

Methodological approach to groups with fewer opportunities in higher education (minimum requirements)

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Content:

1. A person with fewer opportunities (according to the Erasmus+ programme guide)	2
2. Financial support for inclusion.....	3
2.1 Financial support for the institution	3
2.2 Financial support for the participant with fewer opportunities.....	3
2.2.1 Individual support (basic grant)	4
2.2.2 Individual support based on real costs (special grant).....	4
3. Types of support for groups with fewer opportunities - Erasmus + (2021 - 2027).....	6
4. ECHE-based support for participants with fewer opportunities.....	7

1. A person with fewer opportunities (according to the Erasmus+ programme guide)

The Erasmus+ programme guide defines a participant with fewer opportunities as: „**A person with fewer opportunities is a potential participant whose personal, physical, mental or health-related conditions is such that his/her participation in the project / mobility action would not be possible without extra financial or other support.**“¹

¹ https://www.erasmusplus.sk/erasmus_2021_2027/doc/dokumenty/2021-erasmusplus-programme-guide_v2_sk.pdf

At the same time, the program guide presents a fairly extensive list of possible obstacles to mobility and their description:

- **Disabilities:** This includes physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder someone's full and effective participation in society on the same footing as others.
- **Health problems:** Barriers may result from health issues including severe illnesses, chronic diseases, or any other physical or mental health-related situation that prevents from participating in the programme.
- **Barriers linked to education and training systems:** Individuals struggling to perform in education and training systems for various reasons, early school-leavers, NEETs (people not in education, employment or training) and low-skilled adults may face barriers. Although other factors may play a role, these educational difficulties, while they may also be linked to personal circumstances, mostly result from an educational system which creates structural limitations and/or does not fully take into account the individual's particular needs. Individuals can also face barriers to participation when the structure of curricula makes it difficult to undertake a learning or training mobility abroad as part of their studies.
- **Cultural differences:** While cultural differences may be perceived as barriers by people from any backgrounds, they can particularly affect people with fewer opportunities. Such differences may represent significant barriers to learning in general, all the more for people with a migrant or refugee background – especially newly-arrived migrants –, people belonging to a national or ethnic minority, sign language users, people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion difficulties, etc. Being exposed to foreign languages and cultural differences when taking part in any kind of programme activities may put off individuals and somehow limit the benefits from their participation. And such cultural differences may even prevent potential participants from applying for support through the programme, thereby representing an entry barrier altogether.
- **Social barriers:** Social adjustment difficulties such as limited social competences, anti-social or high-risk behaviours, (former) offenders, (former) drug or alcohol abusers, or social marginalisation may represent a barrier. Other social barriers can stem from family circumstances, for instance being the first in the family to access higher education or being a parent (especially a single parent), a caregiver, a breadwinner or an orphan, or having lived or currently living in institutional care.
- **Economic barriers:** Economic disadvantage like a low standard of living, low income, learners who need to work to support themselves, dependence on the social welfare system, in long-term unemployment, precarious situations or poverty, being homeless, in debt or with financial problems, etc., may represent a barrier. Other difficulties may derive from the limited transferability of services (in particular support to people with fewer opportunities) that needs to be "mobile" together with the participants when going to a far place or, all the more, abroad.

- **Barriers linked to discrimination:** Barriers can occur as a result of discriminations linked to gender, age, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation, disability, or intersectional factors (a combination of two or several of the mentioned discrimination barriers).
- **Geographical barriers:** Living in remote or rural areas, on small islands or in peripheral/outermost regions³, in urban suburbs, in less serviced areas (limited public transport, poor facilities) or less developed areas in third countries, etc., may constitute a barrier.

This overview serves as a reference for the National Agencies. Based on it, they will develop a strategy for inclusion in national conditions in the context of the specifics and needs of individual sectors. For call 2021, examples of disadvantaged groups are given in Chapter 3.

2. Financial support for inclusion

Financial support for inclusion is provided at 2 levels:

- financial support for the institution;
- financial support for a participant with fewer opportunities.

2.1 Financial support for the institution

It is intended for the institution to cover the costs related to the organization of mobility of participants with fewer opportunities who require additional support based on real costs.

Financing mechanism: contribution to unit costs.

Allocation rule: based on the number of participants with fewer opportunities who require additional support based on real costs - € 100 per participant.

2.2 Financial support for a participant with fewer opportunities

It consists of an additional amount of individual support for participants with fewer opportunities (so-called "top-up"), whereby in justified cases, if the grant is not sufficient, the National Agency may be asked for additional support based on real costs (special grant).

2.2.1 Individual support – basic grant

It is provided in the form of a top-up for certain groups of people (possible examples are given in Chapter 3 of this document).

The increase for long-term mobility is a contribution of € **250 per month**. Students and recent graduates with fewer opportunities who are doing a traineeship are entitled to receive a supplementary amount for students and recent graduates with a fewer opportunities as well as a supplementary amount for a traineeship (€ 150 per month).

The short-term mobility increase represents a contribution of € **100 for participants with fewer opportunities in the case of a physical mobility activity lasting 5 to 14 days and € 150 in the case of an activity lasting 15 to 30 days**. The additional amount for traineeships does not apply in this case.

We recommend to enable for the applicant to indicate that he / she is a participant with fewer opportunities in the mobility application.

Financing mechanism: top-up.

Allocation rule: The university is responsible for identifying a participant with fewer opportunities. In this case, it does not apply to the National Agency for a permit.

Example: A participant receiving a social scholarship is selected for mobility. This participant will enclose the relevant confirmation with the application (see table below). The contact person adds mobility to the Beneficiary Module (BM), indicating belonging to a group with a lack of opportunity. The BM tool adds the corresponding increments to the individual support.

2.2.2 Individual support based on real costs (special grant)

It is provided in the form of real costs. It is intended to cover additional costs incurred by participants with fewer opportunities in cases where the top-up would not be able to cover these costs. This cost is specifically intended to cover the extraordinary financial support required for participants with physical, mental disabilities to enable them to participate in a mobility as well as for preparatory visits and accompanying persons (including travel and subsistence expenses, if justified and are not reimbursed by these participants from the budget categories Travel and Individual Support).

Financing mechanism: real costs documented by accounting documents.

We recommend to enable for the applicant to indicate that he / she is a participant with fewer opportunities in the mobility application.

Allocation rule: The university will be able to apply to the National Agency for special grants for its students / staff by the deadline set in the special call, when submitting the interim report and, in justified cases, outside these possibilities.

The special grant application will be available on the programme website.

Examples of real costs:

- transport allowance (e.g. rental of a special motor vehicle, if the person is dependent on individual transport by personal motor vehicle, or such transport is provided by an authorized person / municipality / social service provider) to / from as well as on site (e.g. if the person is unable to use public transport, whether due to physical or mental constraints);
- a contribution in case the mobility participant needs assistance or care (e.g. compensation for a natural person who provides personal assistance on the basis of a written contract or for a family member in case of care);
- transport allowance and accommodation for an accompanying person;
- material support of participants - special teaching aids, special medical needs, etc.

Example: A participant with a severe disability is selected for mobility. Such a participant will attach an appropriate certificate and, if he / she needs additional funding to facilitate mobility (see examples above), fills in the special grant application and submit it to the Erasmus coordinator at his / her university, who will check, sign and send it to the National Agency for approval. After approval, the National Agency will issue an addendum to the contract and send the funds to the university's account. The contact person adds the mobility to the Beneficiary Module (BM) and indicates that the participant is entitled to a special grant.

3. Types of support for groups with fewer opportunities - Erasmus + (2021 - 2027)

Group	Description	Type of support	Proof possibilities
Disability	As a person with a severe health disability (hereinafter referred as a person with a SHD) is considered a person with a functional impairment rate of at least 50% .	Top-up and real costs (if top-up is not enough)	ŽP card (Disability card)
Health problems	As a person with a health problem is considered a person with a chronic illness or psychiatric illness.	Top-up	Medical report and/or financial contribution decision from ÚPSVaR (labor office) and/or a student with special needs status - Counseling Center report
Economic barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low standard of living, low income (e.g. family in social need) • dependence on the social security system (e.g. orphan's pensioner, unemployment benefits) 	Top-up	Social scholarship and/or - confirmation of material need from the ÚPSVaR (labor office)
Social barriers	Social adaptation difficulties: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a single parent with a child (i.e. a single woman or a single man who is permanently taking care for a child under the age of 15), • discrimination barriers 	Top-up	Depending on the situation: Statutory declaration
Others	Different types of barriers (e.g. ethnic origin, migrants, etc.) - depending on the university's decision	Top-up	Depending on the situation: Statutory declaration

Warning:

In case of participants with severe disabilities, the participant can choose from the following options:

- a. top-up only - this amount does not need to be supported by supplementary documents,
- b. combination of top-up and real costs - in case the top-up is not able to cover the increased costs of such a participant, this difference can be covered through a special grant (real costs). The university must ensure that in the case of a combination of top-up and real costs, there is no double funding – i.e.. to avoid overlapping funding of the same expenditure.

In case of a participant facing several obstacles - it is not possible to assign more than one top-up to a participant.

4. ECHE-based support for participants with fewer opportunities

In order to ensure the easiest possible access to student and staff mobility in accordance with the principles of the ECHE Charter, higher education institutions must ensure equal and equitable access and opportunities for current and prospective participants from all backgrounds, and thus for participants with fewer opportunities. In order to comply with this principle, it is necessary to define internal selection procedures that take into account fairness and inclusion and holistically assess the quality and motivation of applicants. In addition, higher education institutions are encouraged to create mobility opportunities, such as mobility windows integrated into curricula to facilitate the participation of students from all disciplines. In this sense, mixed mobility may contribute to offering additional opportunities that may be more appropriate for some individuals or groups of students. In this context, in addressing inclusion and diversity, it is useful to allow inclusion officers to work in higher education institutions. Inclusion staff can, for example. Contribute to awareness raising, the development of communication and awareness strategies, provide adequate support throughout the mobility period in cooperation with relevant colleagues and contribute to the facilitation of cooperation between the relevant staff of the institution with its expertise in the field of inclusion and diversity.