



European Policies and Programs: Translations on the Ground

Report on Valérie Drezet-Humez's Presentation on the Priorities of the European Commission

The main objective of the Multiannual Budget 2021-2027 and the European Recovery Plan NextGenerationEU is to link objectives, policy priorities, and their concrete translations into the lives of European citizens. It should be noted that this budget is the largest the Union has ever had since its inception (€1.2 trillion), and NextGenerationEU represents the first common debt of the 27 member states (€800 billion).

The 2021-2027 budget allocates 30% each to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and territorial cohesion. The rest of the budget is dedicated to current policy priorities, namely the digital and green transitions. The flagship project of this period is the European Green Deal. Carbon neutrality is a major component of this deal, particularly reflected in the legislative package "Fit for 55," which aims to reduce European greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Furthermore, as part of the European financing for national post-COVID-19 recovery plans, member states must allocate at least 37% of their recovery plans to the green transition in order to benefit from common funding. The digital transition is also a central priority for Europe during this period, receiving 20% of the multiannual budget. Two legislative packages are associated with this objective: the Digital Market Act and the Digital Services Act. The former aims to counter major digital players and help competitors break the oligopoly situation, while the latter holds content platforms responsible for hosted content. Additionally, this year marks the fifth anniversary of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The challenge of these transitions is to ensure their fairness. Therefore, the support instruments largely target SMEs, and institutions work to mitigate the effects of gas shortages and the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. Furthermore, the Erasmus program has seen its budget doubled compared to the 2014-2020 period, resulting in a significant increase in the number of funded projects.

Lastly, it is important to highlight that the European Union has a significant advantage in the field of hydrogen as an energy source. Europe holds the largest number of patents for these technologies. The new European industrial plan is a future-oriented plan to lead the EU towards technological and energy independence, reducing dependencies on materials and manufactured goods as much as possible, while maintaining exchanges with the rest of the world.

Report on Bélen Molla-Diez's Presentation on the CERV Program

The Citizens, Equality, Rights, and Values program is a new program under the MFF 2021/2027. The CIDEM is the national contact point for CERV, providing information and support for application submission. Regarding the budget and funding, there is an amount of €171 million for 2023, which will gradually increase throughout the MFF.

The CERV program is formed by the merging of previous programs focused on citizenship (combating discrimination and violence, citizen engagement, etc.). The general objectives include creating and promoting spaces for exchanges and debates among citizens and organizations, as well as protecting and promoting rights and values. The program funds various activities such as training, workshops, conferences, and seminars. It consists of four components.

The first component, focused on the Union's values, now also includes the promotion and protection of rights from the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Calls for proposals cover broad rights protection, promotion and strengthening of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and structural funding for major European networks.

The second component addresses the fight against discrimination. The listed project calls for proposals mainly target the fight against discrimination in a broad sense and the protection of children's rights.

The third component involves citizen engagement and participation. It funds three types of projects:

- Memory projects: focusing on European common memory, the history of European integration.
- Citizen engagement and participation projects, where only civil society can be project leaders, while public authorities can be partners.

City twinning and networking projects: representing the largest part of CERV funding. The objectives are classic, promoting citizen exchanges and interculturality between European territories, and cooperation against discrimination. France has a significant success rate (7 out of 8 projects funded in 2022), as well as Italy (25 twinning projects funded out of 31 submitted).

The top priority for city twinning projects is to promote cross-border solidarity, citizen exchanges, and collaboration on European Commission policies (see the presentation for more details). To be eligible, city twinning projects must involve at

least 2 states, with one being an EU member state, and events must engage at least 50 people, including 25 international participants. The budget is lump-sum, and no pre-financing is required.

The second priority is for city networking projects. In 2023, the focus is on raising awareness of the 30th anniversary of the Maastricht Treaty. In 2024, the focus will be on European elections. City networking projects are more substantial in scope, lasting up to 2 years, with no lump-sum limit for funding. Such projects must involve at least 4 countries, including 2 EU member states, and third countries do not receive funding.

AURA, a city network project involving 10 rural communities, was presented as an example. It focuses on capacity building, exchange of best practices regarding climate change, and the implementation of resilience policies and public policies later transferred to the EU.

- The fourth component is Daphné, which funds projects combating violence against women and LGBTQ+ minorities.

Report on Mirya Duran's Presentation on the Territorial Offices of the Erasmus+ Program

The major advantage of the Erasmus+ program is that it significantly enhances skills development, both for individuals going abroad and those hosting them. Additionally, participation in this program allows for the establishment of networks and partnerships that enable further project development and promote open-mindedness. This program targets all audiences, across all ages and throughout their lives. The Erasmus+ program is generally well-known among eligible organizations (higher education institutions, secondary schools, primary schools). However, there are some organizations that are unaware of it or have limited knowledge. The territorial offices play a crucial role in identifying and providing information to these organizations, enabling them to benefit from the program.

The work of territorial offices involves informing stakeholders about the program, fostering proximity with stakeholders through a presence in all departments of the region, promoting professional connections that redirect them to relevant actors, offering free and available support, including informative interventions, and assisting in project emergence.

In 2022, the AURA territorial office welcomed around 1200 people, which represents only about 10% of the poorly informed individuals in the region according to regional estimates. It is worth noting that the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region remains well-informed in France, as there are only five territorial offices in the country, with four of them located in mainland France.