



Technical Discussion Report

Overview of Funded Projects Addressing “Democratic Participation” in Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps (2021–2024)

Overview of Funded Projects Addressing “Democratic Participation” in Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps (2021–2024).

© 2026 SALTO Participation and Information Resource Centre

This publication is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (CC BY-SA 4.0), unless otherwise indicated.



You are free to share and adapt the material provided that appropriate attribution is given, changes are indicated, and derivative works are distributed under the same license.

License:
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

Authors:
Dan Moxon and Ondřej Bárta
on behalf of People, Dialogue and Change

Coordination:
Joana Freitas (SALTO PI)

Publisher:
SALTO Participation and Information Resource Centre

Recommended Citation:
Moxon, D. and Bárta, O. (2026) *Overview of Funded Projects Addressing “Democratic Participation” in Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps (2021–2024)*.
SALTO Participation and Information Resource Centre.

Proofread by Interlex OÜ and
Designed by Refleks Design Agency

ISBN 978-9916-779-22-4
Published: September 2026

This publication may contain third-party materials, including photographs, illustrations, maps, data-sets, charts, and excerpts subject to separate copyright conditions. Responsibility for obtaining permissions for reuse rests with the user.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of SALTO PI, the European Commission, affiliated institutions, or funding bodies.

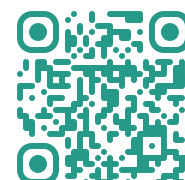
This publication is provided “as is” without warranty of any kind. The publisher and authors disclaim liability for errors, omissions, or consequences arising from use of the publication.

This publication is governed by the laws of the Republic of Estonia and applicable European Union law. Nothing in this publication limits the moral rights of authors under applicable copyright legislation.

Translations and adaptations that are not formally approved by SALTO Participation and Information Resource Centre shall not be presented as official versions.

Ethical statement

This work was funded by SALTO PI. The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest and no financial or personal relationships that could have inappropriately influenced the content of this report. AI was not used in the preparation of this research. The publicly available version of the databases supporting the findings of this study can be accessed through the sources cited above. Access restrictions apply to the additional data sourced from DG EAC.



Introduction

This report serves as a technical annex setting out the methodology applied in the project “Cross Sector Monitoring of the “Participation Priority” within the Erasmus+ (E+) and European Solidarity Corps (ESC) Programmes,” commissioned by the SALTO Participation and Information Resource Centre.

The aim of this project was to analyse trends in activities funded through the E+ and ESC programmes during the 2021–2024 call years. The focus was on activities that contributed to the priority of “participation in democratic life, common values, and civic engagement” as defined in the E+ programme (hereafter referred to as the participation priority).

The methodology is based on an analysis of project results, i.e. details of the funded activities from both programmes. It encompasses the *youth,*

education and training, and sport fields. Particular emphasis was placed on the comparison between sectors and fields.

The participation priority is complex and encompasses a range of subtopics. These are addressed and understood differently across the various sectors. In addition, the available project results data are categorised and recorded differently depending on the programme, the specific action under which the project was funded, and the source database.²

This report discusses the methodology in detail, identifies the limitations within it, and provides recommendations for future developments.

The full results of the analysis can be found in the accompanying reports available in the SALTO PI [Participation Resource Pool](#).



1. <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-a/priorities-of-the-erasmus-programme>

2. DG EAC (n.d.) Erasmus+ Project Results Database, available at <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/?page=1&sort=&domain=eplus2021&view=list&map=false&searchType=projects>

Methodology for E+ funded projects

The aim of this element of the research was to produce an analysis by field and sector of the types of projects funded through the E+ programme during the 2021–2024 call years and that contributed to the “participation priority”.

Fields and sectors were defined according to the different categories within the E+ programme, as

described in Table 1. These are not necessarily identical to educational sectors and fields when defined by the type of organisation (see limitations section). As the *youth* (YOU) and *sport* (SPO) fields are not divided into sectors, these were treated as both fields and sectors to simplify comparison.

Table 1: Categorisation of Fields and Sectors

E+ DATABASE FIELD IDENTIFIER WITHIN PROJECT CODE	FIELD	SECTOR
YOU	Youth	Youth
VET	Vocational Education and Training	Education and Training
HE	Higher education	Education and Training
AE	Adult Education	Education and Training
SE	School	Education and Training
–	Misc. E&T (see limitations section, on KA3 Civil society cooperation grants)	Education and Training
SPO	Sport	Sport

Projects (hereafter referred to as participation projects) which contributed to the participation priority were defined as any E+ project grant made during the 2021–2024 call years that met any of the following criteria:

- 1) A **KA1 or KA2 project grant** marked in the source databases as having one or more of the following participation-related topics:
 - Promotion of alternative forms of participation
 - Awareness about the European Union
 - Democracy and inclusive democratic participation
 - European identity, citizenship and values
 - Reaching the policy level, dialogue with decision makers.

- 2) A **KA154 project grant**, recognising that the criteria for these projects fundamentally relate to the participation priority.
- 3) A **KA3 grant** in the *youth, education and training* fields, recognising that one of the fundamental objectives of these projects is to support policy development. As such, they seek to engage with democratic and public decision-making and therefore relate directly to the participation priority.
- 4) A **Jean Monnet grant** where the project description or title relates to the participation priority, other than *modules, chairs or centres of excellence* (see limitations section).

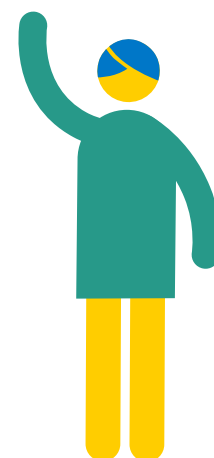
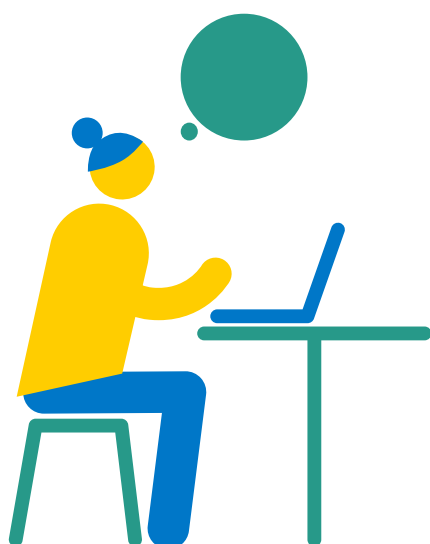
Data sources, extraction and analysis

Source databases for this project were as follows:

- **The E+ Results Database³**
- **The DG EAC Internal E+ Results Database**
(not publicly available)

These two source databases are, in fact, derived from the same dataset that is maintained by DG EAC based on E+ grant reporting. The internal database contains a slightly wider range of data variables compared to the publicly available version. For this research, the two databases were used to produce a consolidated database of “participation projects” as follows:

- 1) The *actions and topics* filters on the public database website were used to identify projects meeting criteria 1–3 above. The *call years* filter was then applied to restrict the results to projects funded in the specified time period. Matching projects were exported in batches of 1.000 (the maximum export limit of the public database), using call year and country to subdivide the results into batches of fewer than 1.000 projects where necessary. The exported data was then combined into a consolidated database.
- 2) In the case of Jean Monnet grants, the *actions*, *action types*, and *call years* filter in the public database were used to identify all Jean Monnet grants, excluding *modules*, *chairs or centres of excellence* within the relevant call years. The resulting projects were exported, manually reviewed, and cleaned to remove any projects whose title or description did not relate to the participation priority. These entries were then merged into the consolidated database.
- 3) To obtain data from the internal DG EAC database, a request was sent to DG EAC to provide data for all E+ projects funded under HED, VET, SCH, ADU, YOU, SPO and Jean Monnet, for the call years 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024.
- 4) Using the project code variable, entries in the consolidated database were matched to the same projects within the data supplied by DG EAC, and the additional variables were merged into the consolidated database.
- 5) The project code variable, which contains a reference to the field, was used to compute variables relating to fields and sectors (see Table 1).
- 6) A variable for simplified organisational types was computed, by aggregating the entries in the COM: Organisation Type Name variable entries into major categories.



3. DG EAC (n.d.) Erasmus+ Project Results Database, available at <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/?page=1&sort=&domain=eplus2021&view=list&map=false&searchType=projects>



 11.326
projects

This resulted in a consolidated database of 11.326 projects with the following variables:

- Project Identifier
- Project Title
- Project Summary
- Topic: Promotion of alternative forms of participation
- Topic: Democracy and inclusive democratic participation
- Topic: Awareness about the European Union
- Topic: European identity, citizenship and values
- Topic: Reaching the policy level/dialogue with decision makers
- Topic Count
- Results Platform Project Card
- Coordinating organisation name
- EU Grant award in euros (This amount represents the grant awarded after the selection stage and is indicative. Please note that any changes made during or after the project's lifetime will not be reflected here.)
- COM 2021–2024: Priority Name
- COM 2021–2024: Project Title In English
- COM 2021–2024: Selected Stage Forecasted Participants for Fewer Opportunities
- COM 2021–2024: Contracted Forecasted Participants
- Programme
- Sector
- Key Action
- Key Action Code
- Action Type
- Funding Year
- Coordinator's country
- Number of Participating Countries
- Names of Participating Countries
- Good Practice Project (yes/no)
- COM 2021–2024: Organisation Type Name
- COM 2021–2024: Topic Name
- Simplification of organisation types
- Summarising sectors into fields

This consolidated database was analysed using descriptive statistics (e.g., totals, means and results across different years, etc.). Results are listed in the table of figures within the main reports. Calculations were produced to 1 decimal place, creating a margin of error of $\pm 0,05$ in reported figures.

Data were extracted from the public database on 24 October 2025. Data from DG EAC were received on 4 March 2026. Unfortunately, the source databases are continually updated, including the addition of retrospective entries. This means that future data extractions are unlikely to produce exactly the same results as those presented here. Nevertheless, any the overall findings are unlikely to differ significantly.



ESC-funded projects methodology

The aim of this element of the research was to analyse ESC projects that contributed to the participation priority of the E+ programme and were funded through the ESC during the 2021–2024 call years

Participation projects were defined as any project grant awarded during the 2021–2024 call years that met one of the following criteria:

- 1) A *solidarity project grant*
- 2) A *volunteering project, volunteering teams in high priority areas, or a volunteering in support of humanitarian aid operations grant*, recognising that the criteria for these project types are based on civic volunteering and therefore contribute directly to the participation priority.

Data sources and analysis

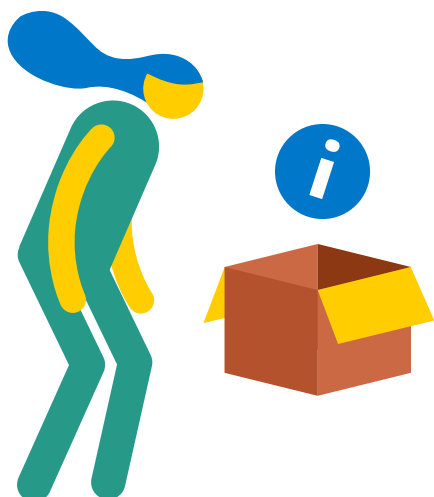
Data on projects matching the definition of a “participation project” above were exported, merged and cleaned from two source databases:

- **The ESC Results Database⁴**
- **The DG EAC Internal ESC Results Database** (not publicly available)

These two source databases are in fact, derived from the same dataset which is maintained by DG EAC based upon ESC grant reporting. The internal database contains a wider range of data variables compared to the publicly available version.

For this research, the two databases were used to produce a consolidated database of “participation projects” as follows:

- 1) The *actions* and *call years* filters on the public database website were used to filter for project matching criteria 1 and 2 above, in the relevant call years. Matches were then exported in groups of 1.000 (the export limit within the public tool), using call year and country to further subdivide into groups below 1.000 as needed. The exported data was then combined into a consolidated database.
- 2) To obtain data from the internal DG EAC database, a request was sent to DG EAC to provide data all ESC projects, except jobs and traineeships, funded under the call years 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024.
- 3) Using the project code variable, entries in the consolidated database were matched to the same projects within the data supplied by DG EAC, and the additional variables were merged into the consolidated database.
- 4) A variable for simplified organisational types was computed, by aggregating the COM: Organisation Type Name into major categories.



4. DG EAC, n.d. European Solidarity Corps Project Results, available at: <https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/projects/>

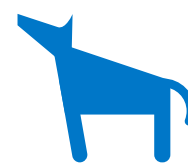
9.684 projects

This resulted in a consolidated database of 9.684 projects with the following variables:

- Programme
- Action
- Funding Year
- Project Identifier
- Project Title
- Project Summary
- Results Platform Project Card
- Coordinating organisation name
- Coordinator's country
- Participating Countries
- COM: Action Code – Name
- COM: Project Code
- COM: Topic Name
- COM: Priority Name
- COM: Project Title In English
- COM: Organisation Type Name
- COM: Selected Stage Forecasted participants for Fewer Opportunities
- COM: Contracted Forecasted participants
- Simplification of the organisation types

This consolidated database was analysed using descriptive statistics (e.g., totals, means, results across different years, etc.). Results are listed in the table of figures within the main reports. Calculations were produced to 1 decimal place, creating a margin of error of ± 0.05 in reported figures.

Data extraction from the public database took place on 24 October 2025. Data from DG EAC were received on 4 March 2026. The source databases are continually updated, including through the addition of retrospective entries. As a result, future data extractions are unlikely to duplicate the results presented here. However, any differences are expected to be minor and should not materially affect the overall findings.



Known limitations and gaps in the methodology

Limitations with regard to the E+ analysis

- 1) The field and sector groupings used within source datasets do not correspond directly to the educational sectors and fields as they are defined and applied in youth and educational policy. **In this research, categorisation of fields is determined by the grant category to which the organisation applied**, rather than the sector to which the organisation belongs or the legal status of the organisation. For example, any organisation receiving a grant made under YOU is categorised as part of the *youth field*. However, it is possible for YOU grants to be made to organisations (e.g. schools), which may not be typically considered part of the *youth field* or field as the term is generally understood in policy contexts. The same can apply to other fields. Nevertheless, this issue affects the YOU field more substantially, because there are a large number of applications from organisations outside of the *youth field*. Grant categories were used as the basis for the field or sector groupings because this is the way data within E+ is typically referred to and grouped by programme stakeholders.
 - 2) **To follow the categorisation** approach outlined in limitation 1, all Jean Monnet grants were treated as being within the HED sector, which is the primary focus of Jean Monnet. This includes a number of grants (approximately 115) that relate to other sectors and could potentially be categorised within other sectors.
 - 3) **This method** for categorising projects as participation-related cannot fully capture or assess:
 - a. Learning mobility activities organised by E+ accredited organisations. The initial accreditation of these organisations is captured. However, the source databases do not include data on their subsequent activities. The budget for these activities is also not recorded.
 - b. Collaborative Partnerships in Sport, Large-scale Not-for-profit European Sport Events, and European Sports Events. The source databases do not include topics for these types of projects, meaning participation-themed projects cannot be easily identified. It is assumed that these projects, overall, do not make a strong contribution to the participation priority, so they are not included.
 - c. Jean Monnet Modules, Chairs, and Centres of Excellence. In general, Jean Monnet grants are particularly difficult to analyse. The source databases do not include topic themes for Jean Monnet projects, meaning that projects address the participation priority cannot readily be identified except through manual review. Modules, Chairs, and Centres of Excellence are too numerous for this approach to be feasible. It could be argued that all Jean Monnet grants contribute to the participation priority, as they are intended to support “teaching, learning, research and debates on various aspects of the European Union.”
- However, previous consultation between SALTO PI and the National Agencies indicated that this is not necessarily the view held by programme stakeholders. An initial review of project titles this conclusion, as the vast majority cannot be clearly linked to the participation priority (e.g. *European Research Activities as Elective Courses in Physics Teacher Education* or *EU Strategy for Sustainable Textiles*). On balance, excluding modules, chairs, and centres of excellence from the analysis was considered the most appropriate approach. Nevertheless, it is recognised that some projects within these action types do not contribute to the participation priority, for example, *CoEV – the Centre of European Values*.

d. KA1 and KA2 projects that use high-quality participatory methodologies but do not address participation as a project topic. For example, a beneficiary might support a group of young people to plan and develop a project on the theme of environmental conservation. Although this participatory methodology would participants to develop competences related to participation in democratic life, the project would not be identified as a “participation-themed” project within the source databases. As the source databases do not contain information on project methodologies, projects of this nature cannot be identified. Consequently, it is not possible to determine how many such projects exist.

4) KA3 Civil Society Cooperation grants are particularly difficult to analyse. Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) grants and the associated 2023 Structural Grant Agreement (SGA) grants are recorded as separate grants in the source databases, although they are interdependent in practice. Civil Society Cooperation: Education and Training grants (including FPA and SGA grants) cannot be easily linked to the *education and training field*, so these have been categorised as Misc. E&T. The budgets for all Civil Society Cooperation grants are recorded as zero in the source databases. However, it is known that the associated funding is allocated through the SGA grants.

5) KA3 Grants relating to EU Youth Dialogue are not included in the source databases and therefore cannot be included in the analysis.

Although these grants relate directly to the participation priority, the impact of their exclusion is likely to be negligible. They are few in number (one per Member State), and their implementation is largely prescribed by the EU Youth Dialogue process.

6) The analysis is based on the availability of data in the source databases. Information on organisation type and participant numbers is not available for all projects. In particular, the source databases do not contain these data for the for the following action types:

- a. Erasmus+ accreditation in the field of youth
- b. Youth participation activities
- c. Mobility of sport coaches and staff
- d. Small-scale partnerships (all sectors)
- e. Cooperation partnerships (all sectors)
- f. Civil Society Cooperation (all sectors)
- g. European policy experimentation in higher education
- h. European Youth Together
- i. Jean Monnet actions in other fields of education and training
- j. Jean Monnet policy debates – thematic networks in higher education.

Limitations of the ESC analysis

7) Within the source database, all *solidarity projects* are recorded as having zero young people with fewer opportunities participating (as distinct from missing values). This seems unlikely and therefore suggests gaps in the collection or monitoring of the original data.

8) Within the source databases, all *volunteering projects* are reported as having only one

participating country. This seems unlikely, as cross-border *volunteering projects* are permitted. This suggests gaps in the collection or monitoring of the original data.

9) Within the source databases, participant data are unavailable for *volunteering teams in high-priority areas* or *volunteering in support of humanitarian aid operations*.

Recommendations for future monitoring

Based on the experience gained during this project, several recommendations can be made for future analyses.

Addressing gaps in the source databases. Many of the limitations above (3a, 4–6 and 8–9) relate to gaps in the source databases. It is not clear whether these gaps arise at the data collection stage (i.e. the data are simply not collected from grant beneficiaries), or whether the data are held internally by DG EAC and/or the National Agencies but not incorporated into the source databases. The initial data request submitted to DG EAC included these categories of data; however, the corresponding fields were blank or absent from the database provided. Further discussion with these stakeholders may help clarify the reasons for these gaps and could potentially provide access to additional data to support future analyses. DG EAC has been very supportive in providing supplementary data for this research, and direct access to internal databases would further enhance the scope of future analyses. If data are not collected in these areas, addressing these gaps would require changes to project monitoring across the two programmes.

Additional data cleaning. Several of the limitations identified above could be addressed through further data cleaning, particularly limitations 3 and 4 relating to Jean Monnet Modules, Chairs and Centres of Excellence and KA3 Civil Society Cooperation grants. Addressing these limitations would require additional time for the review and analysis of project entries, which was beyond the scope of this initial project.

Identifying projects that use high-quality participatory methodologies. This represents the principal limitation of the research. Information on project methodology is not recorded as part of the project results and is therefore unavailable in the source databases for analysis. To enable this aspect to be analysed, it would first need to be monitored at the project level within the programmes. This would require:

- **Developing** a set of formalised standards, criteria, or benchmarks to define high-quality participation within a project.
- **Assessing** project applications against these benchmarks. This could be undertaken either through self-assessment by project applicants or external assessment by grant evaluators.
- **Recording** the outcomes of these assessments within the project results and, ultimately, within the results databases.

Implementing such a system would be a substantial change to programme monitoring and would increase the monitoring burden on both applicants and National Agencies (NAs). However, it would also encourage the use of high-quality participatory methodologies (for example, if the assessment were linked to grant decisions) while enabling the analysis of trends in their use across the programmes.

An alternative approach to this limitation would be to draw on the findings of the forthcoming RAY-MON research. The [RAY Network](#) has recently introduced module questions about the quality of participation in its surveys, which are distributed to a representative sample of programme beneficiaries. Once available, these findings should provide a useful indication of overall trends in the quality of participation within projects in the *youth field*. However, as the RAY Network does not cover the *education, training and sport fields*, it would not be possible to undertake a cross-sector comparison using these data.



