

Education, training: Community action programme Socrates, 2nd phase 2000-2004

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This report was written to fulfil the requirements set out in the European Parliament and Council decisions establishing the Community action programmes in the field of education (Socrates 2000-2006), vocational training ([Leonardo da Vinci 2000-2006](#)) and integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in education and training systems in Europe ([eLearning 2004-2006](#)).

Together, these programmes received more than **EUR 3 billion of Community funds**.

For the period 2007-2013, the various initiatives under these three programmes have been integrated under a single umbrella, the new [Lifelong Learning Programme](#) (LLP). The decision to conduct a joint evaluation and to present this joint report follows the same line as this integration.

The **Socrates** programme, with a total budget of EUR 2.093 billion, had four specific objectives: (i) to strengthen the European dimension in education; (ii) to promote knowledge of EU languages; (iii) to promote cooperation and mobility in the field of education; and (iv) to encourage innovation in education.

The programme consisted of three main schemes - **Comenius**, **Erasmus** and **Grundtvig** -, covering schools, higher education and adult learning respectively.

Results of the evaluation: the evaluation demonstrated that these EU programmes were relevant to the needs of the sectors concerned and that many of the activities would not have taken place without their financial support:

- in terms of **school education**, the key schemes with an impact on schools were Comenius and eTwinning. Partnerships supported under the Comenius and eLearning programmes gave schools a more European dimension and outlook and improved the school climate, in terms of cooperation between teachers and pupils and between different subjects in the schools participating. They helped to create a clearer sense of European identity by enabling schools to cooperate with schools in other EU countries. School partnerships enabled teachers to improve their teaching skills and gave pupils and teachers alike a chance to improve their foreign language and ICT skills, to experience European cooperation projects and to create sustainable links with their peers in other countries. Some 85% of the respondents who had participated in Comenius felt that their activity would not have taken place without funding from the Commission. Enhanced mobility within school education made the clearest impact out of the activities in the programme;
- in terms of **teaching methods**, projects, partnerships and individual mobility schemes influenced the educational practice of those directly involved. In particular, 64% of all beneficiaries reported increases in knowledge and skills and half saw sharing good practice across Europe as the main benefit;
- in terms of **higher education**, the largest positive impact was by increasing the capacity for mobility. This influenced participants' personal and professional development and contributed to a more open attitude and a clearer and better informed perspective for their subsequent studies or professional life and to improving their understanding of Europe and of "belonging to a European family". Knowledge of EU languages has improved and stronger contacts have been established with European colleagues. Participants in mobility schemes became more employable thanks to their international experience and better language skills. Erasmus has also had a considerable effect at national and international institutional levels. 94% of the participants in the survey agreed that

Erasmus had increased and sustained cooperation between institutions. The effect on universities' internationalisation strategies and development of international support services is significant, whereas the effect on teaching and research at departmental level seems more indirect, e.g. via the international networks created. Erasmus has also acted as a driver for change in national and European higher education policies as it inspired five of the six lines of action in the Bologna Declaration;

- in terms of **adult education**, the strongest kinds of impact reported on adult learning were closer, sustained cooperation between institutions (93% of participating organisations), greater opportunities for mobility and a more European outlook on the part of individuals and institutions (90%). Grundtvig has thus clearly succeeded in sowing the seeds of a European dimension in adult education – a sector with almost no tradition of European cooperation. The evaluation reported a significant impact in terms of improving the quality of teaching and curricula and approaches to learning and management (74%). Enhanced professional skills and stronger networking between adult education staff in Europe were further benefits, and more than half the respondents (56%) felt that their participation in Grundtvig had made them more employable and adaptable. Lastly, Grundtvig had a comparatively strong impact on improving educational opportunities for disadvantaged social groups.

More generally, the report acknowledges that the creation of a “**European education area**” establishing a sustainable culture of European cooperation is the most significant impact. In particular, Erasmus has created infrastructure in which almost all European universities participate.