) you still have expenses directly and exclusively linked to your stay in the destination country, like rent and electricity and/or b) you are taking part in virtual learning or other virtual activities (if the institution/ organisation in the destination country has made those available, as an alternative to the originally planned activities) then yes, you can keep your grant.
- In addition, you may be able to obtain a refund of additional travel costs you may have incurred. You should check with your institution/ supporting organisation.¹
- If you do not continue to have expenses in the destination country, then you might have to pay back the portion of the grant, covering the period between the date you terminated your mobility experience and its planned end date.

❖ I was on Erasmus+ in another country, but my course was cancelled because the institution closed. I decided to stay in my destination country. Do I get to keep my grant?

- If you remain in the destination country and a) you still have expenses directly and exclusively linked to your stay in that country, like rent and electricity and/or b) you are taking part in virtual learning activities (if the institution in the destination country has made those available as an alternative to the originally planned activities) then yes, you can keep your grant.
- In addition, you may be able to receive an additional grant to cover the extra period of time, beyond what you had initially planned, that you had to stay abroad due to the Covid-19 outbreak. You should check with your institution².

❖ I was on a European Solidarity Corps activity in another country, but my activity was cancelled because the organisation closed. I could not return to my home country. Do I get to keep my pocket money/ relocation allowance?

- If you stay in the destination country and a) you still have expenses directly and exclusively linked to your stay in that country and/ or b) you are taking part in virtual activities (if the host organisation has provided online alternative to the originally planned activities) then yes, you can keep your grant.
- Similarly, in the above cases, the organisation may also get the grant to cover other costs linked to your stay.

¹ Subject to availability of additional EU funds at disposal of the organisation for your activity

² Subject to availability of additional EU funds at disposal of the organisation for your activity

- ❖ **I was planning to go on Erasmus+ or European Solidarity Corps mobility in another country, but had to cancel before the start because of the Covid-19 outbreak. I had already paid for my flight ticket and part of my accommodation. Do I get to keep the pre-financing I received for that?**
 - If you have paid travel expenses linked to the planned mobility, such as a flight ticket that you never used and that could not be refunded, you can receive the grant for travel costs, whenever the funding rules of the action envisage a financial support for travel.
 - If the action does not envisage this, you are entitled to keep or receive the part of the pre-financing that corresponds to the costs incurred. You may also be able to obtain a refund of costs for the reservation of accommodation. You should check with your institution/ supporting organisation³.

- ❖ **Can I postpone my planned Erasmus+/ European Solidarity Corps mobility to a later date?**
 - Check with your home institution/ supporting organisation, but in principle, the National Agency of your home institution/ supporting organisation will accept to prolong an Erasmus+ project (which might include periods of mobility abroad for multiple participants) or a European Solidarity Corps project by up to 12 months.

- ❖ **I was on a European Solidarity Corps activity in another country, but my activity was suspended because the organisation closed. Will I be able to continue my activity at a later stage?**
 - Check with your supporting organisation but in principle, this could be counted as a temporary interruption of the activity and you should be able to continue your activity afterwards.

- ❖ **I am a recent higher education or VET graduate and wanted to do a traineeship placement abroad. However, these are only open to recent graduates within 12 months of completing their education. Can I get an exception to this rule?**
 - Recent higher education or VET graduates who need to postpone their planned placements abroad will be allowed to take them up within 18 months of their graduation, instead of the normal 12-month timeframe.

Questions raised by organisations/ institutions

- ❖ **Many Erasmus+ higher education students fear that their study period abroad will not be recognised. What help can be given to them to help them cope with this situation?**
 - Higher education institutions are asked to be as flexible and pragmatic as possible to help students achieve the outcomes indicated in their learning agreements, regardless of the students' geographical location. For example, through remote studying arrangements with the use of digital tools. This flexibility will in particular help students who have returned to their home countries to finish their courses at their host institution and to have European

³ Subject to availability of additional EU funds at disposal of the organisation for your activity

Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits obtained through remote studying arrangements fully recognised.

- ❖ **When the borders started closing, one of our participants had to buy an extra flight ticket to get home early, as the airline did not agree to change her original date of return. Can we cover these additional or exceptional costs with Erasmus+ or European Solidarity Corps funds?**
 - Yes, you can consider these costs as “eligible” as long as the overall budget for your project covered by the grant agreement in question is not exceeded. If you are subject to a later audit, you might need to provide proof of the need to reimburse these additional costs.

- ❖ **Due to the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, we had to cover some exceptional costs for a participant with a disability, who needed help for a longer period of time. Are these eligible costs?**
 - Yes, you can consider these costs as “eligible” as long as the overall budget for your project covered by the grant agreement in question is not exceeded. If you are subject to a later audit, you might need to provide proof of the need to reimburse these additional costs.

- ❖ **I wanted to apply to take part in a project for which the deadline is approaching. But I cannot contact my partners in other countries because their offices are closed. Can the Commission postpone the application deadline?**
 - The Commission has extended the deadline for applications for a number of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps calls for proposals. The new deadlines can be found [here](#).
 - Please contact your [National Agency](#), as some administrative procedures regarding the submission of application forms will be simplified.

- ❖ **I work on coordinating Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps projects and the organisational support pays my wages, and that of my colleagues. Given the cancellation of many of the activities, can we still be sure that we can keep the operational support we were counting on?**
 - For those cases set out above, where the individual participants are eligible to receive or retain the individual support grant, yes, you will be entitled to receive Erasmus+ or European Solidarity Corps organisational support.
 - Even in cases where the Erasmus+ or European Solidarity Corps activities are cancelled, you are entitled to receive the organisational support. This approach takes into account the rent of premises costs of preparation and follow up of participants prior to the departure as well as the tasks you are carrying out to support the participants in managing the exceptional nature of the Covid-19 pandemic (cancellations, contacts with host partners, counselling, etc.)

- ❖ **I am a project coordinator and have had to suspend the project. Do I get to keep the project management grant? Can I ask to prolong my project to complete the activities later on?**
 - Beneficiaries of strategic partnerships or solidarity projects can opt to temporarily suspend their project, ask for an extension of the project duration and carry out the planned activities once the restrictions in place in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic have been lifted. In this case, the project management grant will be calculated based on the new project duration, excluding the suspension, but cannot exceed the total agreed grant amount.

- ❖ **I am a project coordinator. I had to cancel activities but already incurred expenses that I will not get back (rental of room, accommodation for participants etc.). Will these costs be covered?**
 - Please contact the National Agency in your country. In the cases where the Erasmus+ or European Solidarity Corps activities are cancelled and organisations have incurred costs that cannot be reimbursed, they will have the possibility to have those costs covered.

- ❖ **I want to complete a grant agreement for a project, but am unable to obtain the physical signature of my boss who should sign it. Is a scanned copy enough?**
 - Please contact the National Agency in your country. Given the current exceptional circumstances, the National Agency may agree to temporarily accept exchanges of scanned and signed copies of grant agreements. However, this will have to be validated by a formal exchange of physical signatures once the restrictions in place in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic have been lifted.