

Basics of cooperation with the neighbouring partner countries

Prepared especially for newcomer NA officers

Find it also online: www.beyondb.eu/QandA



Which countries from outside the European Union are eligible for youth cooperation within Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps?

Both programmes are open for cooperation with the partners from outside the EU. The key role is played by so called “neighbouring partner countries”, also called “third countries not associated to the programme”). These countries are grouped in the following way:

1. South-Mediterranean (supported by the SALTO EuroMed): **Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia;**
2. Western Balkans (supported by the SALTO South East Europe): **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro;**
3. Neighbourhood East (supported by the SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus): **Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine;**
4. **Russian Federation** (supported by the SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus)

Please note, that in the European Solidarity Corps we have 2 more neighbouring partner countries that are full programme countries in the Erasmus+:

- **Serbia**, supported by the SALTO South East Europe
- **Norway**, supported by the SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus

To make it a little bit easier to imagine, we have created a map for you:

www.beyondb.eu/neighbouring-countries

Who supports cooperation with the neighbouring partner countries?

- *The European Commission has created regional SALTO resource centres to help the National Agencies to work with the neighbouring partner countries. Three centres had been created: in 2000 the EuroMed based on the French NA, in 2002 the South East Europe (Western Balkans) based on the Slovenian NA and in 2003 the Eastern Europe and Caucasus (Eastern Neighbourhood and Russian Federation) based on the Polish NA.*
- *In 2021, a number of National Agencies and the three regional SALTOs had established a strategic cooperation project “Beyond Borders - Neighbours Together” fostering cooperation with the neighbouring partner countries. Each year, together we offer a number of activities and initiatives supporting such cooperation - from events targeting grass-root level organisations, through bigger political conferences, to promotion and information activities. We hope your National Agency will also join and support the common effort! Find more at: www.beyondb.eu/about.*

What are the regional SALTO Resource Centres?

Based within the French, Slovenian and Polish NAs, we are little teams of 4-5 persons each supporting the youth cooperation with the neighbouring partner countries in the areas as:

- *information and promotion of the both programmes' opportunities, targeting both the partner and programme countries beneficiaries;*
- *capacity building via trainings, seminars and other activities involving youth workers and trainers from the neighbouring and programme countries;*
- *horizontal and transversal initiatives, where we enhance the aspects of cooperation with the neighbouring partner countries: supporting different SNACs (strategic NAs cooperation projects) and other strategic and long-term initiatives of the National Agencies, the European Commission as well as wider stakeholders of European youth work;*

It is also worth mentioning that in the European Solidarity Corps, the regional SALTOs support the programme also on the technical level: doing assessments and awarding quality labels of supporting organisations as well as offering on-arrival, mid-term and final events for the volunteers.

What formats of projects with the neighbouring partner countries are possible for youth organisations within the Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps?

Our programmes are quite open for cooperation with the neighbouring partner countries. Well, in the end it is an official "important feature" of both programmes ;)

- *First of all the KA1 of Erasmus+ is fully open for collaborations, allowing organisations to have common youth exchanges, youth participation projects and mobiles of youth workers;*
- *In the European Solidarity Corps, the international volunteering is fully available and Humanitarian Aid volunteering is even not possible without the partner countries;*
- *Additionally, in KA2 projects within Capacity Building in the Field of Youth as well as Cooperation Partnerships are partly open.*
- *Find more about each kind of format at www.beyondb.eu/opportunities.*

Where can I find examples of projects with the neighbouring partner countries?

- *Well, first of all your National Agency might have financed such project(s) in the past. Please check with your NA colleagues and if you find such projects inspiring and well documented, let us know, so we can also spread a word about it!*
- *Within the strategic cooperation project Beyond Borders we run a portal, where examples of different projects are presented: www.beyondb.eu*
- *Write email to regional SALTOs, we might help you finding what you need (contacts below).*

Can we have TCA / NET projects including the neighbouring partner countries?

Of course! Actually, without the TCA / NET budgets and involvement of the National Agencies, the regional SALTOs can do much less. Each year we implement a number of international TCA / NET projects, benefiting both, the partner but also the programme countries organisations, youth workers and youngsters. Offering TCA / NET projects in cooperation with the neighbouring partners foster intercultural learning, awareness and respect of pluralism and diversity, critical thinking as well as a stronger interest in democratic citizenship and human rights issues.

What are the key obstacles in cooperation with the partner countries?

Despite the positive aspects mentioned above, some organisations find the cooperation with the neighbouring partner countries challenging due to:

- *Visa issues,*
- *Travel length, distance,*
- *Political situation and security,*
- *Erasmus+ limitations.*

*Visa issues play a role in cooperation with about half of all the neighbouring countries (mostly EuroMed), as the European Union has a visa free regime with quite many of these countries (mostly the Western Balkans). The regional SALTOs advise to take into account the visa procedure in the project plan, as it might take **6-10 weeks** to arrange the visas. Many organisations underline that gaining this experience once, makes it much easier in the future.*

“Partner countries are far away” we hear often. But we also know that it is usually a mental distance, not geographical. Going from Warsaw, Vienna or Budapest to neighbouring countries like Ukraine, Moldova or Bosnia and Herzegovina is closer than going to Paris or Brussels. The same for Athens or Madrid distances to many EuroMed countries.

Political situation in some neighbouring partner countries is indeed unstable, and we all know some of these countries are at war. Following closely the news prior to the project, getting informed, is not only the way to avoid troubles, but also to expand understanding of the EU neighbourhood. The regional SALTOs can also offer their expertise in that area.

*Some organisations say they are hesitant to cooperate with the neighbouring partner countries, because their projects are less likely to be granted. There are different reasons for such opinions, but the only one formal limitation is the 25% budget limit of Key Action 1 in Erasmus+. **All the other formats of cooperation do not have any restrictions in these regards.** And we know from many National Agencies, that the projects involving neighbouring partner countries are actually getting more points in the assessment.*

Contact the regional SALTOs:

Eastern Europe and Caucasus: eeca@salto-youth.net

EuroMed: euromed@salto-youth.net

South East Europe: see@salto-youth.net