



Catalonia working with Europe

Supporting the active participation of Catalan institutions and citizens in European cooperation

#CATALONIA WORKING WITH EUROPE COMMENT#

IS EUROPE READY FOR ERASMUS+?

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Erasmus+ and its policy references and contexts are full of innovation and re-thinking old traditions in education and social work, and beyond...

Is Europe ready for this?

The program and the calls encourage new interventions linked to entrepreneurial mentality, to opening up education to the community, to embedding learning in real-life cases, to taking risk and initiative and to working much more in cross-sector partnerships.

The Commission even in background papers to Erasmus+ encourages a “cultural revolution” in education and “rule-breaking” to bring about urgent change...

In this, Erasmus+ and its policy contexts go far beyond national policy in most member states.

I will risk saying that reading Erasmus+ and its policy base in a certain and open way, it occurs to be the most radical European program ever.

There is, however and as we well know, an ocean between the program words and implementing such innovation and mentality change in practice.

The very application procedure and application form in itself dramatically devaluates the juice of many innovations.

Why? Simply because the applications basically still need the project to know everything in advance and several years before the production of the outcomes; less room for experimentation, then.

But the authentic implementation of the Erasmus+ innovation is also seriously threatened by organisational and administrative factors accompanying the program and the assessment of applications.

First of all, the decision to give the assessment process to the National Agencies seems to be quite problematic: National Agencies and national evaluator corps seem to have very different mind-sets and practices and this is clearly damaging the program and the implementation of its innovation.

Second, many evaluators come from sectorial backgrounds, such as VET or adult education. Even if they might be formally qualified as evaluators, they might not have developed the needed mind-sets to appreciate and value the radical innovation embedded in Erasmus+.

A very good example is that the Commission encourages cross-sector collaboration and working with the community in all education, but we still have to link applications to a specific educational sector and accept to be evaluated by professionals from that sector.

On the administrative side, we of course praise any simplification of the application and of the budget; but the fact is that professional organisations are requested to not only administer but implement a 2 year project at the price of 250 euro per month. Not much community work and entrepreneurship for that sort of money.

In conclusion, Erasmus+ includes amazing innovation potentials, but the administrative program structure, the mind-sets of many evaluators and the devaluation of the strategic partnership format tends to prevent most of the innovation potentials from being implemented in practice.

So, the answer is: no, *Europe is not ready for this, not yet.*