



Obtaining European funding for EPEA training events and conferences

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The process of applying for European money has become more complicated than previously, however this is to ensure a better quality of training provision and practical application of learning outcomes.

For EPEA members there is the possibility to acquire funding for attending an EPEA conference or training event. This guide should help de-mystify this process and provide some solid recommendations for ensuring that the EPEA and its members can continue to benefit from European money, whilst having a really positive impact on the provision of prison education in Europe.

What is a Mobility Action?

A Mobility Action is one of the only ways that EPEA members can acquire funds to attend EPEA events. Individuals themselves cannot apply, but applications have to run through the organisations where they are employed. Mobility Actions enable organisations (above all EPEA organisational members) to create strategic training plans for their staff, to prepare and send their staff to international training events (i.e. EPEA training conferences) and to ensure follow-up and dissemination of their learning outcomes within the organisation. These organisations are known as “sending organisations”, whereas the training event providers (i.e. the EPEA itself) is known as the “receiving organisation”.

The goal of these actions is to generate solid learning outcomes - not just to attend a conference, but to actively learn from it, and be able to implement this knowledge in your own professional setting.

It is easier for organisational members than individual members – individual members will need to convince their organisations to set up a project – this may be difficult, particularly when most of our employers are public sector prisons and detention centres!

What do I need to do?

There are a number of stages in applying for a grant for Mobility. The “sending organisation” needs to compile a European Development Plan. This plan may be 4-5 pages long and shows how the organisation wants to develop and modernise within an international context. It is possible that the EPEA steering committee can write a template European Development Plan, based on its vision for its members. EPEA organisational members (or other “sending organisations”) can then adapt this template to their local situation.

The “sending organisation” also needs to apply for a PIC number from the Erasmus+ ECAS platform. This PIC (Participant Identification Code) identifies your organisation in any Erasmus+ application, and you only need to apply for it once – then you can use it on all applications in the next 7 years. You can apply for a PIC number here: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cas/eim/external/register.cgi>.

Afterwards, the “sending organisation” designs a mobility project and submits an application by the given deadline. An example of the 2014 application form can be found here: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/documents/form/adult_education_staff_mobility_en.pdf. The mobility project should show how certain international training events will contribute to the organisation’s European Development Plan, and outline how staff learning will impact the organisation, including how this new knowledge will be shared and disseminated within the organisation.

What should the EPEA Steering Committee do?

The EPEA SC should offer a number of different training and networking possibilities throughout the year. These can be organised by the SC or by other members. It includes the bi-annual conference and training course. The content of these courses should not be pre-defined but designed in collaboration with the “sending organisations”. These could be no more than set dates when “training events” could occur – once we know who will attend these events, then we can plan then more concretely to meet the exact needs of EPEA members.

Example Case Study

An **EPEA organisational member** in Denmark has 20 prison teachers and support staff. These staff want to attend an EPEA event (conference or training event).

This **EPEA organisational member** compiles a European Development Plan. This plan outlines that by 2020, their staff should be more familiar with broader European practices in prison education; their staff should be competent in communicating with prisoners in at least one other European language, and should be able to design and manage international education projects.

This **EPEA organisational member** registers itself with ECAS, and received a PIC code that it can use on all Erasmus+ applications.

The **EPEA organisational member** sees that the EPEA is holding a conference and training course, and a European project generation and management workshop (although the content of these training courses is not yet defined). This **organisational member** writes a project concept (see “example project concept” below).

Based on the project concept, the **organisational member** writes an application and submits it to their Erasmus+ National Agency according to the set deadlines. Before submitting their application, they can send it to the EPEA SC / Project Officer to review it.

If the mobility project is accepted by the National Agency, the **organisational member** along with other organisational members who have applied for / received funding and the EPEA Steering Committee (and others hosting the event or training), can start to prepare the mobility project, including identifying the specific training requirements and content. According to what was written in the application form, the **organisational member** should (in collaboration with the EPEA SC) implement any preparations for the training, establish monitoring processes and criteria for validating learning outcomes.

Participants from the “sending organisation” (the **organisational member**) attend the conference or training event for a minimum of 2 days. The process should be monitored and evaluated, and learning outcomes should be validated (the EPEA SC / Project Officer can help with this)

After the conference or training events, the participants do not just forget about it, but should actively plan how to share and disseminate their new knowledge within their organisations.

The **organisational member** completes a report for the European Commission on how the project was implemented, how the staff have benefited, and how the training has benefited the organisation.

A possible mobility project plan

Each organisation may have different goals for their training projects, and it may involve different types of training – and can also cover training and events outside of the EPEA. A possible plan for a 12-month mobility project could look like this:

Months	Activities
1 > 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifying training requirements and determining the content of the training with the EPEA• Preparation for training - development and completion of a pre-training review• Establishing monitoring criteria for learning outcomes• Establishing validation criteria for learning outcomes
4 > 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>e.g.</i> Some staff members attending EPEA training event and conference• <i>e.g.</i> Some staff members attending EPEA-organised European Project generation and management course• <i>e.g.</i> Some staff members attending EPEA-organised "Languages Behind Bars" training for communication with foreign national detainees• <i>e.g.</i> Other training activity, as decided in Months 1-3• Monitoring, evaluation and validation of learning outcomes
10 > 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning and implementation of learning dissemination within the organisation• Final report of mobility action

What kind of funding can I expect?

Funding under Erasmus+ is always considered a 'contribution to costs' rather than complete coverage of expenses. However, since it works on the basis of "unit costs" rather than "actual costs", you have more control, and if you can minimise the cost of travel and accommodation, you may be able to cover everything with the grant.

- **Travel** – “sending organisations” (i.e. EPEA organisational members) may receive between €180 and €360 for each staff member being sent to a conference or training event. The amount depends on the distance being travelled:
 - 100km-499km = €180
 - 500km-1999km = €275
 - 2000km – 2999km = €360

More money is available for longer distances (i.e. €1100 for over 8000km) but these distances are unlikely in reality.

- **Subsistence** – “sending organisations” receive money per day to cover the food and accommodation of its staff whilst at a conference or training event. This amount is not yet defined, but will be clarified by your National Agency. In any case it will be between €50 per day and €160 per days, and will depend on the country where the training will take place, along with other “objective and transparent criteria” that is not yet clear.

- **Organisational support** – “sending organisations” receive €350 per staff member for costs linked to the implementation of these mobility activities, including any preparation work, monitoring and support and validation of learning outcomes.

Recommendation

Part of this money can be paid to the EPEA so that they can hire somebody to oversee monitoring and validation, to ensure a common, systematic approach.

- **Course fees** – “sending organisations” receive €70 per day, per participant to pay course fees (up to a maximum of €700). These course fees are, of course, set by the EPEA or its training providers.

Recommendation

The EPEA should set course fees at €70 per day for 3-4 days. This money can go to the EPEA or pay for the training provider.

- **Special needs** – “sending organisations” are reimbursed 100% for any costs incurred relating to participants with disabilities. This must be declared and justified in the application itself.

What is the benefit of this?

It is important that EPEA members have the opportunity to learn from one another, to exchange best practices and develop the capacity and competences to move the prison education agenda forward in Europe. By turning EPEA conferences and other events into training programmes, we can be sure that members can really take something away from these events that will support them in their professional activities. Having a focus on ‘learning’ through the EPEA provides a sense of meaning and direction the organisation, and encourages people to get actively involved in developing and sharing best practice.

It also means that any EPEA member who wants to share their knowledge and experience with other members can actively set up a networking event and training course. A possible idea could be for a group of EPEA members to collectively put together a programme, which other members (organisational members and branches) can get funding to participate in.

Deadlines

The next deadlines will be communicated to EPEA members by email and through the newsletter and magazine.

More information and support

If you are unfamiliar with European funding programmes, then this process may seem daunting. However, it needn't be complicated, and with the support of the Steering Committee, you can really benefit from European money, and we can all make positive changes to prison education in Europe.

For more information and support on Erasmus+ processes, you can contact Paul on p.talbot@dieberater.com, or you can arrange to speak with him on Skype at *paul.dieberater*.

The EPEA Steering Committee would also like to run an 'online conference' on the topic of European funding, and we will contact you soon with more details.

We look forward to supporting you in Erasmus+

EPEA Steering Committee – 16.4.2014