

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION THROUGH ERASMUS+: BETWEEN ACADEMIC MOBILITY AND EUROPEAN IDENTITY

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Abstract: *This article analyzes the influence of the Erasmus+ program on formal education in Romania. Taking a multidisciplinary perspective, the study integrates theories from educational sciences and social sciences, such as experiential learning theory, European identity theory, academic mobility theory and multiculturalism theory. These theoretical frameworks provide a deep understanding of the complex and multidimensional impact of Erasmus+. Methodologically, the paper adopts a documentary analysis and a comparative case study, evaluating the program through a SWOT analysis. This analysis highlights the contributions of Erasmus+ to the internationalization of education and the development of intercultural, linguistic and social competences. At the same time, limitations of the program are addressed, such as dependence on external financing and unequal distribution of benefits. The study's findings underline the role of Erasmus+ in shaping well-informed and aware European citizens with relevant skills for the global labor market. Strategies are also recommended for enhancing the impact of the program in Romania, such as improving access and inclusion, promoting digital skills, supporting sustainability and sustainable development, recognizing qualifications and promoting active European citizenship.*

Keywords: Erasmus+, European identity, academic mobility, internationalization of education, educational transition, interculturality, European funds.

1. The theoretical framework

To establish a theoretical scaffolding for the Erasmus+ initiative, we shall harness a panoply of seminal concepts originating from the domains of pedagogy and social sciences. Amongst these, David Kolb's experiential learning theory takes center stage, accentuating the pivotal role of unmediated exposure and introspection in the acquisition of knowledge. Concomitantly, European identity theory delves into the forging of self-perception within the continental milieu, while academic mobility theory underlines the significance of scholarly interchanges in the globalized educational landscape. Moreover, the theory of multiculturalism champions the recognition and valorization of cultural heterogeneity. This theoretical arsenal shall illuminate the multifaceted ramifications of Erasmus+ on its partakers and the pedagogical ecosystem at large (Kolb, 2014).

Kolb's experiential learning paradigm proves exceptionally germane and apposite in the dissection of Erasmus+, a scheme that offers profound and metamorphic educational prospects via international immersion. This framework, positing learning as an engaged procedure emanating from the alchemization of lived occurrences (Kolb, 2014), can supply an all-encompassing lens to fathom how Erasmus+ molds the individual and vocational growth of its beneficiaries.

At a later stage, reflective observation becomes crucial. After experiencing various experiences in the context of the Erasmus+ programme, participants take time to reflect on them. This reflection can be personal or shared with peers and mentors. Through reflection, participants can better understand different cultural and educational contexts and analyze how these experiences relate to their prior values and knowledge. This process of reflection is essential to transform direct experiences into meaningful learning (Kolb, 2014).

As participants process and reflect on their experiences, they reach the stage of abstract conceptualization. In this phase, they begin to formulate theories or adjust their preexisting concepts in light of their new understandings (Kolb, 2014). In the context of Erasmus+, this may mean developing a new perspective on intercultural relations, comparative education systems or professional practices. This abstract conceptualization allows them to synthesize and integrate their new experiences with prior knowledge, leading to a deeper and more nuanced understanding.

The last stage of Kolb's cycle is active experimentation, where participants apply their new acquisitions and knowledge in other contexts (Kolb, 2014). In the case of the Erasmus+ programme, this could involve applying the intercultural and linguistic skills acquired in their professional career or further studies. Participants could also share the knowledge and experiences gained with their home communities, thus extending the impact of experiential learning beyond themselves.

European identity theory, which finds its roots in the works of thinkers such as Jürgen Habermas and Anthony D. Smith, is central to understanding the impact of the Erasmus+ program on individual and collective perceptions of European identity. This theory, which deals with how individuals construct and express their identity within a wider European context, can provide a deep insight into how Erasmus+ experiences shape the sense of European belonging (Stråth, 2002).

Jürgen Habermas, one of the most influential theorists of European identity, discussed the concept of "European public space", suggesting that European identity is formed and manifested through transnational dialogue and communication (Gestrich, 2006). The Erasmus+ program embodies this idea by facilitating broad cultural and academic exchanges that allow participants to engage in dialogues and build a common understanding and a shared European identity.

Conversely, Anthony D. Smith, renowned for his treatises on nationalism, might posit that the edifice of European self-perception rests upon the shared cultural and historical fundamentals (Smith, 1992). Through the lens of Erasmus+, this notion would imply that immersion in the variegated tapestry of European national heritages and chronicles enables partakers to valorize the collective continental legacy and forge an identity that surpasses the confines of national boundaries.

The analysis of the Erasmus+ program through the lens of European identity theory reveals how cross-border intercultural and educational experiences can influence participants' perception of their own identity and their belonging to a European community. Through interactions with various cultures and education systems within the European Union, participants are exposed to a variety of perspectives and ways of life. This exposure can lead to a reconsideration of one's own values and identity, allowing participants to develop a broader perspective on Europe.

Erasmus+ experiences also offer opportunities to observe and participate in democratic and governance practices at the European level. Participants may come to appreciate more the principles and values that underpin the European Union, such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law. This can lead to a stronger identification with Europe as a political and cultural entity.

In addition, the Erasmus+ program promotes the development of a sense of European solidarity and cooperation. This is achieved by encouraging active participation and collaboration in various educational and cultural projects, which allow participants to experience the benefits of transnational cooperation and develop a sense of shared responsibility for the future of Europe.

Academic mobility theory, explored by theorists such as Philip G. Altbach and Hans de Wit, focuses on the dynamics and impact of transnational movements of pupils, students, teachers and researchers (De Wit & Altbach, 2021). This theory is highly relevant for understanding and analyzing the Erasmus+ program, a program that facilitates academic and cultural exchanges at the European and international level.

Hans de Wit, a distinguished scholar in the realm of educational internationalization, underscores the pivotal role of academic mobility in cultivating intercultural competence and global understanding (De Wit, 2010). Within the framework of Erasmus+, this notion manifests through the opportunities afforded to partakers to study and work in diverse cultural milieus, thereby acquiring vital aptitudes such as adaptability, cross-cultural communication, and problem-solving in heterogeneous contexts.

Philip G. Altbach, a preeminent researcher in the domain of international education, emphasizes the significance of educational mobility in the globalization of pedagogy. He illuminates how exchange programs like Erasmus+ transcend the mere expansion of the academic and cultural horizons of the partakers, instead contributing to the development of international professional networks and the augmentation of collaboration between educational institutions (Altbach & Engberg, 2014). Through Erasmus+, students and teachers find themselves immersed in novel teaching-learning methodologies, leading to the improvement of the quality of education and research.

Academic mobility theory also suggests that such international experiences can have a significant effect on participants' academic careers (De Wit, 2010). This is due not only to the accumulation of knowledge and skills, but also to the acquisition of a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and educational practices. In this way, Erasmus+ contributes to the training of teachers and researchers who are well equipped to navigate the global education and research landscape.

Applying the theory of academic mobility to the Erasmus+ program, it can be seen that this program plays a crucial role in promoting the internationalization of education and research. Erasmus+ not only provides opportunities for learning and personal development, but also contributes to creating a generation of academics and professionals with a broad perspective, able to contribute to the academic and professional community globally.

Multiculturalism theory, an essential field of study in the social sciences, explores how societies can integrate and celebrate cultural diversity. Theorists such as Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka have made significant contributions to this field, providing relevant perspectives for the analysis of the Erasmus+ programme.

Charles Taylor, in his work on the politics of recognition, argues that societies must recognize and respect the cultural diversity of their members (Taylor, 1994). This principle is vital to understanding how Erasmus+ promotes multiculturalism. The program encourages participants to explore and value diverse cultures, not just in a passive way, but through immersion and direct interaction. Thus pupils, students and teachers participating in Erasmus+ have the unique chance to experience and learn about European cultural diversity in a deep and personal way.

Will Kymlicka highlighted the importance of cultural rights and autonomy within diverse societies (Kymlicka, 1995). This perspective is relevant to the Erasmus+ program as it encourages participants to understand and respect the different cultural and political contexts in Europe. Through their experiences, students and teachers are exposed to different ways of life and value systems, which can lead to a greater appreciation of pluralism and a better understanding of how different cultures can coexist and collaborate.

Analyzing the Erasmus+ program through the lens of multiculturalism theory, it becomes evident that it not only provides educational opportunities, but also plays a crucial role in promoting the understanding and acceptance of cultural diversity. Erasmus+ helps participants develop essential intercultural competences such as empathy, intercultural communication and the ability to navigate diverse cultural environments. These skills are fundamental in a globalized world where cross-cultural interactions are frequent.

2. Research methodology

The Erasmus+ program, initiated in 1987, has become an essential element in the European educational landscape. It is a program that has continuously evolved, becoming today a symbol of education and mobility in the European Union.

The general objective of the study is to comprehensively evaluate the Erasmus+ program, exploring its history, development, current priorities and impact on education and professional training within the European Union, with a specific focus on Romania. The historical analysis shows a transition from one-off educational initiatives to an integrated program encompassing education, vocational training, youth and sport. This development reflects the EU's continued commitment to education, adapting to the needs and challenges of contemporary society.

The research incorporates five distinct aims, each contributing to the holistic examination of the initiative. The inaugural objective seeks to delve into the chronicle and evolution of Erasmus+, furnishing a backdrop for grasping its current state and developmental trajectories. The second aim hones in on the present-day structure and goals of the program, illuminating how it fosters educational mobility and inter-institutional collaboration, with a special emphasis on inclusion and diversity.

A tertiary objective lies in appraising the repercussions of Erasmus+ on the internationalization of education in Romania. This encompasses an analysis of how the initiative has contributed to the cultivation of linguistic, intercultural, and social aptitudes among Romanian partakers. Moreover, it investigates the manner in which Erasmus+ has impacted innovation and the exchange of best practices between institutions.

The fourth specific objective focuses on identifying the challenges and opportunities associated with the Erasmus+ program in the Romanian context. This involves exploring dependence on external funding, uneven distribution of benefits, and logistical and administrative challenges.

Finally, the fifth objective is to carry out a SWOT analysis of the Erasmus+ program in Romania, to highlight the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This analysis provides a clear perspective on how the program can be improved and adapted to maximize its benefits in the Romanian context.

3. Presentation of the Erasmus+ program

The European Parliament's 2019 clarion call to reimagine the Erasmus+ initiative and exponentially augment its financial resources signaled a bold vision for the future landscape of pedagogy across the continent (European Parliament, 2019). Ursula von der Leyen echoed this resounding appeal, underscoring a profound dedication to bolstering education and training throughout Europe. Yet, the fiscal compromise forged by European leaders in the summer of 2020 allocated a more modest sum of €21.2 billion for the nascent generation of programmes, markedly below the initial proposition. In the wake of

this concession, legislators from diverse parliamentary factions, united by their zeal for educational matters, penned an open missive to Chancellor Angela Merkel, imploring for a more generous endowment for Erasmus+ (Cotidianul, 2018).

Set against the canvas of these metamorphoses, a watershed moment materialized in 2014 when a constellation of EU endeavors in the realms of education and youth were woven together under the aegis of the trailblazing Erasmus+ integrated program for education, training, youth, and sport. This encompassed the perpetuation of erstwhile initiatives under the novel nomenclature of Erasmus+, such as Erasmus for Higher Education, Erasmus for Masters and PhD Mobility, Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs, Comenius for School Education, Leonardo da Vinci for Vocational Training, and Grundtvig for Adult Education (Grisoni, 2010).

On the Romanian stage, the pivotal mantle of shepherding this program of European magnitude is bestowed upon the National Agency for Community Programs in the Field of Education and Professional Training (ANPCDEFP). This organization shoulders a panoply of vital and multifaceted duties, encompassing the stewardship and apportionment of European pecuniary resources earmarked for the education and vocational training sectors. ANPCDEFP also assumes a seminal role in buttressing organizations and individuals in their ontogenesis, while championing the forging of stalwart partnerships and facilitating the interchange of experiences, best practices, and expertise. Through its manifold undertakings, the agency contributes to the molding and transfiguration of attitudes and mentalities, embracing and promulgating cardinal European values, while interweaving Romanian indigenous values into an expansive continental tapestry. At its core, ANPCDEFP is steadfastly committed to nurturing a culture of excellence, a dedication mirrored in the mission it espouses (National Agency for Community Programs in the Field of Education and Vocational Training, 2022).

At its core, the Erasmus+ initiative is steadfastly committed to fostering inter-institutional cooperation and facilitating cross-border academic and professional mobility. As per the European Commission (2017), this program caters to a wide spectrum of beneficiaries, encompassing students, apprentices, foremen, teachers, educators, and administrative staff within educational institutions.

Firmly rooted in the tenet of lifelong learning, Erasmus+ presents an array of opportunities for transnational educational and professional engagements, including study visits, student and apprentice placements, teaching and training activities, exchange of experience, as well as youth and sports initiatives. These prospects transcend the boundaries of the European Union, extending beyond the continent's borders, subject to the stipulations outlined in the program guide (European Commission, 2017).

The Erasmus+ program distinguishes itself through the diversity of its mobility modalities, differentiating between short-term and long-term mobility, as well as individual and group mobility. By means of these mechanisms, the initiative seeks to empower participants to enhance their professional, linguistic, social, and intercultural competencies. Concurrently, Erasmus+ contributes to the fortification of a profound awareness of European unity in diversity, a foundational principle of the union's construction. Thus, the program not only reinforces the sense of belonging to a shared European cultural and educational space but also underscores the rich cultural tapestry of the continent, thereby bolstering European identity within the context of this diversity (European Commission, 2017).

The Erasmus+ program weaves together three distinct yet interconnected specific objectives, each with a well-defined scope of action, all contributing to the realization of the overarching vision, under the umbrella of its general objective:

1. The inaugural specific objective places emphasis on fostering individual and group mobility for educational purposes while simultaneously nurturing cooperation, quality, inclusion, equity, excellence, creativity, and innovation at both the organizational level and within the realm of educational and training policies. ("promote the mobility of individuals and groups for the purpose of learning, as well as cooperation, quality, inclusion and equity, excellence, creativity and innovation at the level of organizations and policies in the field of education and training;" European Commission, 2022).

2. "To promote mobility for the purpose of non-formal and informal learning, the active participation of young people, as well as cooperation, the quality, inclusion, creativity and innovation at the level of youth organizations and policies" European Commission, 2022).

3. "To promote the mobility of sports personnel for the purpose of learning, as well as cooperation, quality, inclusion, creativity and innovation at the level of sports organizations and sports policies." European Commission, 2022).

The Erasmus+ program, as outlined in the European Commission's 2022 documentation, endeavors to tackle four horizontal priorities, each playing a pivotal role in molding and perpetually enhancing the European educational and social landscape.

Foremost among these is the program's steadfast dedication to championing an agenda of inclusion and diversity. This entails an unwavering focus on equal opportunity and access, inclusion, diversity, and equity across all its initiatives. The program places particular emphasis on organizations and participants confronting limitations in accessing opportunities, providing them with specialized resources and mechanisms. This commitment necessitates that organizations partaking in Erasmus+ embrace an inclusive approach in crafting projects and activities, ensuring their accessibility to a wide spectrum of participants, thereby mirroring the rich tapestry of European society (European Commission, 2022).

The Erasmus+ program demonstrates a strong commitment to excellence in education through various initiatives. These include the establishment of European universities, joint master's degrees, and centers of professional excellence, which promote cross-border collaboration, integrated study, and the cultivation of professional skills. Additionally, the program features Jean Monnet actions focused on European studies and Erasmus+ academies for training teachers and administrative staff, further reinforcing the understanding and appreciation of EU values and principles in an educational context. (Samuk et al., 2022). The program also harbors a lofty aspiration to engender a far-reaching systemic impact, striving to fortify the sustainable horizontal internationalization of national education systems. This process of internationalization permeates the entire educational continuum, from the formative years of primary and secondary education, across all forms and types of schools, to the realm of lifelong learning in adult education (Samuk et al, 2022). The program's aim transcends merely bolstering national political priorities in the educational domain; it also encompasses the promotion of tools for transparency and recognition of qualifications, as well as the cultivation of networks at the European level. This holistic approach contributes to the creation of a coherent and interconnected European educational space, where educational mobility and knowledge exchange are facilitated and valued. The program emphasizes the necessity of leveraging digital technologies for teaching and learning, fostering universal digital competences, and engaging learners, teachers, youth, and organizations in this transformative process to ensure a relevant education that prepares citizens for an increasingly digitized world. (European Commission, 2022).

The Erasmus+ program acknowledges the significance of addressing environmental challenges and promoting eco-friendly behavior through education and training, encouraging educational institutions to work together with various stakeholders to reach climate neutrality goals by 2050. Additionally, the program aims to tackle the issue of low citizen engagement in EU democratic processes and insufficient understanding of the EU by fostering active participation in communities and EU political and social life, utilizing formal education and non-formal learning to enhance citizens' comprehension of the EU and cultivate a sense of belonging. (European Commission, 2022).

Thus, through these four horizontal priorities, the Erasmus+ program aims to shape a more inclusive European educational and social landscape, one that is more adapted to the digital age, more cognizant of ecological challenges, and more engaged in democratic life. It represents a comprehensive and integrated approach that reflects and promotes the fundamental values and objectives of the European Union.

In the realm of pre-university education, the Erasmus+ program plays a pivotal role in facilitating and strengthening cross-border cooperation between educational institutions, including schools, kindergartens, and other educational entities. It stimulates the European mobility of students, teachers, educators, and administrative staff of pre-school and school educational institutions (Saraiva et al, 2022).

Furthermore, virtual projects between schools and kindergartens can take place within the eTwinning platform (European Commission, 2023a). This online platform facilitates the development of online cross-border projects and supports the creation of national and international networks of trainers through European courses and conferences. Thus, the Erasmus+ program contributes significantly to the creation of a European educational network characterized by cooperation, innovation, and cultural exchange. Through these mechanisms, the program not only enriches the educational experience of students, teachers, and administrative staff but also favors the development of innovative educational approaches and promotes a sense of belonging and European identity among young people.

The Erasmus+ program provides two distinct types of cooperation partnerships: Cooperation Partnerships, which are geared towards experienced organizations or more extensive projects, focusing on enhancing the quality of activities, promoting transnational and cross-sectoral collaboration, and tackling shared needs and priorities; and Small-scale Partnerships, which are specifically designed for grassroots organizations or those new to the program, aiming to increase accessibility and offer valuable international cooperation experiences. Both types of partnerships are structured to generate results that

can be transferred and scaled up, enabling organizations to enhance their activities, develop their capacity, address common needs, and create positive and enduring impacts on the participating organizations, political systems, and individuals involved, while simultaneously contributing to the modernization and adaptability of education and training systems and youth policies in response to global challenges (European Commission, 2023a, (European Commission, 2023b).

4. SWOT analysis of the Erasmus+ program in Romania

The Erasmus+ program in Romania stands as a beacon of educational transformation, illuminating a path towards unparalleled opportunities for growth and development. Its strengths are manifold, weaving a tapestry of internationalization that has forever altered the fabric of the nation's educational landscape. At the heart of this metamorphosis lies the program's unwavering commitment to providing pupils, students, and teachers with a portal to a world beyond their own, a chance to immerse themselves in the kaleidoscopic beauty of diverse cultures and educational systems through exchange programs that transcend the boundaries of the ordinary. This transformative journey has given birth to a generation of linguistically adept, interculturally savvy, and socially empowered graduates, armed with the tools to navigate the labyrinthine global job market with the grace of a seasoned explorer.

Yet, amidst the program's myriad triumphs, there lurk shadows of weakness that threaten to dim its radiance. The specter of external funding dependency looms large, casting a pall of uncertainty over the program's future, particularly in the face of the capricious tides of European Union budgetary fluctuations. Moreover, the fruits of the program's labors may not be evenly distributed, with smaller school units or those in less developed regions at risk of being relegated to the margins, their voices drowned out by the cacophony of larger, more privileged institutions.

Nevertheless, the Erasmus+ program is a wellspring of untapped potential, a font of opportunities waiting to be seized. As the world hurtles towards an increasingly digitized future, where distance education reigns supreme, the program stands poised to serve as a crucible for the forging of digital skills, both for students and teachers alike. Furthermore, the program's unwavering focus on sustainability and sustainable development opens up new vistas of research and innovation within the hallowed halls of educational institutions, inviting scholars and visionaries to dare to dream of a greener, more equitable world.

However, the path ahead is not without its perils. The specter of political and economic instability, both at the European and global level, casts a long shadow over the program's funding and strategic direction, threatening to derail even the best-laid plans. Moreover, the labyrinthine web of logistical and administrative challenges that ensnare some schools can prove to be an insurmountable barrier, limiting access to the program and denying countless students the opportunity to partake in its transformative power.

In the final analysis, the Erasmus+ program stands as a beacon of hope for the Romanian educational system, a luminous testament to the boundless potential of international collaboration and exchange. It is a clarion call to all stakeholders, urging them to band together in common cause, to surmount the challenges that lie ahead and to harness the program's transformative power to shape a brighter, more enlightened future for education in Romania. The road may be long and the obstacles many, but with the Erasmus+ program as our guide, we can dare to dream of a world where every student, regardless of background or circumstance, has the opportunity to soar on the wings of knowledge and to drink deeply from the well of human understanding.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

The Erasmus+ program has been a catalyst for profound and far-reaching transformations in the Romanian education system, as revealed by a thorough analysis of its impact. By applying seminal theories from the realms of education and social sciences, we can gain a deeper understanding of how this program has succeeded in molding both individuals and educational structures.

David Kolb's theory of experiential learning takes center stage within the Erasmus+ program, as the international experiences it offers transform learning into an active and deeply personal process. Romanian pupils, students, and teaching staff who participate in Erasmus+ go beyond the mere accumulation of theoretical knowledge, engaging instead in a learning process rooted in direct experience. These experiences provide them with the opportunity to confront new ways of thinking, explore diverse educational and cultural systems, and develop a more nuanced understanding of the world around them. By reflecting on these experiences and integrating them into a broader conceptual framework, participants engage in meaningful and enduring learning.

The impact of the Erasmus+ program on European identity is evident in the way participants construct and express their sense of self within a wider European context. European identity theory suggests that the Erasmus+ program contributes to the formation of a sense of belonging to a united European community. This is achieved by exposing participants to a rich tapestry of European cultures and histories, enabling them to appreciate their common European heritage and develop an identity that transcends national boundaries.

The Erasmus+ program stands in stark contrast to the communist period in Romania, when academic mobility and international collaboration were virtually non-existent. During the communist regime, access to international education and research was severely restricted, with occasional academic exchanges tightly controlled by the party-state. Students and teachers were often isolated from the trends and innovations of the rest of the world, limiting their opportunities for professional and personal growth. For students, international mobility was an impossibility.

In addition to its impact on individual learning and identity formation, the Erasmus+ program makes a significant contribution to the promotion of multiculturalism and transcultural understanding. Through immersion in different cultures, participants gain a deep appreciation of cultural diversity and develop crucial intercultural competencies. This approach aligns with the theory of multiculturalism, which emphasizes the importance of recognizing and valuing cultural diversity in contemporary societies.

The promotion of multiculturalism in Romania through the Erasmus+ program is particularly significant given the country's unique socio-cultural context. As part of Eastern Europe, Romania has undergone significant political and social transitions, opening the door to greater cultural diversity and deeper integration into the European context. In this framework, Erasmus+ serves as a vital tool for enriching cultural understanding and tolerance in a society that is constantly evolving. Romania faces challenges related to the integration of ethnic minorities and migrants (Trofimov & Maximiuc, 2022), and the Erasmus+ program offers a unique opportunity for Romanians to interact with and learn from people from diverse cultural backgrounds. This positive interaction can help reduce prejudices and stereotypes, promoting mutual understanding and reducing ethnic or cultural tensions.

Therefore, the Erasmus+ program significantly influences the education system in Romania, not only by offering educational opportunities, but also by contributing to the formation of an integrated European perspective. By promoting intercultural understanding, developing global skills and stimulating international collaboration, the Erasmus+ program plays a vital role in preparing young Romanians to become active and aware citizens of Europe and the world.

In order to increase the effectiveness of the Erasmus+ program in Romania, it is essential to address some strategies specific to the national context.

The first recommendation focuses on expanding access and inclusion. This implies the implementation of proactive strategies to attract students and teachers from less developed regions of Romania and from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. For example, we can initiate mentoring programs where students from top schools collaborate with their peers from underrepresented regions. This could include counseling and guidance sessions, thus providing support and encouragement to participate in the Erasmus+ programme.

Second, promoting digital skills and online education is vital in the current context. This can be achieved by developing dedicated digital platforms that facilitate virtual exchanges, online conferences and remote collaborations between students, students and teachers. In addition, information and communication technology training programs can be integrated into the Erasmus+ curriculum, thus ensuring that participants are well prepared for an increasingly digitized world.

A third direction focuses on supporting sustainable development and climate action. In this sense, Erasmus+ in Romania could encourage projects and initiatives that address ecological challenges specific to the region, such as biodiversity conservation in the Carpathians or projects related to renewable energy. Exchange programs may include modules or research projects focused on sustainability and environmental protection.

A fourth strategy involves improving the recognition and transferability of qualifications obtained through Erasmus+. This could involve close collaboration between Romanian schools and European partners to ensure a common framework for the recognition of credits and skills acquired. It is also important to develop an effective system for the validation and recognition of non-formal skills acquired through participation in Erasmus+ programs.

Finally, promoting active participation and European citizenship is crucial. This can be achieved by organizing events, workshops and projects that encourage intercultural dialogue and civic participation.

For example, annual Erasmus+ forums can be organized in Romania, where participants can share their experiences and debate topics related to European citizenship and global challenges.

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