1, 2, 3 of Policy

Linking your Erasmus+ Adult Education Project to National and European Policy
Erasmus+ Policy Series
What is policy?

Policy is the set of values and objectives that guide the work of organisations and bodies. This includes for example, the Irish Government and the European Union.

Why is policy important?

Policy is important because it tells us what certain organisations and bodies plan to achieve and how they will be guided in their work.

Take Government policy for example: Government policy tells us what the Government’s priorities are and what it plans to accomplish. It sets out the commitments it is making on a range of different issues.

For example: education and training, employment, mental health, the rights of people with disabilities, migration and so forth.
National Adult Education Policy

Our Government has a number of important policy documents that set out what it plans to do in the field of Adult Education in Ireland. The main policy documents are:

Further Education and Training Strategy (2014-2019) is the Government’s first five-year strategy in the field of Further Education and Training (FET). The overall aim of the Strategy is to develop a world-class integrated system of FET in Ireland, which will promote economic development and meet the needs of all citizens. The Strategy has five main goals:

SKILLS FOR THE ECONOMY: FET will address the current and future needs of learners, jobseekers, employers and employees and will contribute to national economic development

ACTIVE INCLUSION: FET provision will support the active inclusion of people of all abilities in society with special reference to literacy and numeracy

QUALITY PROVISION: FET will provide high quality education and training programmes and will meet the appropriate national and international quality standards

INTEGRATED PLANNING AND FUNDING: FET provision will be planned and funded on the basis of objective analysis of needs and evidence of social and economic impact

STANDING OF FET: ensure a valued learning path leading to agreed employment, career, developmental, personal and social options.

Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education (2000) was the predecessor of the FET Strategy and outlined a number of key principles underpinning Adult Education.

The projects and activities that take place as part of Erasmus+ can help to achieve national policy objectives in Adult Education. For example:

• Erasmus+ prioritises projects focused on inclusion
• Erasmus+ provides opportunities for training and upskilling
• Erasmus+ projects can focus on the exchange of experiences and practice between different organisations on issues such as those outlined in the FET Strategy.
European Adult Education Policy

Similar to our own Government, the EU also has a number of important policy documents in the field of Adult Education. These documents set out the EU’s priorities and commitments on Adult Education in Europe. Some of the main policy documents are:

**Europe 2020** is the EU’s plan to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive economic growth. It sets out targets for employment, research and development, climate/energy, education, social inclusion, and poverty reduction.

**Education and Training 2020** is the EU’s plan on education and training. It aims to achieve different objectives including: making lifelong learning and mobility a reality; improving the quality and efficiency of education and training; promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship; enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training.

**Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults (2016)** aims to help adults gain a minimum level of literacy, numeracy and digital skills and/or gain a broader set of skills by progressing towards an upper secondary qualification or equivalent. The Recommendation states that adults would have access to Upskilling Pathways in three ways including: skills assessment (to identify skills and need for upskilling); learning offer (education and training that meets the needs identified by the skills assessment); validation and recognition (the opportunity to have the skills gained recognised and validated).

**Renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning (2011)** outlines how adult learning should develop in Europe by 2020. Priorities between 2015 and 2020 are:

- **GOVERNANCE:** ensuring the coherence of adult learning with other policy areas; improving coordination, effectiveness and relevance to the needs of society, the economy and the environment; increasing, where appropriate, both private and public investment

- **SUPPLY AND TAKE UP:** significantly increasing the supply of high-quality adult learning provision, especially in literacy, numeracy and digital skills; and increasing take-up through effective outreach, guidance and motivation strategies which target the groups most in need

- **FLEXIBILITY AND ACCESS:** widening access by increasing the availability of workplace-based learning and making effective use of ICT; putting in place procedures to identify and assess the skills of low qualified adults, and providing sufficient second-chance opportunities leading to a recognised EQF\(^1\) qualification.

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1 European Qualifications Framework
The European Pillar of Social Rights (2017) sets out 20 principles and rights for European citizens. It has three main categories:

- Equality of opportunities and access to the labour market
- Fair working conditions
- Social protection and Inclusion

It promotes equal rights to quality and inclusive education as well as training and life-long learning.

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on Promoting Common Values, Inclusive Education, and the European Dimension of Teaching (2018) has four main objectives:

- Promoting common values at all levels of education
- More inclusive education
- Encouraging a European dimension of teaching
- Supporting teachers and teaching.

The proposal aims to create the basis for a deeper sense of belonging at local, national and European level. It encourages EU Member States and the European Commission to share good practice and information and to develop policies at a national and EU level.

How does your Erasmus+ project link to European policy?

The projects and activities that take place as part of Erasmus+ are an important way of helping to achieve the aims and objectives of the EU policies listed above. Just some examples:

- Erasmus+ prioritises projects that address the issue of inclusion (Europe 2020, Proposal for a Council Recommendation 2018, European Pillar of Social Rights 2017)
- Erasmus+ supports people to spend time abroad to train and to upskill (Education and Training 2020, Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways 2016)
- Erasmus+ projects provide opportunities for different organisations across Europe to collaborate in order to add a European dimension to their work, to exchange practices and develop new methods of working (Proposal for a Council Recommendation 2018).
We can see that our own Government and the EU want to realise similar things in Adult Education. For example:

- Skills for increased employability, sustainable economic growth and development
- Social inclusion and equality of opportunity
- Quality provision of Adult Education/FET
- Enhancing literacy, numeracy and digital skills
- Needs-based provision of Adult Education/FET.

Your Erasmus+ Adult Education project can develop new and innovative ways to achieve the priorities that are set out in national or EU policy, helping to make positive changes in Adult Education, be that at a local, national or international level.

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Connections between national and European policy

Get in touch

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