



2020

ANNUAL REPORT



# Our Funding



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## Message from the Acting Chair

Following an exceptionally challenging year, it is with particular pride that I acknowledge the incredible work Léargas does, the innovative individuals at its helm and the spirit of the organisation as a whole.

Against the backdrop of a worldwide pandemic in 2020, Léargas underwent a number of internal changes. Following Jim Mullin's retirement as Léargas' Executive Director, we were privileged to experience Nicki Maguire's tenure as Acting Executive Director before Lorraine Gilligan was instated as Léargas' new Executive Director in July.

It was under Nicki and Lorraine's able leadership that the organisation faced into one of its most challenging periods to date: the Covid-19 pandemic. In keeping with the spirit of the organisation, Léargas' highly talented staff met the challenge with compassion, resolve, and innovation. During this time, the Board and Management sought to prioritise the wellbeing of Léargas staff. The management team did an exemplary job helping staff, who in turn gave immense support and guidance to beneficiaries throughout this period.

### **“Against the backdrop of a worldwide pandemic in 2020, Léargas underwent a number of internal changes”**

Given the innovation demonstrated by all at Léargas over the course of 2020, it is perhaps no surprise that the Léargas Forum was a hugely successful event - despite the myriad challenges presented by COVID-19. Held online for the first time since its advent, it was attended last November by more than 200 people over two mornings. Participants celebrated the positive impact of Erasmus+ and other European programmes, and anticipated the new seven-year cycle with great excitement.

Indeed, the expansion of Erasmus+ in the new 2021-2027 programme cycle means a renewed strategic approach for the organisation. With that in mind, and under the supervision of external experts Anne Eustace and Marie Cleary, we recently began crafting a new Strategic Statement to establish long-term aims for the organisation and contribute to its ongoing success.

Of course, 2020 was also the year of Brexit. The UK decision to leave the European Union ultimately saw the British government withdraw from the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes. As such, we were heartened to learn in December that the Irish Government had made the decision to fund third level students from Northern Ireland, so that they may continue to study in Europe under Erasmus+. We hope this may be extended to other sectors in future.

In 2020 the Léargas Board said goodbye to two vastly experienced and much-missed members, Fidelma Collins and our former Chair Michael McLoughlin. I thank them for their highly valued contributions over the years. In December, we introduced four new Léargas Board members: Frank Crummey, Nuala Keher, Dipti Pandya and Margie Water. All are highly qualified and hugely talented people. They brought with them a wide variety of skills and experience, and I have every confidence that their action-focused approach will ensure Léargas' vision for the future; do much to maintain the esteemed reputation Léargas enjoys among the European Commission and Irish stakeholders; and fortify an already fruitful and collaborative relationship with the Departments.

On behalf of myself, and other long-standing Board members Jean-Marie Cullen and Maria Lorigan, I want to welcome them once again to the Léargas Board. Above all, I want to thank all at Léargas for the strength shown throughout 2020.

**Hugh McConville**  
**Acting Chair**  
**Léargas Board**







# Teachtaireacht ón gCathaoirleach Gníomhach

Tar éis bliana a bhí thar a bheith dúshlánach is cúis mhór bróid dom aitheantas a thabhairt don obair dhochreidte a dhéanann Léargas, na daoine nuálacha atá i gceannas air agus spiorad na heagraíochta ina hiomláine.

I gcomhthéacs na paindéime domhanda in 2020, rinneadh roinnt athruithe inmheánacha ar Léargas. Tar éis do Jim Mullin éirí as a phost mar Stiúrthóir Feidhmiúcháin Léargas, bhí sé de phribhléid againn Nicki Maguire a bheith againn mar Stiúrthóir Feidhmiúcháin Gníomhach sular ceapadh Lorraine Gilligan mar Stiúrthóir Feidhmiúcháin nua Léargas i mí Iúil.

Ba faoi cheannaireacht chumasach Nicki agus Lorraine a thug an eagraíocht aghaidh ar cheann de na tréimhsí ba dhúshlánaí a bhí aici go dtí seo: an phaindéim COVID-19. Ag teacht le spiorad na heagraíochta, chuir foireann ardchumasach Léargas aghaidh ar an dúshlán le comhbhá, diongbháilteacht agus nuálaíocht. Le linn na tréimhse seo, rinne an Bord agus an Bhainistíocht iarracht chun tosaíocht a thabhairt d'fholláine fhoireann Léargas. Rinne an fhoireann bainistíochta jab iontach ag cabhrú leis an bhfoireann. Ag an am céanna thug an fhoireann tacaíocht agus treoir ollmhór do thairbhíthe ar fud na tréimhse seo.

## **“I gcomhthéacs na paindéime domhanda in 2020, rinneadh roinnt athruithe inmheánacha ar Léargas”**

I bhfianaise na nuálaíochta a léirigh gach duine ag Léargas le linn 2020, ní haon ionadh é gur éirigh thar cionn le Fóram Léargas - in ainneoin na n-iliomad dúshlán a chuir COVID-19 romhainn. Cuireadh ar siúl ar líne é den chéad uair ó cuireadh ar bun é agus d'fhreastail níos mó ná 200 duine air ar dhá mhaidin i mí na Samhna seo caite. Rinne rannpháirtithe ceiliúradh ar thionchar dearfach Erasmus+ agus clár Eorpach eile, agus bhí siad ag súil go mór leis an timthriall nua seacht mbliana. Go deimhin, ciallaíonn leathnú Erasmus+ i dtimthriall nua an chláir ó 2021-2027 cur chuige straitéiseach athnuaite don eagraíocht. Agus é sin á chur san áireamh againn cuireamar tús le Ráiteas Straitéiseach nua a chur le chéile le déanaí faoi mhaoirseacht na saineolaithe seachtracha Anne Eustace agus Marie Cleary, chun aidhmeanna fadtéarmacha a bhunú don eagraíocht agus chun cur lena rath leanúnach.

Ar ndóigh, ba í 2020 bliain an Bhreitheachta, freisin. Mar thoradh ar chinneadh na RA an tAontas Eorpach a fhágáil tharraing rialtas na Breataine siar ón chlár Erasmus+ agus ón Chór Dlúthpháirtíochta Eorpach. Mar sin, ba chúis áthais dúinn a fháil amach i mí na Nollag go raibh cinneadh déanta ag Rialtas na hÉireann maoiniú a thabhairt do mhic léinn tríú leibhéal as Tuaisceart Éireann, ionas go bhféadfaidís leanúint ar aghaidh ag staidéar san Eoraip faoi Erasmus+. Tá súil againn go bhféadfar é seo a leathnú chuig earnálacha eile amach anseo.

Sa bhliain 2020 d'fhág Bord Léargas slán le beirt bhall a bhfuil an-taithí acu agus braithimid uainn go mór iad - Fidelma Collins agus ár n-iar-Chathaoirleach Michael McLoughlin. Gabhaim buíochas leo as a gcabhair fhíorluachmhar i gcaitheamh na mblianta. I mí na Nollag, thugamar ceathrar ball nua de Bhord Léargas isteach: Frank Crummey, Nuala Keher, Dipti Pandya agus Margie Water. Is daoine ardcháilithe agus sár-chumasacha iad go léir. Thug siad leo réimse leathan scileanna agus taithí, agus táim ag súil go gcinnteoidh a gcur chuige atá dírithe ar ghníomhaíocht físi Leargas don am atá romhainn; go gcabhróidh siad go mór chun an dea-cháil a choinneáil atá ag Léargas sa Choimisiún Eorpach agus i measc geallsealbhóirí Éireannacha; agus go dtreiseoidh siad an caidreamh torthúil, comhoibritheach atá againn leis na Ranna cheana féin.

Thar mo cheann féin, agus thar ceann bhall eile an Bhoird atá air le fada an lá, Jean-Marie Cullen agus Maria Lorigan, ba mhaith liom fáilte a chur rompu uair eile chuig Bord Léargas. Thar aon rud eile, ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghabháil le gach duine ag Léargas as an diongbháilteacht a léirigh siad i rith 2020.

**Hugh McConville**  
**Cathaoirleach Gníomhach**  
**Bord Léargas**





## Message from the Executive Director

2020 was a very different year at Léargas, as it was almost everywhere. Like so many other workplaces, in mid-March 2020 we packed up our desks and prepared to work from home. Fortunately, business continuity planning placed us in a strong position for a quick and smooth transition to this new way of working - and we have been working in this way ever since!

Without doubt it has been a year of highs and lows, which has challenged us all in different ways. It's a particular challenge for any organisation to thrive in an entirely online environment, though it has both advantages and limitations. We've adapted to social distancing, online calls and meetings. We have worked hard to build new connections and relationships, and to maintain creative collaborations with each other.

We have said farewell to colleagues, and welcomed others, without any of the traditional tea and cake! We've met each other's kids and pets on screens, and seen a myriad of other changes to our working days. But Léargas has come through it well: our staff team responded with resilience and creativity. We swiftly re-imagined our own work and how we work with others, so we could ensure continuity of service but also of our usual support.

**“Looking back on 2020, we can be proud of the resilience and adaptability we have demonstrated. But more, it gives us hope and confidence that by working together with a common objective, we will meet the challenges to come.”**

We guided our beneficiaries to transition their own projects and collaborations to the digital space, providing them as much flexibility as possible to sustain their projects and partnerships. We developed training and inspirational activities to spark their creativity, despite the significant disruption of the global pandemic. Looking back on 2020, we can be proud of the resilience and adaptability we have demonstrated. But more, it gives us hope and confidence that by working together with a common objective, we will meet the challenges to come.

We were heartened, for example, that in 2020 we:

- received our highest ever number of applications for Erasmus+ Adult Education Strategic Partnership projects – 24 in all
- received more than half of our 55 Erasmus+ School Education Mobility applications from newcomers to the programme
- published ‘Mythbusting’, a comprehensive project management handbook written by and for European project managers, as a result of a two-day Transnational Cooperation Activity (TCA) the year before
- supported a very high proportion of young people with special needs or with fewer opportunities to take part in Erasmus+ Youth – 64% of all participants in Mobility and Structured Dialogue projects came from these groups
- had a strong response from Irish organisations to the European Commission’s special call for projects responding to the Covid crisis, by addressing digital readiness or creativity
- heard the voices of young people transformed by their experience in the European Solidarity Corps, such as volunteer Amy Collins who told her story on the Ryan Tubridy national radio show
- saw continued growth in registrations on EPALe, the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Ireland, and eTwinning, the online community for schools
- saw the clear impact of CASE Shared Education projects, when pupils worked together – from home - to co-design cards for residents of local nursing homes and made videos to thank frontline workers.

All of this was brought together at the 2020 Léargas Forum events in November, when we hosted more than 200 of you online and gave voice to the experiences of those who have participated in our programmes over the past years. People explained how their transformational experiences of Erasmus+ or European Solidarity Corps broadened their vision of their own potential, and opened new doors for education and employment. Our first dedicated Research Forum was an opportunity for researchers from academia, from European networks and from Léargas itself to share how these personal transformations also shape the sectors we work in: Adult Education, School Education, Vocational Education and Training, and Youth.

We shared and celebrated many more such transformational stories through our blog posts and social media, and with local and national press.

2020 was also the last year of the current European programme cycle. Much energy was focused on supporting the co-creation process for the new Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes to run in 2021-2027, but we also found the time to reflect on the past seven years and how programmes have adapted and evolved. We think of Erasmus+ as a physical exchange – going to work or volunteer or study abroad – and we very much look forward to the time when we can all travel safely again. However, European programmes are all about partnership and cooperation - and getting on a plane is only one way to make that possible. We've seen many projects move online or innovate how they bring people from Ireland and other European countries together. Our connections are very strong and we have so much to learn from each other.

**“European programmes are all about partnership and cooperation - and getting on a plane is only one way to make that possible. We've seen many projects move online or innovate how they bring people from Ireland and other European countries together.”**

Of course, such work would not have been possible without the continued support and engagement of the Board of Léargas and of our colleagues in the Department of Education, and the newly-formed Departments of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

I have been truly privileged to take the position as Executive Director, and to experience the passion and commitment of the Léargas staff as they supported each other and our programme partners through the additional pressures and uncertainties of a global pandemic. Indeed, they continue to do so. Their work is reflected in this Annual Report, in the continued success and growth of this organisation and in the programmes we are privileged to deliver.

**Lorraine Gilligan**  
**Executive Director**  
**Léargas**



## Teachtaireacht ón Stiúrthóir Feidhmiúcháin

Bliain an-difriúil ab ea 2020 ag Léargas, mar a bhí i ngach áit, nach mór. Cosúil leis an oiread sin áiteanna oibre eile, rinneamar ár ndeasca a phacáil agus d'ullmhaíomar chun a bheith ag obair ón mbaile i lár mhí an Mhárta 2020. Ar ámharaí an tsaoil, chuir pleanáil leanúnachais ghnó in áit láidir sinn chun aistriú tapa agus réidh a dhéanamh chuig an mbealach nua oibre seo - agus táimid ag obair ar an mbealach seo ó shin!

Gan dabht, ba bhliain í ina rabhamar thuas seal thíos seal inar cuireadh dúshlán romhainn go léir ar bhealaí éagsúla. Is dúshlán faoi leith é d'eagraíocht ar bith a bheith rathúil i dtimpeallacht atá go hiomlán ar líne, cé go mbaineann buntáistí agus teorainneacha léi. Táimid dulta in oiriúint do scaradh sóisialta agus do ghlaonna agus cruinnithe ar líne. D'oibríomar go crua chun naisc agus caidrimh nua a thógáil, agus chun comhoibrithe cruthaitheacha lena chéile a chothú.

**“Agus sinne ag caitheamh súil siar ar 2020, is féidir linn a bheith bródúil as an athléimneacht agus an inoiriúnaitheacht atá léirithe againn.”**

D'fhágamar slán le comhghleacaithe, agus chuireamar fáilte roimh dhaoine eile gan aon tae agus ciste milis mar a dhéanaimis de ghnáth! Bhuaileamar le páistí agus peataí a chéile ar scáileáin, agus chonaiceamar an iliomad athruithe eile ar ár laethanta oibre. Ach tá Léargas ag déanamh go breá tar éis gach ar tharla: d'fhreagair ár bhfoireann foirne le hathléimneacht agus cruthaitheacht. Rinneamar ár gcuid oibre féin agus an tslí a n-oibrímid le daoine eile a shamhlú as an nua gan mhoill, ionas go bhféadfaimis leanúnachas seirbhíse chomh maith le leanúnachas ár ngnáth-tacaíochta féin a chinntiú.

Threoraíomar ár dtairbhíthe chun a gcuid tionscadal agus comhoibrithe féin a aistriú chuig an spás digiteach. Thugamar an oiread solúbthachta agus is féidir dóibh chun a gcuid tionscadal agus comhpháirtíochtaí a choinneáil ar siúl. D'fhorbraíomar gníomhaíochtaí oiliúna agus inspioráideacha chun a gcuid cruthaitheachta a spreagadh, in ainneoin an chur isteach suntasach a tharla mar thoradh ar an bpaindéim dhomhanda. Agus sinne ag caitheamh súil siar ar 2020, is féidir linn a bheith bródúil as an athléimneacht agus an inoiriúnaitheacht atá léirithe againn. Níos tábhachtaí fós, tá go leor fianaise ann maidir le dóchas agus muinín go gcuirfimid aghaidh ar na dúshláin atá le teacht trí oibriú as lámh a chéile ar mhaithe le comhchuspóir.



Ba ábhar misnigh dúinn, mar shampla, gur tharla na nithe seo a leanas in 2020:

- fuairamar an líon is mó iarratas riamh ar thionscadail Chomhpháirtíochta Straitéisí Erasmus+ um Oideachas Aosach - 24 cinn san iomlán
- fuairamar níos mó ná leath dár 55 iarratas ar Shoghluaisteacht Oideachais Scoile Erasmus+ ó dhaoine a ghlacann páirt sa chlár den chéad uair
- d'fhoilsíomar 'Mythbusting', lámhleabhar cuimsitheach bainistíochta tionscadail a scríobh bainisteoirí tionscadail Eorpacha do bhainisteoirí tionscadail Eorpacha, mar thoradh ar Ghníomhaíocht um Chomhar Trasnáisiúnta dhá lá an bhliain roimhe sin
- thacaíomar le cion an-ard de dhaoine óga ag a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta nó níos lú deiseanna chun páirt a ghlacadh in Erasmus+ Óige - tháinig 64% de na rannpháirtithe uile i dtionscadail Shoghluaisteachta agus Idirphlé Struchtúrtha ó na grúpaí seo
- fuairamar freagairt láidir ó eagraíochtaí Éireannacha ar ghlaio speisialta ón Choimisiún Eorpach ar thionscadail a bhí ag freagairt do ghéarchéim Covid trí aghaidh a thabhairt ar ullmhacht nó ar chruthaitheacht dhigiteach
- chualamar guthanna daoine óga a ndeachaigh a n-éispéireas sa Chór Dlíthpháirtíochta Eorpach go mór i bhfeidhm orthu, cosúil leis an saorálaí Amy Collins a d'inis a scéal ar an seó raidió náisiúnta Ryan Tubridy
- chonacamar fás leanúnach ar chlárúcháin ar EPALE, an tArdán Leictreonach um Fhoghlaim Aosach in Éirinn, agus ar eTwinning, an pobal ar líne do scoileanna
- chonacamar tionchar soiléir na dtionscadal Oideachas Comhroinnte CASE, nuair a d'oibrigh daltaí le chéile - ón mbaile - chun cártaí a chomhdhearadh do chónaitheoirí tithe altranais áitiúla agus nuair a rinne siad físeáin chun buíochas a ghabháil le hoibrithe líne tosaigh.

Tugadh an méid seo ar fad le chéile ag imeachtaí Fhóram Léargas 2020 i mí na Samhna, nuair a d'óstálar níos mó ná 200 agaibh ar líne agus thugamar guth d'eispéiris na ndaoine a ghlac páirt inár gclár i gcaitheamh na mblianta atá thart. Mhínigh daoine conas a chuir a gcuid eispéireas ar Erasmus+ nó ar an gCór Dlíthpháirtíochta Eorpach a chuir athrú ón mbonn orthu lena bhfís i leith a n-acmhainne féin, agus mar a d'oscail siad doirse nua don oideachas agus don fhostaíocht. Deis a bhí inár gcéad Fhóram Taighde tiomnaithe do thaighdeoirí

ón saol acadúil, ó líonraí Eorpacha agus ó Léargas féin eolas a roinnt ar an gcaoi a dtéann na hathruithe ón mbonn pearsanta seo i bhfeidhm ar na hearnálacha a mbímid ag obair iontu: Oideachas Aosach, Oideachas Scoile, Gairmoideachas agus Oilíúint, agus an Óige. Roinneamar cuid mhaith scéalta eile den sórt sin faoi athruithe ón mbonn agus rinneamar ceiliúradh orthu trínár bpoist bhlag agus na meáin shóisialta, agus leis na meáin áitiúla agus náisiúnta.

Chomh maith leis sin, ba í 2020 an bhliain dheireanach de thimthriall reatha na gclár Eorpach. Díríodh go leor fuinnimh ar thacú leis an bpróiseas comhchruthaithe do na cláir nua Erasmus+ agus Cór Dlíthpháirtíochta Eorpach a reáchtálfar sa tréimhse 2021-2027, ach bhí am againn freisin chun machnamh a dhéanamh ar na seacht mbliana atá thart agus ar an gcaoi a oiriúnaíodh cláir agus a tháinig siad chun cinn. Smaoinimid ar Erasmus+ mar mhalartán fisiceach - ag dul ag obair nó ag obair go deonach nó ag staidéar thar lear - agus táimid ag tnúth go mór leis an am nuair is féidir taisteal go sábháilte arís. Is é atá i gceist le cláir Eorpacha, áfach, ná comhpháirtíocht agus comhar - agus níl i gceist le dul ar eitleán ach bealach amháin chun é sin a dhéanamh. Chonaiceamar go leor tionscadal ag bogadh ar líne nó ag déanamh nuálaíochta ar an tslí ina dtugann siad daoine as Éirinn agus as tíortha Eorpacha eile le chéile. Tá ár gcuid nasc an-láidir agus is mór an méid atá le foghlaim againn óna chéile.

Ar ndóigh, ní bheifí in ann a leithéid d'obair a dhéanamh gan tacaíocht agus rannpháirtíocht leanúnach ó Bhord Léargas agus ár gcomhghleacaithe sa Roinn Oideachais, agus na Ranna nuabhunaithe sin, an Roinn Breisoideachais agus Ardoideachais, Taighde, Nuálaíochta agus Eolaíochta agus an Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannas, Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige.

Ba mhór an phribhléid dom glacadh leis an bpost mar Stiúrthóir Feidhmiúcháin, agus paisean agus tiomantas foireann Léargas a fheiceáil agus iad ag tacú lena chéile agus lenár gcomhpháirtithe cláir tríd na brúnna agus na héiginnteachtaí breise a bhaineann leis an bpaindéim dhomhanda. Go deimhin, leanann siad orthu ag déanamh amhlaidh. Tá a gcuid oibre le feiceáil sa Tuarascáil Bhliantúil seo, ar rath agus fás leanúnach na heagraíochta seo agus sna cláir a bhfuil sé de phribhléid againn a sheachadadh.

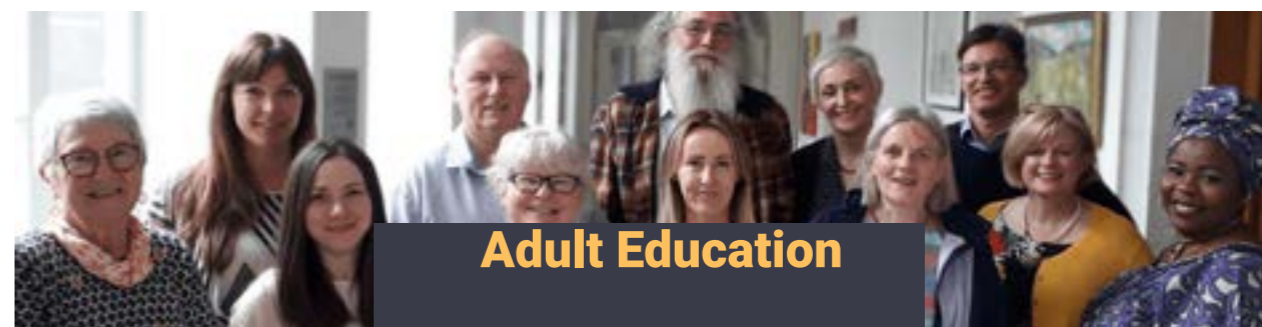
**Lorraine Gilligan**  
**Stiúrthóir Feidhmiúcháin**  
**Léargas**





# Erasmus+

- Adult Education ▶
- School Education ▶
- Vocational Education and Training ▶
- Youth ▶



## Adult Education

Erasmus+ funds projects for mobility of Adult Education staff, and Strategic Partnerships between organisations



## Erasmus+ Adult Education in 2020

Despite the challenges of 2020, the year was a successful one. We had a good take up in Erasmus+ Adult Education projects across Key Action 1, Mobility, and Key Action 2, Strategic Partnerships. It was gratifying to see high levels of participation from Education and Training Boards (ETBs) across the country in Key Action 1, and a wide range of organisations exploring different Adult Education themes through Key Action 2.

## Key Action 1 - Mobility

Mobility projects carried out by ETBs in 2020 linked strongly with their strategic plans, and aligned to the goals of the Further Education and Training strategy for Continuous Professional Development of Further Education and Training staff. Projects addressed the needs of the sector including integrating literacy and numeracy, quality assurance, Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL), Refugee Integration, prison education and leadership development. Sustainability, climate change and climate justice was also a strong theme this year, with relevant projects from City of Dublin ETB, Global Action Plan and Cork Environmental Forum.

Training courses were the most popular choice of mobility activity, but we also saw projects use Erasmus+ to support their engagement and contribution to key European networks. These included research networks like the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults, the Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults, the European Basic Skills Network, European Association for the Education of Adults, and TEL- other technology-oriented conferences related to learning methods. We are very positive that the 2020 call under KA1 continues to be representative of the scope and diversity of Adult Education provision in Ireland.



Of course, the key challenge this year has been Covid-19 and the travel restrictions associated with it. This has been difficult for KA1 projects, but EPALE has offered opportunities to engage in the European space online.



## Key Action 2 - Strategic Partnerships

The final year of Erasmus+ saw the highest ever number of applications for KA2 projects. We had 24 applications on a wide range of themes.

We are pleased to report that our KA2 projects rose to the challenge of Covid-19, and engaged with us almost immediately to adapt their project plans to the online space. We were learning from them as much as they were being guided by us! We have learned a lot from this experience, and indeed working online in this way has shown us the potential to reach organisations and people who are regionally remote or are not able to engage with face-to-face events and training.

We hope to use this experience to reach even more organisations across the country and share the opportunities on offer in the next programme - including small scale partnerships and adult learner mobility!

## Adult Learning at National and European Level

We have developed and strengthened our strategic alliances through using EPALE (the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe), and through our membership of the European Agenda for Adult Learning stakeholder committee, made up of key stakeholders for Adult Education in Ireland.

We are aided by the fact that there are many synergies between European policy and national policy in the field of Adult Education. The recently published national Further Education and Training Strategy 2020-2024 reflects the priorities of the EU Upskilling Pathways Recommendation, with its emphasis on supporting 'learning pathways for learners' who experience educational disadvantage; ensuring quality of provision; accreditation and validation of learning outcomes at all levels; and the need for particular supports for those with literacy, numeracy and digital literacy difficulties. Importantly, these priorities also recognise the critical role that adult and community education organisations play in outreach to adult learners most distant from education, as well as the importance of providing meaningful and tailored learning opportunities. We continually promote these policy synergies through our input at national events, our own information sessions and application workshops, blog posts, case studies, thematic Transnational Cooperation Activities and webinars.



### Project Spotlight

#### Ethical Media for Active Citizenship (EMAC)

NEAR Media

2017-1-IE01-KA204-025696

This project provided citizens, journalists and media activists with competences to tackle editorial challenges like fake news/alternative facts, infomercials vs. information, freedom of speech and hate speech, and helped them to develop diversity and pluralism in media. Resources, terminology sheets, training and guidelines were developed in various formats and in three languages. The Council of Europe invited the EMAC project to take part in their Ministerial Conference, bringing together ministers, advisers and the Council of Europe, in June 2021.

<http://ethicalmediatraining.eu/>

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/freedom-expression/media2021nicosia>



### Adult Education Contact

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## Erasmus+ Adult Education Funding 2020



**Total Allocated Funding**  
**€2,058,106**

### KA1 Mobility

**€160,665**

**funding 6 projects and 77 participants**

### KA2 Strategic Partnerships

**€1,534,785**

**funding 7 projects and 1,425 participants**

### KA2 Strategic Partnerships - Creativity

**€355,306**

**funding 2 projects and 301 participants**

### Transnational Cooperation Activities in Adult Education

**€7,350**



### Erasmus+ School Education in 2020

The main challenge this year was Covid-19, and adapting working methods to ensure ongoing support to project beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries. We organised online information and application clinics, and 'Webinar Wednesdays' with School Education themes. We also organised Virtual Activities Sessions for Key Action 1 and Key Action 2 projects, to support beneficiaries as they moved their projects online and to inspire ideas of how to move towards virtual collaboration and activities.

### Key Action 1 – Mobility

We funded 55 Mobility projects and awarded grants of €1,253,775. Almost half of these projects were from newcomers to Erasmus+. Wellbeing, health and motivation were key and recurring themes in these projects, as captured in our blog post [How Erasmus+ Fosters Wellbeing in Schools](#) (link to post).

### Key Action 2 – Strategic Partnerships

We funded 19 School Exchange Partnerships and 11 Strategic Partnerships. These included six newcomers to Erasmus+. Again, wellbeing and health were common themes along with STEM and Climate Change. In late 2020, to respond to the circumstances created by the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a special Erasmus+ call for KA2 projects to support Digital Education Readiness and Creativity. We were able to fund four additional Strategic Partnership projects, and two were from newcomers to Erasmus+.



## School Education at National and European level

We were excited to begin the first round of applications for Irish schools to receive Erasmus+ Accreditation. This is a new feature of Erasmus+ 2021-2027, that will give organisations simplified access to learning mobility opportunities. We had a good response to the call for applications and several Irish schools have been accredited for the next programme..



### Project Spotlight

**Promoting Green Skills through Games**  
Cork Institute of Technology  
2017-1-IE01-KA201-025721

This project developed an educational digital game targeted at primary and post-primary schools. The mobile-first, interactive digital game and associated teaching and learning materials helped students develop the skills and knowledge necessary to promote and actively engage in sustainability within their homes and communities. The project also produced a toolkit for teachers with guides, best practices and associated educational material to help them integrate the game in an educational setting. The project was selected as a success story by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the European Commission, and was featured at the 2020 Léargas Forum.  
<https://greenskillsgame.eu>

## School Education Contacts



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## Erasmus+ School Education Funding 2020



**Total Allocated Funding**  
**€7,621,731**

### KA1 Mobility

**€1,230,805**  
funding 51 projects and 581 participants

### KA2 Strategic Partnerships

**€3,534,555**  
funding 11 projects and 3,305 participants

### KA229 School Exchange Partnerships

**€1,649,344**  
funding 63 projects and 1,602 participants

### KA2 Strategic Partnerships - Digital Education Readiness

**€571,849**  
funding 2 projects and 520 participants

### KA2 Strategic Partnerships - Creativity

**€534,178**  
funding 2 projects and 492 participants

### Transnational Cooperation Activities in School Education

**€101,000**



## Erasmus+ VET in 2020

In 2020 we moved our usual face to face activities, such as workshops and project management days, online and were happy to see increased participation in events as a result. We also held more cross-sectoral and collaborative events, including an information morning for newly appointed ETB staff in the FET sector.



### Key Action 1 – Mobility

We had the largest number of applications in any single deadline to date, and continued the trend of having a high percentage of newcomers - 38% of eligible applications. This was the second year in a row with a full regional geographic spread. We also had a higher than European average of ErasmusPro mobilities, which have a longer term duration of between three and 12 months. We collaborated with colleagues in the European Solidarity Corps to hold a workshop on how best to mentor and support young people during their placements.

### Key Action 2 – Strategic Partnerships

As for all sectors, 2020 was a very challenging year but despite this several projects were successfully completed. These covered topics including management skills for entrepreneurs, upskilling for young farmers and training for the creative industries. All projects succeeded in achieving their original objectives and produced outputs as planned. Projects also succeeded in contributing to a range of European priorities including development of key competences, inclusion and diversity and enhancing access to training and qualifications.

It was especially positive that projects confirmed the increase in the capacities and international scope of the participating organisations and the benefits that transnational cooperation afforded the participants.

As a result of the pandemic many projects moved their dissemination activities online. This involved re-imagining their events and how they would reach their audience. In many cases this resulted in reaching a much wider and more diverse audience – a very positive outcome.

### VET at National and European Level

A successful KA2 cross-sectoral TCA on Innovation in Teaching and Learning through Erasmus+ took place in Dublin from 19-21 February 2020. This seminar provided an opportunity for networking, discussion and peer exchange, among participants of Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships from across Europe. This was a thematic event, relating specifically to the theme of innovation (and inclusion) in teaching and learning, and it brought together a range of different actors from the fields of adult, school and vocational education and training, as well as others involved in developing or delivering education for learners in these domains. Participation extended to 14 European countries and 42 participants. Irish practitioners and professionals represented around one third of participants, many of those having an active role in event delivery.



2020 also saw the publication of the handbook Mythbusting: European Project Management in Transnational Partnership Projects which was the output from a two-day Transnational Cooperation event held the previous year. This involved bringing together both new and experienced European project coordinators to explore challenges and successes and share tools/approaches that enable them to work effectively in this way. The content of this handbook is drawn from their discussions and inputs. It is a handbook that has been created by European Project Managers for European Project Managers. It is available from [https://issuu.com/leargas.ireland/docs/mythbusting\\_tca\\_project\\_management\\_handbook](https://issuu.com/leargas.ireland/docs/mythbusting_tca_project_management_handbook)





### Project Spotlight

Pop-up Shop Helper

Mullingar Employment Action Group

2017-1-IE01-KA202-025699

PUSH - Pop-Up Shop Helper is an Erasmus+ supported project led by Mullingar Employment Action Group. The project partnership is formed by six different institutions coming from five European countries (Ireland, Spain, Greece, Lithuania and Poland.) The project aims to develop a unique innovative entrepreneurial training product to help those in the creative and artistic sectors to make the transition from creativity to commercialisation - to make a living from their work.

<https://www.meag.ie/erasmus/pop-up-shops/>

## Vocational Education and Training Contacts



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## Erasmus+ VET Funding 2020



Total Allocated Funding

€7,877,411

### KA1 Mobility

€5,357,475

funding 49 projects and 1,861 participants

### KA2 Strategic Partnerships

€1,940,715

funding 8 projects and 1,569 participants

### KA2 Strategic Partnerships - Digital Education Readiness

€574,961

funding 2 projects and 515 participants

### Transnational Cooperation Activities in Vocational Education and Training

€5,000



## Erasmus+ Youth in 2020

Many youth organisations faced significant challenges in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. These included the impossibility of young people coming together in a physical space; capacity and resource challenges; and the focus on provision of critical and frontline services during the pandemic. Nonetheless, a number of newcomer organisations received Erasmus+ Youth funding and we saw continued engagement from organisations who had participated in the programme previously.

## Key Action 1 – Mobility, Key Action 2 – Strategic Partnerships, and Key Action 3 – Youth Dialogue

In 2020, there was a high representation of young people with special needs and young people with fewer opportunities in Key Action 1 and Key Action 3 projects, totalling 64% of all participants.

One newcomer to the programme was Tusla. Their project is of particular significance as it involves a State Agency adopting non-formal methods to engage with young people in residential care, with an emphasis on engaging these young people in policy and how policy can be made more youth friendly. The project has a particular significance in the context of inclusion, focussing on the engagement and empowerment of young people in residential care.

We supported organisations to amend or postpone their projects as well as providing space for peer-to-peer support. The challenges faced by organisations to carry out their projects were evident from meetings we held, with many choosing to extend their projects and postpone activities. Some projects were able to adopt a blended approach, bringing smaller groups of young people together outside of lockdown restrictions, and adding a virtual element.

Beneficiaries demonstrated their adaptability and resilience. For example, when Covid-19 impacted Macra na Feirme’s youth worker mobility project ‘Building Bridges - Creating an LGBT+ Positive Europe’ requiring them to extend the project, the team used the extended time to progress with their own professional development by attending online team building meetings and trainings delivered by LGBT+ Ireland, BelongTo! and Amach as well as hosting private question and answer sessions with members of the LGBTI+ community such as Maria Walsh MEP.

The Cloyne Diocesan Youth Service worked closely with their Finnish partners to adapt their project “Young Decision Makers Part 2” using the online platform Discord. This allowed the groups to meet transnationally in a virtual space.

Of interest also in the context of Covid-19 and inclusion was the continued engagement of the Central Remedial Clinic, a disability service for young people with disabilities, whose 2020 project idea was adapted to meet the needs of the young people in the context of the pandemic. This included a focus on the issue of tech poverty and digital literacy, which was a significant barrier for young people to engage in virtual/online project activities. The project was adapted to include elements of digital training and empowerment as well as a plan to make digital devices more easily available to the young people to facilitate their engagement.



## Youth at National and European Level

We continuously emphasise national and European policy relevant to the youth field with our beneficiaries, through our workshops and trainings and resources. This included an online v-log series on the European Youth Goals. .

Covid-19 posed significant challenges in carrying out our workshops and training activities. However, we adopted new ways of engaging our current beneficiaries and to reach newcomers. This included a Webinar Wednesday series which allowed us to address many of the programme priorities including sustainability, inclusion, digital youth work and active citizenship.



'Active and Engaged', the first ever online Training and Cooperation Activity organised by Léargas, took place in September 2020. It brought together 17 youth workers from across Europe in an online space to explore the promotion of conscious active citizenship among young people.

In line with our increased focus on safeguarding, we published specific Safeguarding Guidance in 2020 applicable to Erasmus+ activities including in the field of youth.



### Project Spotlight

**Waterford & South Tipperary Community Youth Service  
Be Environmental**  
2020-2-IE01-KA205-066104

Young people from across Europe are faced with similar challenges in the areas of Youth Wellbeing, Climate Change and the Natural Environment. This project started with the needs of young people and what changes they wanted to make in their world. The young people worked to develop their vision and this became: 'We want to develop youth work methodologies for young people to work with the natural environment in the age of climate change, and we want to learn from each other, exchange good practices, implement initiatives that deliver real positive change, and learn and grow as organisations together.'  
<https://wstcys.ie/services/international-youth-work-erasmus/>

## Youth Contacts



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## Erasmus+ Youth Funding 2020



**Total Allocated Funding**  
**€3,626,175**

### KA1 Mobility

**€728,695**

**funding 16 projects and 1,010 participants**

### KA2 Strategic Partnerships

**€2,091,411**

**funding 12 projects and 1,979 participants**

### KA2 Strategic Partnerships - Creativity

**€339,380**

**funding 2 projects and 195 participants**

### KA3 Youth Dialogue

**€156,689**

**funding 4 projects and 740 participants**

### Transnational Cooperation Activities in Youth

**€310,000**



**EUROPEAN  
SOLIDARITY  
CORPS**



# European Solidarity Corps

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**Volunteering Projects**

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**Solidarity Projects**

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**Traineeships & Jobs**

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## European Solidarity Corps

The European Solidarity Corps funds and supports young people between 18 and 30 to volunteer or work in projects that benefit communities.



## European Solidarity Corps in 2020

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, organisations that take part in the European Solidarity Corps were able to continue their projects. Volunteers worked both remotely and online, supporting many marginalised and vulnerable sectors of society.



## Volunteering and Solidarity Projects

In 2020 we heard the voices of young Irish volunteers talking about how their experiences have helped them to grow, develop and move on in their lives. We were delighted to hear European Solidarity Corps participant Amy Collins share her experience on the Ryan Tubridy Show on national radio; and to see the “It’s Ok to not be Ok” project take part in a video for the European Commission.

The restrictions caused by Covid-19 did not curb the volunteers’ creativity and enthusiasm. They developed and delivered activity packs for children experiencing homelessness and isolation. They supported youth groups, community circus and youth theatre to continue their connection with the community by delivering workshops online. The European Solidarity Corps volunteer had a very different experience than expected in 2020; however, their ability to give time, commitment and empathy was never more needed.



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### Project Spotlight

**ABCD A Black Child's Dilemma**  
2020-1-IE01-ESC31-065951

This Solidarity project sets out to raise awareness for black and minority groups in Ireland and Europe, through the medium of music and collaborative art form. The Cork-based creative group aims to tackle racism, social exclusion, bullying and mental health. This youth-led group use their creative talents in music, film and the arts as a platform to share stories and strengthen bonds; creating dialogue and understanding around the issues facing young people from minority backgrounds in Ireland today.

<https://blog.leargas.ie/blog/confronting-racism-through-arts-meet-abcd-a-black-childs-dilemma>

## European Solidarity Corps at National and European Level

Faced with the challenge of moving our events to an online platform we embraced the positives - increased participation and reach. We ramped up our Learning Network events to create space for the organisations to discuss the challenges presented by the pandemic, building a community of solidarity and support. In 2020 we co-facilitated an event with our Erasmus+ colleagues and The Wheel. We had a phenomenal attendance with over 90 participants from the community and voluntary sector. We reached into new communities and continued to grow the programme in a number of sectors including Disability, Sustainability and Youth.

**“The European Solidarity Corps volunteer had a very different experience than expected in 2020; however, their ability to give time, commitment and empathy was never more needed.”**

The Department of Rural and Community Development published Ireland's first-ever national volunteering strategy on 5 December 2020. Léargas, along with many other stakeholders and the Department itself, supported the development of the strategy. The purpose of this strategy is to recognise, promote and grow the unique value and contribution volunteers make to Irish society. The strategy will bring a new level of recognition of the importance of volunteering across Government Departments. The Strategy outlines five clear objectives and these are directly aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. We greatly welcome that under objective four there is an explicit commitment to engage with the European Solidarity Corps, promoting ethical and skills-based international volunteering to deliver results for beneficiaries and enhance Global Citizenship in Ireland.

## European Solidarity Corps Contacts



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## European Solidarity Corps Funding 2020



**Total Allocated Funding**  
**€1,688,082**

### Volunteering

**€1,439,659**

funding 28 projects and 141 participants

### Solidarity

**€57,223**

funding 6 projects and 44 participants

### Jobs and Traineeships

**€4,000**

funding 1 projects and 1 participant

### KA3 Youth Dialogue

**€156,689**

funding 4 projects and 740 participants

**€87,200 reserved for STEC**

**€100,000 reserved for NET**

 **léargas**



## Strategic Initiatives

EPALE ▶

eTwinning ▶

Eurodesk ▶

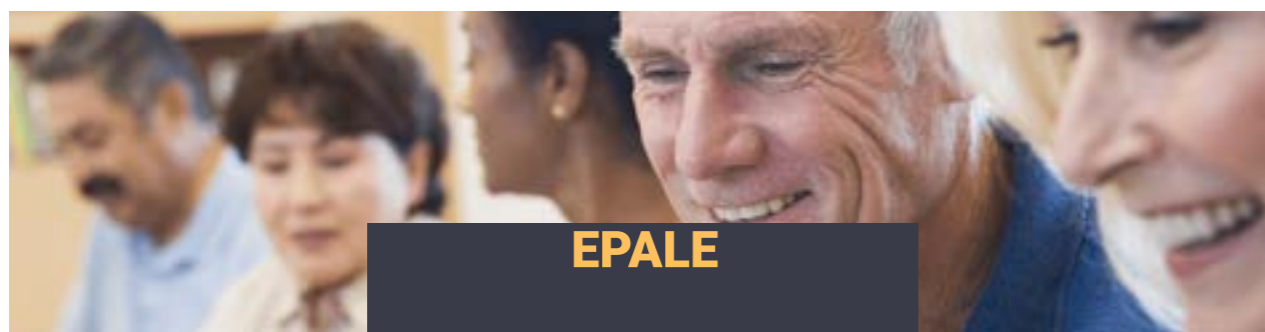
Peace IV - CASE ▶

Youth Wiki ▶

Languages ▶

IAESTE ▶

ECVET ▶



EPALE connects professionals involved in Adult Learning in Europe through a multilingual open membership community



### EPALE Ireland

Like many programmes during the year, EPALE faced an uphill battle with the pandemic changing the entire face of the world. However, the EPALE Ireland team put their heads together to come up with inventive ways to engage the EPALE audience and deliver online events to great success.

EPALE Ireland responded to the times while staying in line with the thematic focuses on both a national and European context. Workshops became a catalyst in building up awareness of EPALE Ireland. There was a drive for connecting and carrying out the important work in the adult learning sector and though people were living in an unfamiliar world, the connection we were all seeking helped to create a special atmosphere at the events as the year went on.



he EPALE Ireland National Day 2020: Bringing Burnout Tools to Adult Learners was notable because it saw our highest number of registrants and attendees and because it was on a topic that had yet to be covered in the year. It felt pioneering in its approach in a year dominated by Covid-19 and digital transitions.

We were gratified that overall growth of registered members from Ireland reached new heights in 2020.. The wider EPALE network also initiated the ‘Community Stories’ aspect in 2020. These were made into an e-book as a resource for EPALE members, capturing memorable participant stories.



## Programme Highlight

EPALE Ireland reached 441 registered members and more than 4,000 social followers by December 2020

### EPALE Contacts



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**Lucia Iacovone**  
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## eTwinning

The online community for schools in Europe connects teachers and pupils to work on joint projects of mutual interest



### eTwinning in 2020

Despite being a very challenging year, 2020 had many highlights in eTwinning.



Our amazing eTwinning teachers still managed to create 143 new eTwinning projects in 2020. Many of these were continued and completed during the school closures.

In all, 12 teachers received National Quality Labels for their projects in 2020, with four also receiving European Quality Labels. The winners were acknowledged at a special online prize giving ceremony in October. Two more Irish schools were also awarded the eTwinning Schools Label for 2020, recognising a whole school approach to eTwinning.

We created the “In This Together” eTwinning projects for primary and post-primary schools to provide resources and support teachers during school closures. The projects were populated with information, updates and useful digital resources for teachers and were used as a repository of distance learning material for teachers and as a collaborative space to share ideas with other Irish educators.

We adapted to the pandemic by providing more bespoke online support visits and training to schools across the country. Training was delivered to teachers on using the eTwinning platform, creating and managing projects.

We delivered the Department of Education-approved blended summer course on eTwinning, ‘Schools Connected Across Europe’, to 20 teachers throughout July. The course consisted of two online ‘face to face’ days and three days of moderated online content. The course was very well received by participants with the blended approach deemed a success.

Five new eTwinning ambassadors were selected as eTwinning ambassadors for 2020/2021. In total, 18 eTwinning ambassadors were chosen for 2020/2021. Ireland’s first university-to-university eTwinning project was established. Lecturers and student teachers from Maynooth University and University of Limerick set up the eTwinning project with the aim to engage trainee teachers in the field of Modern Foreign Languages, including Gaeilge.

Two Irish teachers were selected to deliver workshops at the eTwinning Annual Conference which took place online from 21 to 24 October 2020. Carmel Moore from English NS Galway and Maria O’Donovan from Meánscoil San Nioclás Waterford delivered workshops on the conference theme of “Climate Change and Environmental Challenges”

The first Irish eTwinning Thematic award was awarded to King’s Hospital School for their project on the theme of Democratic Participation. The school were awarded a €500 voucher for video recording equipment for the school.



## Programme Highlight

eTwinning had 282 new teacher registrations and 143 new eTwinning projects in 2020

### eTwinning Contacts



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## Eurodesk

Eurodesk is a free information service about EU funding and opportunities to work, study, volunteer and travel in Europe



### Eurodesk in 2020

2020 was a challenging but also a very creative year for Eurodesk Ireland! Due to Covid-19, from March to December all Eurodesk events and training which we had planned to happen face-to-face instead moved online.



The national #EUYouthInfo event celebrating 25 years of Eurodesk in Ireland and 30 years in Europe, which was also the launch of the Irish section of Youth Wiki, took place on 26 May. It was attended by 50 participants from Ireland, Belgium and Lithuania, including representatives of the European Commission, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (as it was named in 2020), the Eurodesk President, National Youth Council of Ireland, youth organisations, guidance counsellors, young people, Eurodesk multipliers and Ambassadors.

At the ‘Learning by Leaving’ online conference in June, Eurodesk in cooperation with Euroguidance Ireland ran a workshop ‘Euro-Quest’ and ‘Time to Move’ promoting educational and inclusive mobility across Europe.

The Eurodesk Ambassadors panel was launched in February. Young people nominated by Eurodesk multipliers received training on Eurodesk, EU programmes and opportunities for young people, Voice and Public Speaking, Internet Safety and Child Protection.

In October, Eurodesk Ireland and its multipliers organised various Time To Move events and initiatives. We held a national networking inter-agency event “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much” on 7 October. EU information services in Ireland – EURES, Europe Direct, Eurodesk, Europass and Euroguidance/ NCGE - shared examples of successful inter-agency projects and discussed future cooperation.

As part of the YouthInfo chat, run in cooperation with Spunout, Eurodesk multipliers from Youth Work Ireland, Crosscare and the YMCA organised a national week-long campaign during which they answered questions from young people on mobility opportunities such as working, studying or volunteering in Europe.

An interactive publication, Time To Move 2020 Work Volunteer Study, was prepared and published by Youth Info Crosscare in cooperation with VSI Ireland. This accompanied the YouthInfo chat campaign to encourage young people to start thinking about EU opportunities, and to chat with Eurodesk multipliers.

Youth Information Ballinasloe and Europe Direct Ballinasloe recruited and interviewed young people from Ireland who had taken part in Erasmus+ for students in 2019 and 2020, and made a video to share their experience.

Eurodesk Ambassadors designed and delivered their first interactive online Time To Move event for young people in which they shared their experiences.



Due to Covid-19, we of course found it challenging to promote international mobility opportunities and programmes in 2020. At the same time the pandemic has also contributed to an accelerated and intensified use of online tools and technologies and encouraged us to modify our working and communication methods. The experience of 2020 has taught us that in this new context we need to look for new strategies, new ways of exploring and promoting mobility opportunities – at local, national, international and virtual level – while motivating the young people we work for, not to give up, but to plan for the future.

### Eurodesk Contact



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CASE connects schools to take part in shared education projects that cultivate positive relations among school children and young people in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland



## CASE in 2020



“2020 was a year that we will never forget! A year that brought school closures, staying at home, isolation, a lot of hand-washing and a great deal of uncertainty. Yet amidst all this uncertainty 2020 also brought with it a lot of certainty, thanks in no small part to our involvement in the Peace IV Shared Education Programme.” – Principal Clodagh Stephenson

This summary of 2020 by the Principal of Lifford NS, Clodagh Stephenson, was echoed again and again by CASE partnerships. Three workshops reflecting on progress to date and sharing best practice within Shared Education were held in January 2020. The outcome was a rich source of material for our mid-term evaluation and creative ideas for further collaboration. The following weeks saw the delivery of Teacher Professional Learning Programmes, some of which centred on ‘Online Collaboration’. No one foresaw at the time just how beneficial these courses would be in the ensuing weeks and months as the participants found themselves implementing the learning by reaching out to their pupils online. When autumn came, teachers engaged in Blended Learning NI shared their expertise in online sessions and local experts helped schools move to the next level of digital expertise.



Responding to the ‘Returning to School Guidelines’ issued by the Departments of Education both North and South, the CASE team focussed on the area of well-being in the school community. Over 400 teachers and SNAs attended the three workshops on ‘Weaving well-being’ delivered by Fiona Forman. Subsequently, partnerships worked jointly on developing well-being policies for their schools as well as applying the advice imparted in the workshops. Working this way it comes as no surprise that schools could say “CASE has meant for us togetherness while apart”. Pupils too had their say: “This project changed me in a good way. I am kinder to people. I was open to getting to know new people.” And this kindness was shown in collaborative work undertaken by pupils in the months of March to June, when they co-designed cards and sent them to residents in local nursing homes or made videos to thank the frontline workers. While face-to-face meet ups were no longer possible, digital meet ups became the new norm. Pupils when reconnecting online expressed their hope that one day they would catch up in person with their friends in other schools.

Another positive outcome was greater involvement with the wider school community. A partnership in Inishowen reached out to the parents of all three schools involved, and collectively - while apart - entire families walked from Mizen Head to Malin Head and a bit beyond in one day, creating a final celebration of the school year.



## Programme Highlight

CASE had 15 North-South partnerships, 36 South-South partnerships and involved 98 schools from the Republic of Ireland by the end of 2020

## CASE Contact



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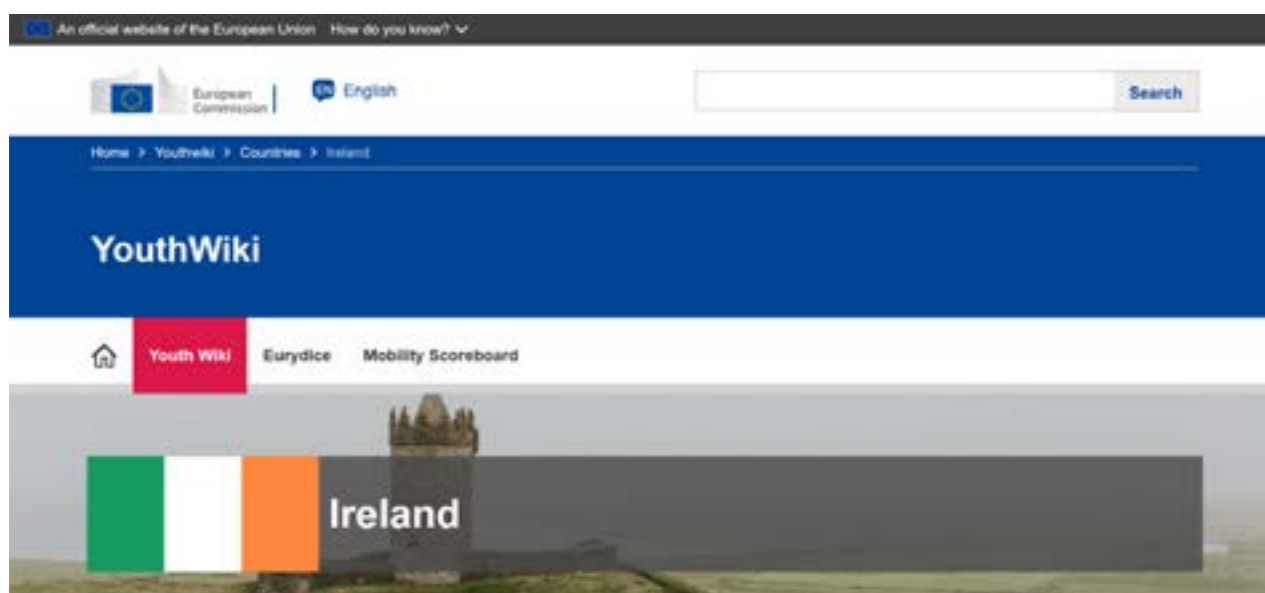
Youth Wiki is Europe's online encyclopaedia for national youth policies. It was created to promote ease of access and peer-to-peer learning.

## Youth Wiki



The main objective of Youth Wiki is to support evidence-based European cooperation in the field of Youth.

Youth Wiki is an online platform presenting information on European countries' youth policies. The main objective of Youth Wiki is to support evidence-based European cooperation in the field of Youth. It does so by providing information on national policies in support of young people in a user-friendly and up-to-date way. The overall purpose is to help the European Commission and Member States in their decision making, by providing information on state of play on reforms and initiatives. The collection of qualitative information also allows the exchange of information and innovative approaches and can substantiate peer learning activities. In 2020 there were 29 countries, including Ireland, participating in Youth Wiki.



Over 2020 Léargas added five further Chapters to the Youth Wiki site and updated the initial five created in late 2019. Visit <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/ireland/overview> to see chapters on:

1. Youth Policy Governance
2. Voluntary Activities
3. Employment & Entrepreneurship
4. Social Inclusion
5. Participation
6. Education and Training
7. Health and Well-Being
8. Creativity and Culture
9. Youth and the World
10. Youth Work

We officially launched Youth Wiki Ireland on 26 May 2020. This was changed from a day-long face-to-face conference to an online event, due to Covid-19. The launch was co-hosted with Eurodesk Ireland and formed part of their anniversary celebrations. The joint online event looked back at 25 years of Eurodesk in Ireland, providing information on Europe to young people and the complimentary of the Youth Wiki site for youth workers and policy makers. There were over 70 registered guests, including youth workers, youth guidance providers, alongside policymakers from relevant government departments including the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Department of Education and Skills (as they were titled in 2020).

Our target audience in Ireland are professionals in the field of youth. Youth workers, academics, policy makers and young people themselves who may wish to be aware of policy that affects their lives. As the National Agency for Erasmus+ Youth, European Solidarity Corps and Eurodesk we are delighted to be able to host Youth Wiki and see a future full of collaboration across the youth sector.

## Youth Wiki Contact



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Our languages programmes promote multilingualism and plurilingualism at all levels of learning

## Languages in 2020



2020 was a busy year for Languages, to be sure! Here are just a few highlights.

On 28 May 2020, Léargas and the Higher Education Authority launched the study “The Impact and Experience of Foreign Languages in the Context of Erasmus+ in All Education Sectors in Ireland” by Dr. Britta C. Jung. The study explored how Erasmus+ influences attitudes to and experiences of foreign language learning.



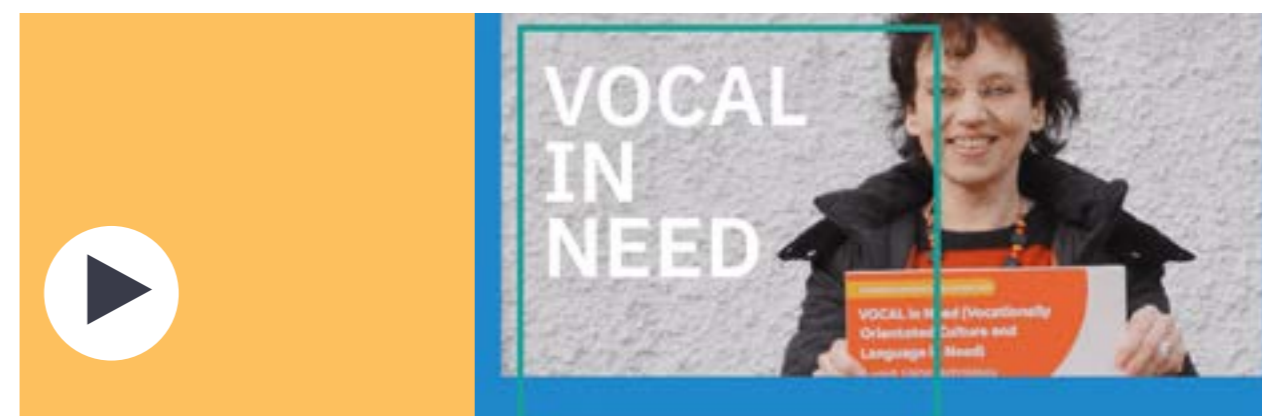
Compared to last year, we had twice as many European Language Label entries from projects that use information and communications technology. This is great news for implementing the Digital Schools Strategy!

2020 was the year of the first online award ceremony for projects that won the European Language Label Award. It was different, but it was fun! Áine Gallagher, comedian and Ireland’s only ‘unqualified guerrilla Irish teacher’, delivered the keynote speech and encouraged everyone attending to use our languages, even if we are not fluent. Her message was to celebrate our language mistakes and have another go at any language!



## Congratulations to the winners of the 2020 European Language Label Award!

- Mary Immaculate College with the project The TEAL Project – Transforming Education through Dialogue (TED) EAL Project
- Na Cnocadóirí with the project Na Cnocadóirí
- ADAPT Centre, Dublin City University with the project AILO at Home
- NUI Galway with the project Proyecto EstudiantELE (#estudiantELE): A Student-Centred Proposal for Language Learning and Teaching Strategies
- St. Andrew’s College, Booterstown, Co. Dublin with the project Desde la Perla Esmeralda a la Perla del Mediterráneo
- IT Tralee with the project VOCAL in Need
- The King’s Hospital School, Palmerstown, Co, Dublin with the project Auf gut Deutsch gesagt
- Mount Carmel Secondary School, Co. Dublin with the project Should borders be abolished? / Faut-il supprimer les frontières?



In November 2020 Léargas Languages organised “Languages in Context”, the first online Erasmus+ Transnational Cooperation Activity (TCA), an international training event in the field of school education that brought safely together teachers from Ireland and ten other European countries. The training focused on putting languages in context through the methodology of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). Besides tailored workshops for primary and post-primary teachers, the TCA showcased CLIL-related Erasmus+ projects and informed participants about Erasmus+ opportunities available to their schools.



### Congratulations to the winners of the 2020 European Day of Languages Competition

- Balbriggan ETNS, Dublin; eTwinning project Language Power
- St. Andrew’s College, Dublin; eTwinning project Desde la Perla Esmeralda a la Perla del Mediterráneo
- Mount Carmel Secondary School, Dublin; eTwinning project Should borders be abolished?/Faut-il supprimer les frontières?
- The King’s Hospital School, Dublin; eTwinning project Auf gut Deutsch gesagt

## Languages Contact



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### IAESTE in 2020

In March 2020 IAESTE Ireland programme activities were put on hold because of the COVID-19 crisis. However, even before the pandemic the environment for IAESTE was extremely challenging. In November 2019 we in Léargas commissioned an external programme review to investigate the programme’s relevance globally and its viability in Ireland.

The review involved consultation with all key stakeholders and was completed in March 2020. It found that “the evidence in Ireland is that (IAESTE) is attracting some interest from students, but hardly any engagement from higher education institutions or enterprise. This is despite the significant efforts made by the IAESTE Officer to promote the programme.” The consequent recommendation was that Ireland end its membership of IAESTE.

The review and its recommendation were considered by the Léargas management team and the Léargas Board. The Board formally adopted the recommendation in June 2020. Léargas will therefore cease to deliver the IAESTE Programme in Ireland. Any students already accepted for placements due to start in 2020 had the option to be supported on their placement through the international IAESTE A.s.b.l. network. Any students who had registered interest in taking part in IAESTE and had paid the registration fee were contacted and refunded.

We are very aware of the huge benefits that IAESTE brought to its participants, and close this programme with regret. We wish to thank all those who supported the IAESTE programme in the past – staff, universities, enterprises and our local committee volunteers.





## ECVET

ECVET is the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training. It is a framework for the transfer and recognition of learning outcomes across VET learning environments.



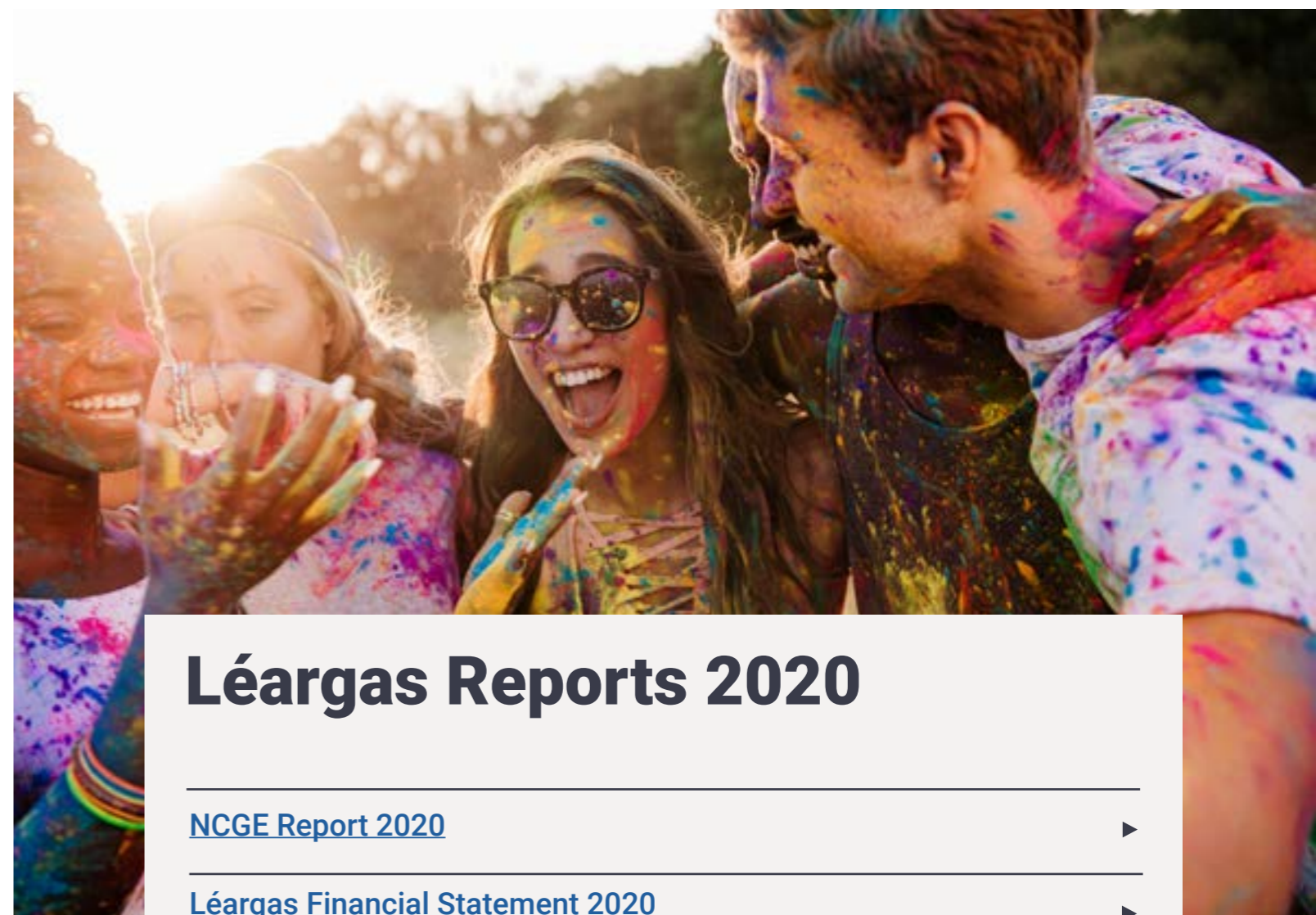
## ECVET in 2020

ECVET finished as a standalone programme at European and national level at the end of 2020. This followed a proposed Council Recommendation, on 1 July, to repeal the 2009 ECVET Recommendation, and for ECVET to be mainstreamed into other EU policy instruments. This reflects that ECVET has accomplished its original goal; enabling greater standardisation and wider recognition and transferability of VET awards.

Across 2020 Léargas facilitated one-to-one check-ins with the ECVET team of ECVET Experts, ECVET users and other close ECVET stakeholders. Some of the focus of these meetings was around the findings of the 2019 national review. Initially happening in face to face in the first quarter, meetings were later held online to ensure each and every user was contacted.

The final Irish ECVET network meeting took place on 15 December 2020. The event was called 'Leading in Complex Times' and took the form of an interactive discussion/training led by facilitators from Resonate Leadership. Discussions focused on the difference between adaptive and technical challenges, and how to approach these differently. Tips were offered through the frame of adaptive leadership. Irish ECVET User Group and Irish ECVET Experts were primarily targeted, but other VET professionals were also invited.

Under the new Erasmus+ programme, ECVET will be mainstream into the wider Erasmus+ VET programme. A new programme called 'VET Teams' will begin in 2021. Under this programme, Léargas will nominate a small team with expertise in the field of VET. This team will promote the use of EU VET instruments, including ECVET, alongside other instruments such as EQUAVET.



## Léargas Reports 2020

[NCGE Report 2020](#) ▶

[Léargas Financial Statement 2020](#) ▶

[Léargas Committees 2020](#) ▶



# Get in touch



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## Léargas Committees: Membership and Attendance, 2020

### Léargas Board

Board Member	Dates of Meetings and Attendance								Total
	28-Jan	28-Apr	05-Jun	01-Jul	08-Sep	13-Oct	09-Nov	04-Dec	
Michael McLoughlin	A	X	X						2
Hugh MacConville	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	8
Maria Lorigan	X	X	X	A	X	X	X	X	7
Fidelma Collins	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	8
Jean -Marie Cullen	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	8
Dipti Pandya								X	1
Frank Crummey								X	1
Margaret Waters								X	1
Nuala Keher								X	1

Key:

X	Attending
A	Apologies
	Not Applicable





## Léargas Finance and Audit Committee

Committee Member	Dates of Meetings and Attendance								Total
	28-Jan	28-Apr	05-Jun	01-Jul	08-Sep	13-Oct	09-Nov	04-Dec	
Michael McLoughlin	A	X	X						2
Hugh MacConville	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	8
Fidelma Collins	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	8
Margaret Guinan	A	X	X	X	X	A	X	X	6

Key:

X	Attending
A	Apologies
	Not Applicable

## Programme Selection Committees, 2020

<b>Date</b>	<b>Programme</b>	<b>Committee Members</b>	<b>Observers</b>
25 March 2020	Erasmus+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps	Áine Beamish, Laura Austen-Gray, Darren O'Connor	Róisín Barr
21 April 2020	Erasmus+ School Education Key Action 101 and Adult Education Key Action 104	Emma Grainger, Carol Guildea, Brian Desmond	Orla Dowling, Daniel Nolan, Nicki Maguire
21 April 2020	Erasmus+ Vocational Education and Training Key Action 102 & 116	Laura Austen-Gray, Carol Guildea, Charis Hughes	Daniel Nolan
23 June 2020	Erasmus+ School Education Key Action 201, Key Action 229 and Key Action 224	Hugh McConville, Fidelma Collins, Laura Austen-Gray, Carol Guildea,	Orla Dowling, Niamh McClelland, Nicki Maguire
06 July 2020	Erasmus+ Youth Key Action 105, Key Action 205, and Key Action 347; European Solidarity Corps ESC11, ESC31 and ESC52	Sue Menton, Gerry McCarthy, Laura Austen-Gray, Darren O'Connor	Donald Ewing, Martina O'Byrne
14 July 2020	Erasmus+ School Education KA202 Application and Selection list	Brian Desmond, Manika-Nia Dixon, Mark Skinner, Diane Dignam	Orla Dowling, Daniel Nolan
3 December 2020	Erasmus+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps	Laura Austen-Gray, Maurice Devlin, Darren O'Connor	Roisin Barr



## Programme Eligibility Committees, 2020

<b>Date</b>	<b>Programme</b>	<b>Committee Members</b>	<b>Observers</b>
19 March 2020	Erasmus+ Key Action 1 and European Solidarity Corps	Áine Beamish, Emma Grainger, Charis Hughes	N/A
19 May 2020	Erasmus+ Key Action 201 and Key Action 229	Charis Hughes, Áine Beamish, Brian Desmond, Laura Austen-Gray	N/A
16 June 2020	Erasmus+ Key Action 105, Key Action 205, Key Action 347 and European Solidarity Corps	Brian Desmond, Charis Hughes, Laura Austen-Gray	N/A
23 October 2020	Erasmus+ Key Action 105, Key Action 205, Key Action 347 and European Solidarity Corps	Charis Hughes, Brian Desmond, Áine Beamish	N/A