



Diversity and Inclusion in Erasmus+ Implementation

Presented by Victor Olivier, Erasmus Student
Network Germany



Co-funded by
the European Union



Towards a More Inclusive Erasmus+: making mobility opportunities accessible to all



Better
understanding of
the barriers and
challenges for
students in
Erasmus+



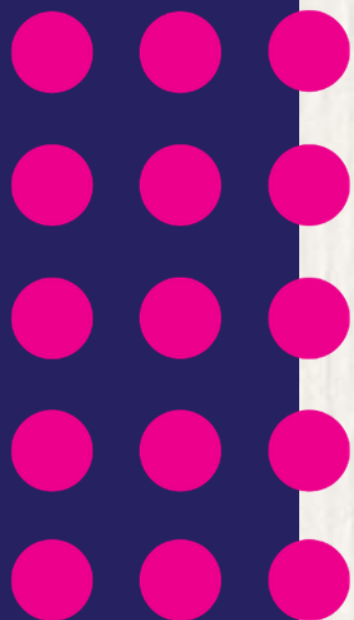
Enhancing diversity
& inclusion in
Erasmus+ through
improved models for
support measures

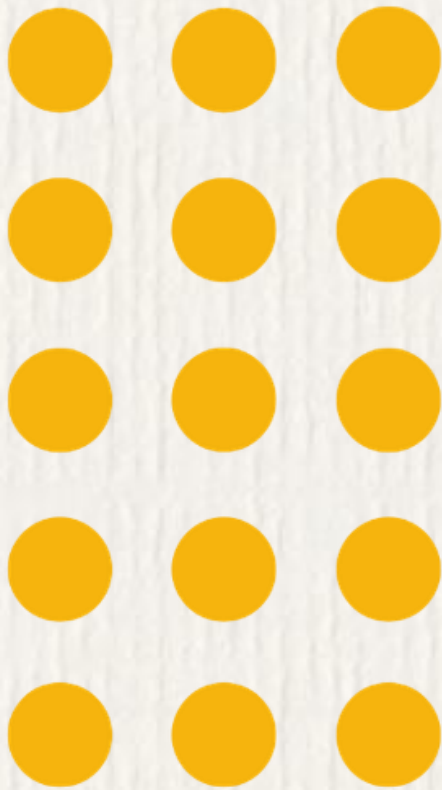


Empowering
HEIs and their
staff for inclusive
internationalisation
support

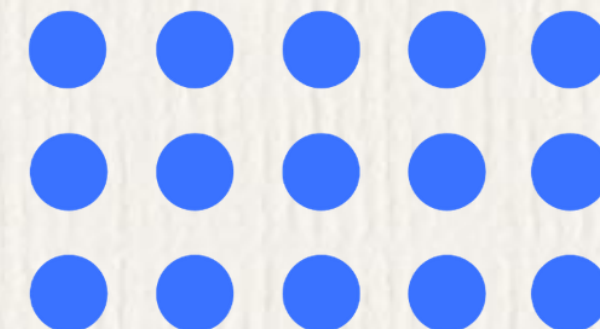


Improve access to
the programme and
removing barriers
through better
Erasmus+ policy
making.





DiEM Consortium



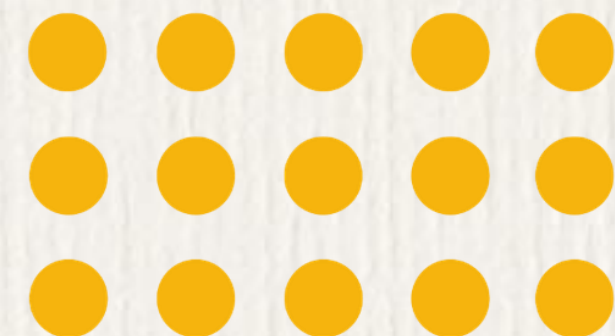
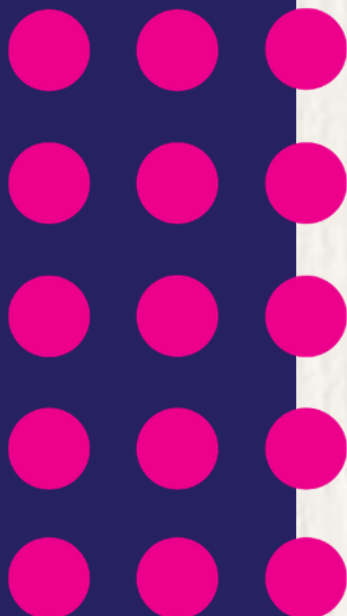
Agenda

Part I: Empirical Foundations & Research Insights

1. Student Perspectives & Access Challenges
2. Institutional Realities & Guidelines for HEI Staff
3. National Governance & Diversity Approaches

Part II: Digital Ecosystems & Practical Actions

1. Toolkit: Inclusivemobility.eu & AskErasmus
2. Inclusion Ambassadors & Inclusive Events





Part I: Empirical Foundations & Research Insights

Inclusive Access and Participation in Erasmus+ Mobility

Report on mobility experiences of students with fewer opportunities

Kalinova-Schmieder, N., Klarenbach, M., Krzaklewska, E., Krupnik, S., Buseyne, S., & Gabriels, W. (2025)

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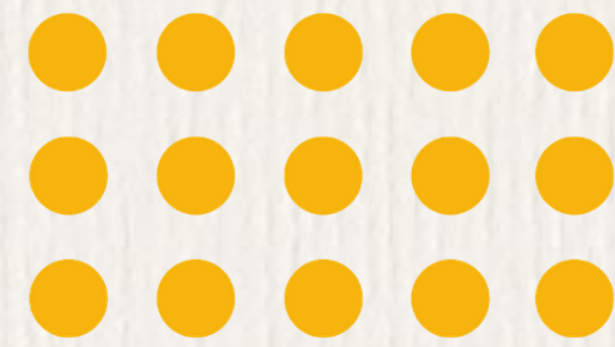
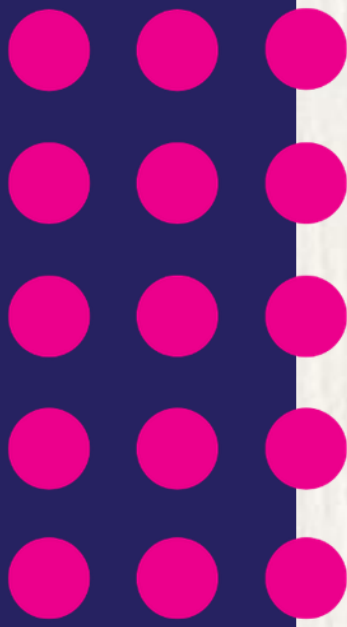
Methodology

This report builds on both qualitative and quantitative research methods:

- (1) **Literature review** (60 publications analyzed)
- (2) **ESN survey** (15,618 students)
- (3) **12 focus groups** for mobile and non-mobile students

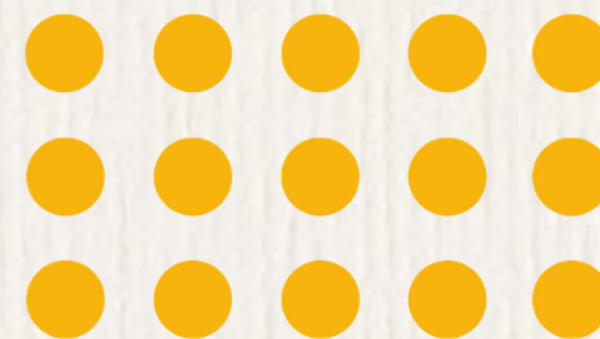
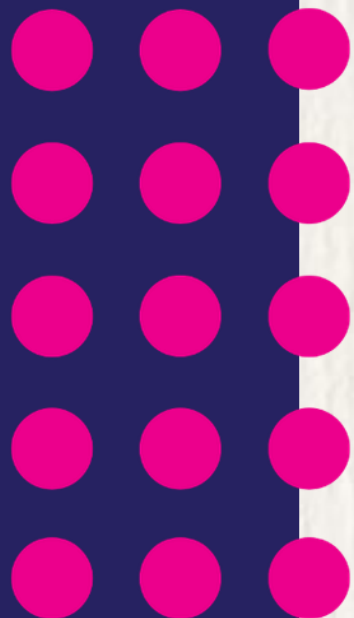
Goal: to gain a comprehensive understanding of the barriers, support structures and experiences shaping access to and participation in mobility opportunities in higher education

Time: May 2024-February 2025



Key Results

- **Low socio-economic background students** suffer from delayed grants, upfront costs and reduced sense of belonging
- **Ethnic Minority groups** face a distinct institutional trust gap and rely heavily on informal networks over university structures
- **First generation students** possess difficulties in navigating through application process while being hindered by lower cultural capital
- **LGBTQ+ & Non-Binary Profiles** practice risk-minimizing destination selection due to absent institutional or safety guidance
- **Students from Rural Areas** face high cultural adjustment anxiety in urban centers & prioritize short-term formats
- **Students with disabilities** face severe accessibility gaps



Key Results

- **Financial constraints:** High upfront costs, inadequate grant amounts, and the risk of losing part-time income
- **Administrative Hurdles:** Complex application procedures, strict visa requirements, and a lack of accessible institutional guidance
- **Academic Barriers:** Rigid curriculum requirements, language difficulties, and uncertainty over credit recognition
- **Social Obstacles:** Lack of cultural capital, restrictive family or work commitments, and the risk of discrimination abroad
- **Psychological Strain:** Anxiety regarding cultural adaptation, fear of isolation, and the mental health toll of concealing one's identity in a new environment

Key Results:

1. Provide **transparent, timely top-up grants and co-financing for housing** to eliminate upfront cost burdens and pre-financing delays for vulnerable students
2. Offer targeted mentoring, funded preparatory host-institution visits **for students with disabilities**, and **comprehensive guides** covering local healthcare, housing, and safety
3. **Expand short-term and blended mobility options** to accommodate students with employment dependencies, caregiving responsibilities, or severe financial constraints

Strengthening Mobility Support for Students with Fewer Opportunities

Guidelines for HEI staff

Kalinova-Schmieder, N., Bohle, C., de Groot, C., Lucque, D. (2025)

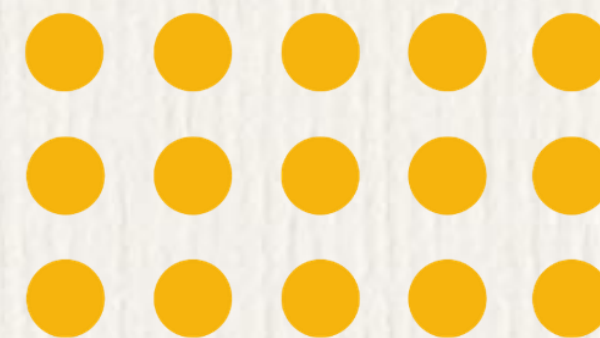
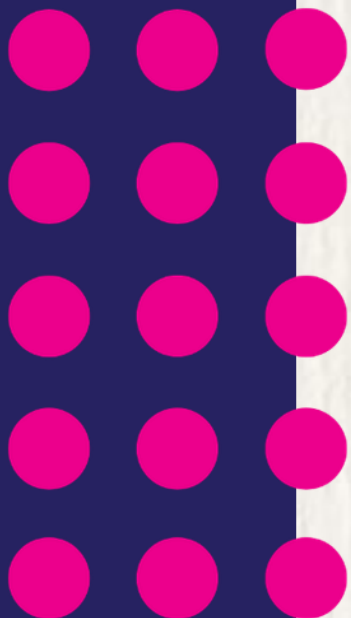
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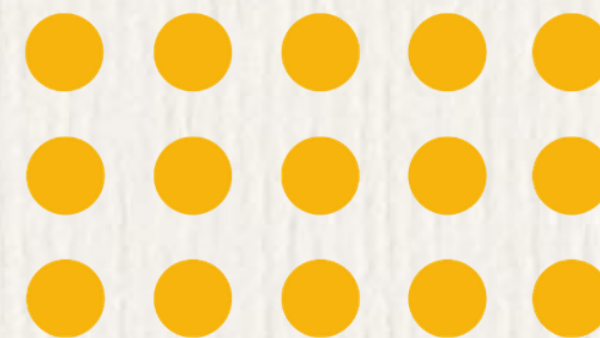
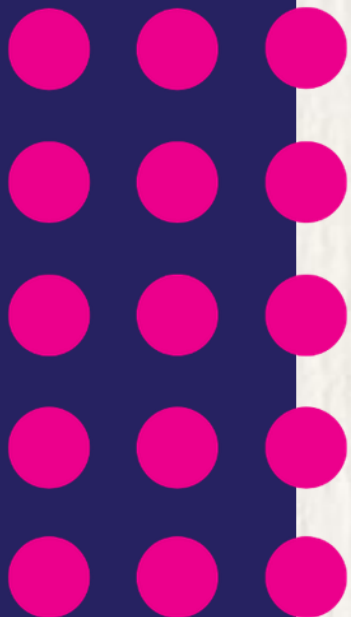
Methodology

- 183 participants from Higher Education Institutions **International Relations Offices** covering 17 EU countries, Norway, Turkey and Serbia in early 2025
- Provided **figures, experiences and knowledge** on their support processes for international students to participate in Erasmus+
- **Aim:** to better scope the support that European HEIs provide to students with fewer opportunities



Key Insights:

- **64% of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)** have **no internal funds** to support students to participate in Erasmus+ mobility
- **49%** of the respondents have **promotional activities** targeted at students with disabilities, the highest in this category
- Only **40% of HEIs** offer **targeted advice** for students with disabilities, and just 21% specifically guide students from lower-income households
- **91% of HEIs** promote support services via **general** websites



Guidelines & Recommendations

1. **Institutional strategies on internationalization should explicitly include mobility** – for all members of the institution – as a core element for internationalization and quality assurance. This can increase visibility and empower staff and participants.
2. **Institutional strategies on internationalization should explicitly include Equity, Diversity & Inclusion** to strengthen visibility and impact of the discourse for all stakeholders. Even as a cross-cutting topic, explicit positioning of the institution increases commitment and may inform institutional priorities, decisions on change management, resource management etc.
3. Provide **specific targeted support** for students with lower opportunities instead of the One-Size-Fits-All Model

National Approaches to Inclusion and Diversity in Erasmus+

Comparative Report

Kalinova-Schmieder, N., Bogdan, M., Jouve, S. (2025)

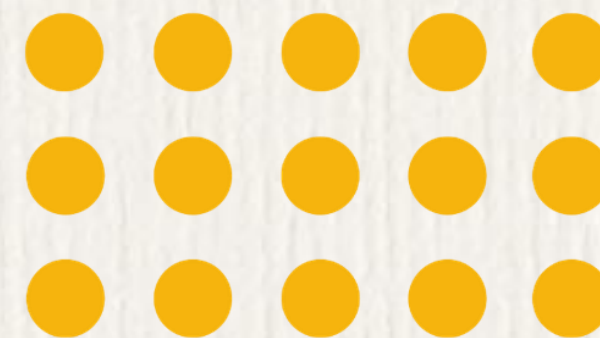
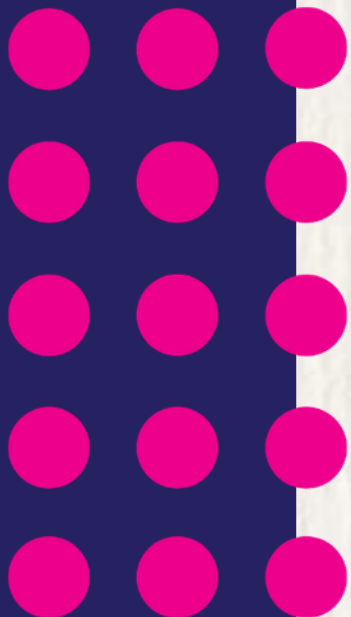
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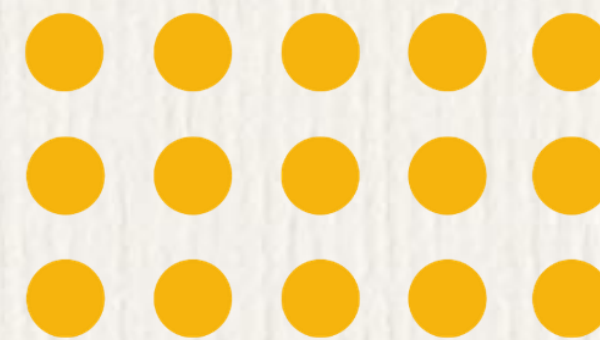
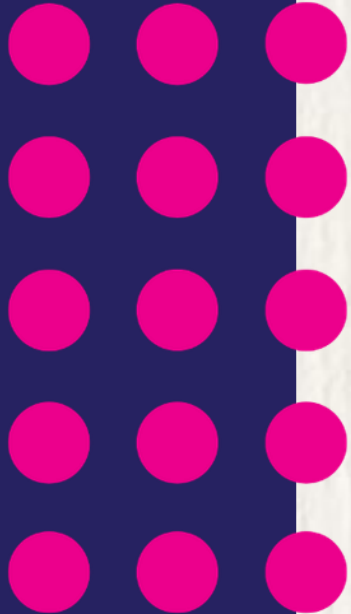
Methodology

- Combination of methods
 - Conducted in **Spring 2025**, gathering **16 responses** from 15 National Agencies across 33 Erasmus+ programme countries and Switzerland (achieving a **~50% response rate**)
 - Leveraged the 15th ESNsurvey dataset, analyzing insights from exactly **15,618 student participants** (collected mid-2023) to capture the lived experiences and barriers of mobility students
 - Integrated public EU-level policy documents and the **2023 SALTO Research report** on National Agency needs to contextualize the survey results and validate findings



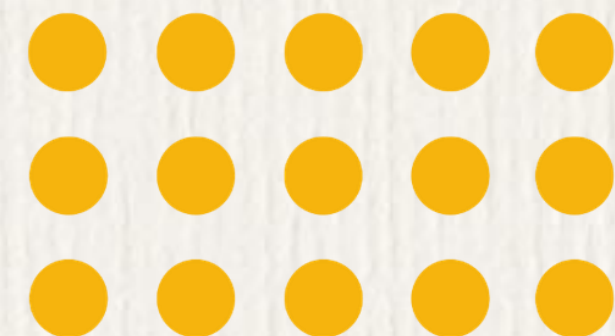
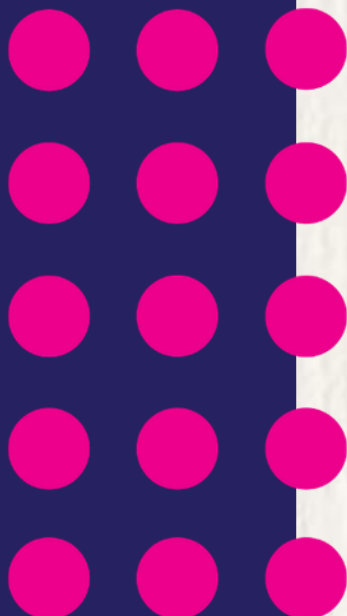
Key Results

- **13 out of 16** surveyed **National Agencies** have **established an I&D strategy**, yet **13 out of 16** report **low student uptake** due to **lack of awareness** and the stigma of self-identification
- Average **coverage of cost of living** by Erasmus+ grant **differs between 36%** in countries like Sweden, Ireland and the Netherlands and **79%** in countries like Slovakia, Slovenia and Croatia
- Only **37%** of international students in Slovakia, **38%** in Italy, and **39%** in Greece feel that **insensitive** or **degrading remarks** are addressed **equally compared to local students**



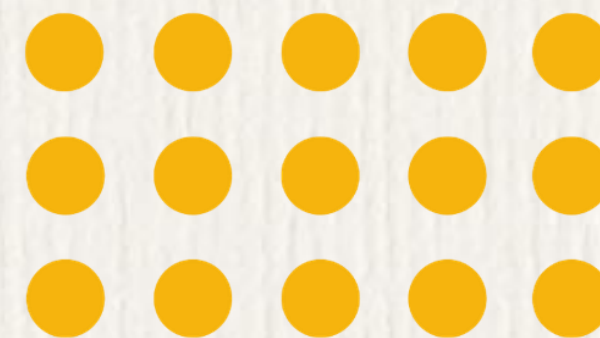
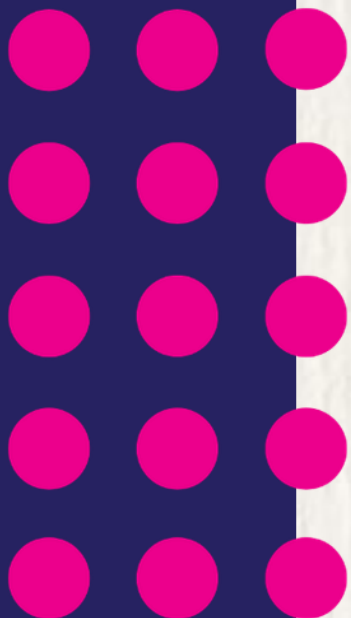
Key Results

- Reliance on **KA131** Higher Education funds as the core source of top-up financing.
 - All 16 NAs explicitly referenced KA131 as the origin of their inclusion budget.
 - In **7 cases**, KA131 was mentioned as the **sole source**
 - In others, it was combined with alternative mechanisms, such as reserve funds, interest income, or surplus redistribution.
- 6 agencies express concerns over **missing robust data** to monitor participation, and 6 agencies cite severe staff and resource limitations. This hinders the ability to systematically target underrepresented groups and evaluate the true impact of I&D measures



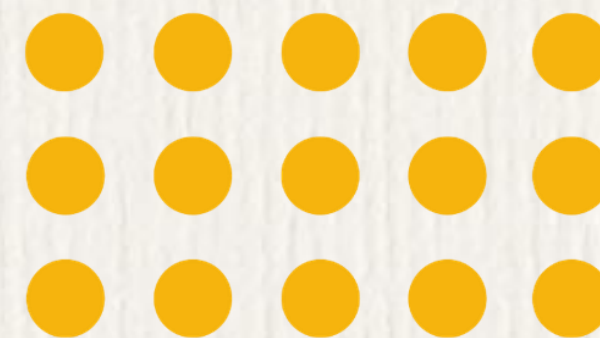
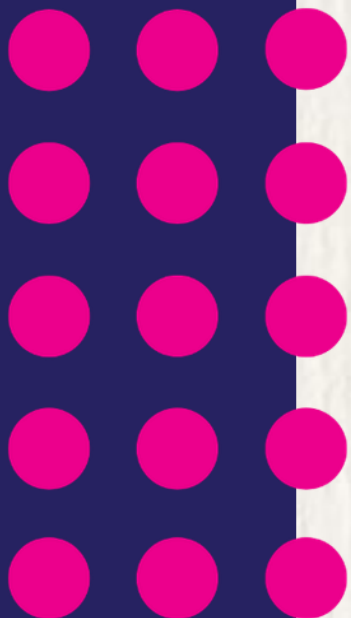
Key Results

- Data is often limited to **basic headcounts**, lacking deeper evaluation of actual outcomes or persisting barriers
- A lack of **I&D-specific expertise** and **limited staff capacity** within National Agencies directly **reduces** the **quality of guidance** provided to HEIs and limits strategic planning
- Embedding Erasmus+ I&D implementation into **existing national equity frameworks** significantly improves strategic coherence, target group identification, and prioritization



Key Results

- Implement **adaptive funding structures** that allow for **mid-cycle budget reallocations** based on actual uptake, ensuring that unused funds are effectively redirected to **inclusion needs**
- Proactively **engage, train, and empower** Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to **identify needs** and **distribute top-ups**, as **university capacity** is a primary determinant of successful inclusion
- Engaging in **collaboration** with student unions, ministries, and other national stakeholders leads to highly relevant, **legitimate policies** while fostering trust and **reducing** duplicated efforts





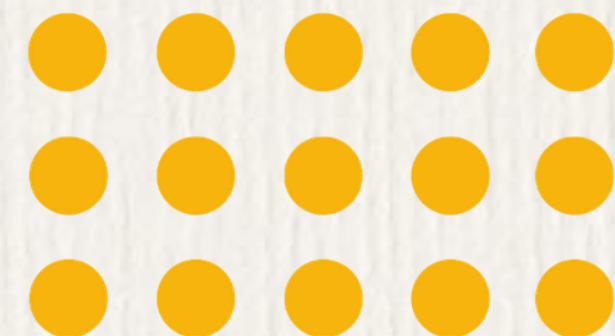
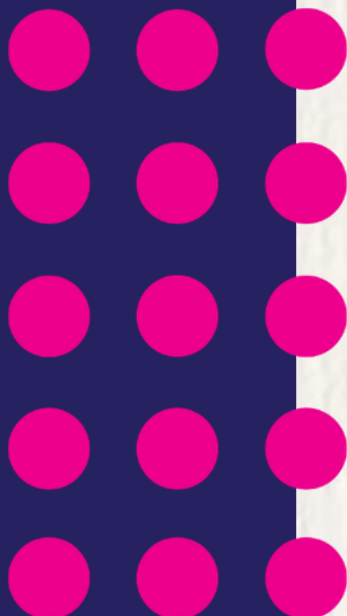
Part II: Digital Ecosystems & Practical Actions

Inclusivemobility.eu

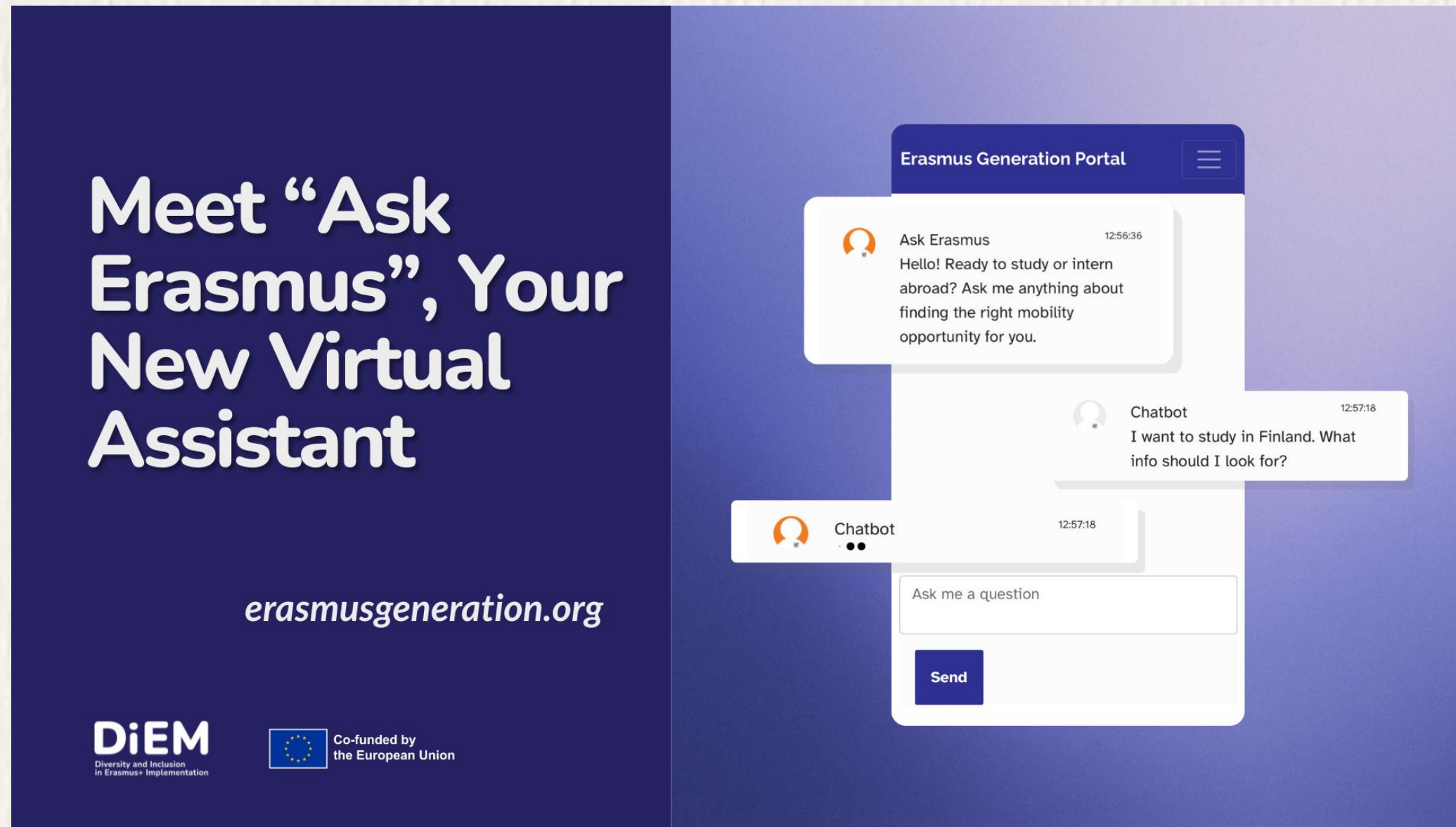
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<https://inclusivemobility.eu/>



AskErasmus – Your virtual Assistant



<https://erasmusgeneration.org/ask-erasmus>

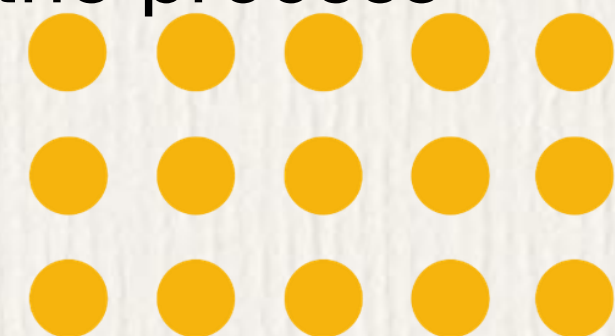
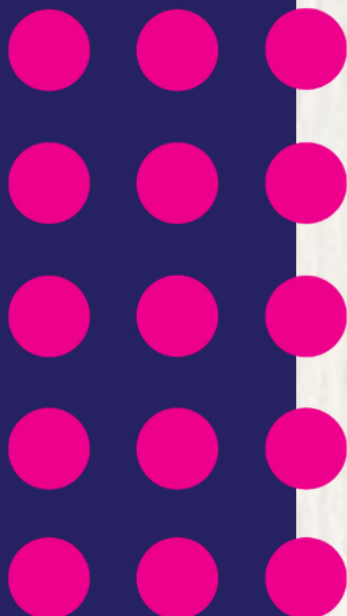
Inclusion Ambassadors & Inclusive Events

What ESN is doing:

- Providing **Peer-to-Peer workshops** on awareness and inclusion
- Providing **Guidelines and training** for volunteers and international students
- **Creating Policies** on how to conduct inclusive events

What Institutions can do:

- Include inclusivemobility.eu in their office to **co-create inclusive strategies** for international students
- Support students with **targeted actions** for before, during and after mobility
- **Collaborate** with Local, National & European Stakeholders to merge the process in advancing inclusive mobility



Call for Poster Contributions

DiEM Final Conference in Brussels

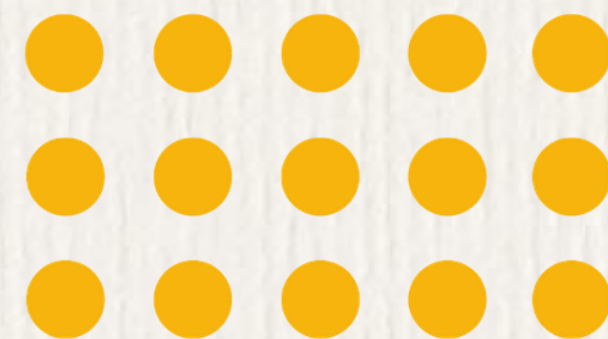
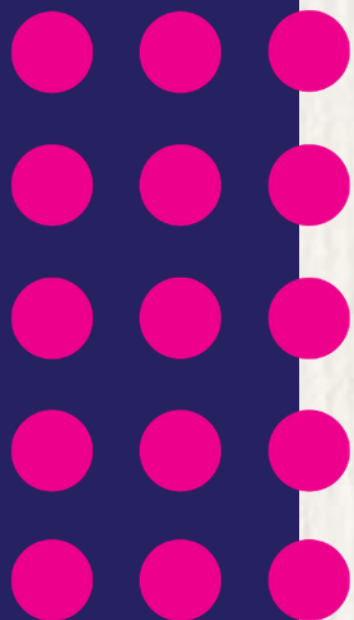


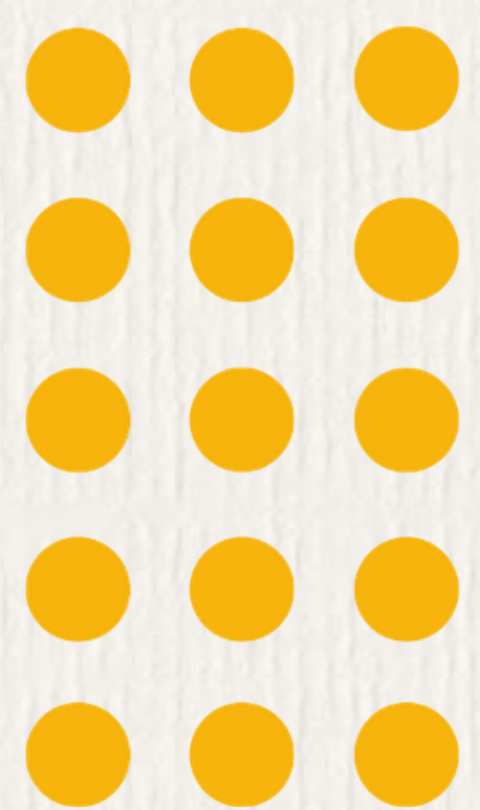
We welcome submissions across a wide range of perspectives within the higher education ecosystem.

What to submit: Submission form for Poster Contribution of maximum 300 Characters (form coming soon)

When to submit: by 31st of July 2026

Conference date: 29th of September 2026





Thank you for your attention!

<https://diem.inclusivemobility.eu>

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