

## **Implications of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) on education and training: State-of-play in Member States**

<b>AUSTRIA</b> <b>Last update: 15/4/2020</b>
<p>1.            Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?</p>
<p>In universities, lectures will be carried out online until the end of this semester. All schools are closed until mid of May. However, to ensure an efficient ending of school careers and subsequent enrolment in universities, national school exit exams (“Matura”) will take place from the 25<sup>th</sup> of May onwards. Accordingly, high school graduates-to-be will resume regular schooling on May 4<sup>th</sup>. Of course, strict hygiene measures and physical distancing will be introduced to reduce the risk of infection. Particular precautionary measures will be introduced to protect pupils with pre-existing health conditions.</p> <p>As of April 1, no fees are charged for all-day schooling at federal schools. The ministry recommends that Länder and municipalities also waive the collection of fees entirely. Similarly, from 1 April onwards, no contributions are collected from parents and guardians at boarding schools. Parents do not have to cover the costs for cancelled school events. The question of refund of tuition fees of a private school has to be addressed individually with the school.</p>
<p>2.            In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?</p>
<p>Wherever pupils under the age of 14 cannot stay at home, because their parents are needed at work (e.g. critical staff in health care sector, supermarkets, public transport) schools and kindergartens are open to carry out necessary day care. It is foreseen to maintain these measures at schools and kindergartens at least until mid of May, especially with a view on potentially higher demand when increasingly more parents resume their normal working routine.</p>
<p>3.            In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?</p>
<p>With reference to the primary and lower secondary school level, school boards decide which teachers and administrative staff has to be present at schools in order to ensure schooling and day care for children, whose parents are needed at work. Teachers in upper secondary schools are required to stay at home, since upper secondary schools are completely closed.</p> <p>All teachers have to supervise pupils through learning platforms, e-mail or chat rooms and have to regularly provide practice materials for pupils at all school levels.</p> <p>Teachers with younger children can also stay at home for childcare if necessary.</p>

4.

Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?

The Ministry is not directly responsible for student dormitories. They are privately run. However, we are informed that home managers have already put relevant measures in place. For example: Residents are asked to keep adequate distance and to use common areas such as kitchens etc. only individually. The use of lounges and fitness rooms is not allowed anymore. Common areas are being cleaned more frequently and special measures have been taken for quarantine cases.

5.

How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.

A large number of content offerings have been compiled on the Ministry's website. [https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/beratung/corona/corona\\_fl.html](https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/beratung/corona/corona_fl.html)

The learning platforms Moodle and LMS operated by the mare in use, as well as cloud solutions from companies such as Microsoft and Google.

The content platform Eduthek, developed by the Ministry, offers learning and exercise material from external providers for kindergarten and pupils of all school levels to practise at home and to deepen their knowledge.

Currently numerous publishers and providers from schoolbooks are offering some of their content free of charge.

Exemplary Links:

<https://lms.at/>

<https://eduthek.at/schulmaterialien>

[https://moodle.univie.ac.at/theme/university\\_boost/login/index.php](https://moodle.univie.ac.at/theme/university_boost/login/index.php)

Since 18 March 2020, the public TV station ORF 1 has been offering a special education programme for students at all school levels. In the morning between 6 and 9 the programme for pre-school and primary school children is broadcasted. Afterwards, the three-hour programme "ORF-1-Freistunde" offers an educational programme for students aged 10+. Documentaries, info contributions and explanatory videos are shown, as well as a news format specially designed for this target group. Moreover, students can express their questions and needs and contribute with videos and messages. The programmes are also offered in the "Mediathek" for the duration of school closings.

Based on the experience of the first weeks of school closures, the Ministry takes additional efforts to improve the efficiency of digital learning environment services. Currently the Ministry is working on a concept with guidelines for distance learning and on a concept for a Distance Learning Service Portal as a Single Point of Entry for teachers and school manager.

Challenges: The challenge is to keep these systems stable and to provide sufficient capacity to allow a large number of users to learn and work simultaneously. Teachers have the important task of continuously supporting the learning process. They are responsible for offering support to pupils, to create their own materials and exercises and make them available to students and parents via electronic communication channels (e-mail, learning management systems and tools for school-parent communication). Additionally, the Ministry set up an extended service portal for Distance Learning to provide low-threshold access for teachers with little experience in conducting their lessons online and set up a digital classroom. Hence, online training for teachers is provided for this purpose.

6.

Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

A main challenge is to counteract learning disadvantages of pupils, for example due to a lack of infrastructure at home, language barriers or skills gaps. Measures are currently being developed by the Ministry for this purpose. The Ministry has published guidelines for education boards in order to ensure that all pupils participate in the learning process during the Corona crisis. The guidelines give detailed instructions on how to support pupils with a disadvantaged background. All students who show problems with the current situation or have not been reached yet will be contacted by social workers without exception. In order to enable pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to use distance learning, the Federal Ministry, in cooperation with other partners, is making available 12,000 digital devices for schools in our realm.

Similar initiatives by regional school authorities are about to follow. The City of Vienna offers its free tutoring "Support 2.0" initiative for 10 to 14 year olds now online, consisting of additional support in the subjects German, mathematics and English for lower secondary schools. These courses have so far taken place regularly at schools and are now held virtually.

Counselling: school psychologists can be reached by telephone or e-mail. Currently psychological counselling is also available during evening hours and weekends. There are also counselling services (in 23 different languages!) for people who do not speak German.

7.

How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. *state matura*), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?

As the academic year is currently continued via distance learning, the pupils are given tasks that they have to solve at home. Teachers are requested to put together further work packages for the period after Easter. The decision whether to teach new material or to deepen their knowledge must be made autonomously at school – without overburdening pupils and their parents.

School-leaving examinations (for instance the „Matura“ examination) have been postponed for several weeks. The “Matura” examination will start from May 25<sup>th</sup> onwards. In order to prepare our pupils for their final exams, they will resume regular schooling on May 4<sup>th</sup>, while all other pupils will continue to use distance learning from home. Of course, strict hygiene measures and physical distancing will be introduced to reduce the risk of infection. Particular precautionary measures will be introduced to protect pupils with pre-existing health conditions. Taking the circumstances into account the examination process will be slightly adapted. Less (oral) tests will be required and previous grading will be taken into account. The goal is to consider the extraordinary circumstances while upholding the high-quality standards. The main aim remains to give all pupils, apprentices and students the possibility to graduate. Therefore, equivalent measures will take place at VET schools. Practical parts of the curricula and work-based learning can be postponed or otherwise flexibly adapted.

The following additional measures are planned to facilitate the school leaving examinations in 2020:

- two weeks of tuition before the start of the examinations
- cut the time between individual parts of the examination
- cancel part of the examinations (e.g. the presentation & discussion of the final thesis)
- changes in the organisation of teaching units
- examinations are going to take place on Saturdays and bridge days

<p>Apprentices will be given the opportunity to complete the last class of vocational school via distance learning, in order to take the final apprenticeship examination in summer, as planned.</p> <p>In the field of higher education, lectures will be conducted online until the end of this semester. Exams may be held in a digital format. The deadlines for handing in final papers and dissertations will be extended. Special regulations will allow for lectures and exams to take place also during the summer months. To enable work in laboratories or individual art lessons, it will be possible to prolong the semester, also comprising the summer months.</p> <p>The admission and enrolment procedures will be aligned with the extended summer semester and the new Matura timeline. Deadlines will be extended and admissions examination will be postponed or adapted to new formats when necessary. All deadlines for handing in and assessing bachelor diplomas/Diplom, and master theses as well as dissertations will be extended by the very time period which students lose because of Covid-19, to make sure that no students will suffer any drawbacks. Holders of needs-based scholarships will not suffer any disadvantages if they are not able to keep the deadlines for presenting the required credits, due to Covid-19 related restrictions and problems. It is laid down in the relevant proposals that the legal regulations on study grant deadlines will be null and void for the current summer semester.</p>
<p>8.</p> <p>What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?</p>
<p>All Erasmus+ beneficiaries were informed about the application of the <i>force majeure rule</i> and how extra costs due to the Corona crisis can be borne. All project promoters were informed about health and safety warnings as from February 2020 (website), repeated info letters and responses to individual requests on how to cancel and early return from abroad. On top of this, 3.500 higher education students who were supposed to study abroad or serve traineeships in spring semester 2020 were informed individually.</p> <p>To our knowledge, most individuals have returned to Austria. A great number of individuals continue with their courses via eLearning opportunities.</p> <p>As regards potential changes of university requirements, we cannot foresee any on top of the current Corona rules.</p>
<p>9.</p> <p>In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?</p>
<p>Monitoring and facilitating the sharing of the strategies and measures of the Member States regarding distance learning and the main challenges and solutions of these (e.g. how is distance learning implemented in primary education? How are socially disadvantaged students supported etc.?)</p>
<p>10.</p> <p>What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?</p>
<p>Flexibility is needed for projects that are currently under way (e.g. ESF projects in adult education that were switched to online learning).</p>

## BELGIUM

**Last update: 31/3/2020**

1.

Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?

In Belgium, the federal minister of public health is advised by a Risk Assessment Group, which closely monitors and analyses the situation, and on the other hand by the Risk Management Group, which can take measures to protect public health. In addition, a special scientific committee for the new coronavirus has been set up to assist the authorities.

The federal authorities are in very close contact with the federated entities.

On Thursday 12th March 2020, the National Security Council decided that all school lessons (in schools and training centres) will be suspended starting Monday 16th March. However, the government called on citizens not to rely on grandparents to look after children. Schools will be responsible for providing care when parents have no choice but to work and for those who work in health care and other critical sectors. The suspension of classes is until 19th April (the containment measures are extended first until 19th April but could be extended in a second time until 3rd May), however on the 5th of April starts the Easter holidays until the 17th of April. Daycare facilities remain open until further notice. The Communities will operationalise these measures.

### Tuition fees:

Compulsory education is free of charge in Belgium.

### In the French speaking part of Belgium:

Adult education schools: lessons are suspended. Regarding the particularity of this education (modular one), if a school decides to cancel or postpone the organization to the following school year a course unit whose organization was scheduled to start between March 14 and April 5 2020, the school is obliged to refund the registration fees already collected for this course unit.

Training: The training centres (apprenticeship, public, continuous training for trainers) suspended all training activities. A certain number of measures have been applied since March 14 and this, until April 19, 2020 (subject to further developments).

In the Walloon Region, for apprenticeship, the suspension of training is also extended to the suspension of work-study contracts that learners have concluded with the companies in which they carry out their practical training. Furthermore, there is, at this stage, no compensation mechanism envisaged for the annual tuition fees. Regarding government-subsidised continuing training for workers, training operators are subject to the same constraints, i.e. cancellation of face-to-face training. Most of them transform these training courses into distance learning or postpone them. An administrative instruction is being prepared to authorise the subsidy of distance learning courses.

In the Brussels-Capital Region, all apprenticeship's contracts are also suspended. Homeworking for trainees is allowed only in specific conditions. Postponed or cancelled continuous training will be reimburse.

2.

In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?

The Belgian authorities have taken a whole package of measures. Most notably on 12th March, the National Security Council has decided that Schools will be responsible for providing care when parents have no other choice but to send their children to the grand-parents and for those who work in health care and other critical sectors.

Furthermore also the following broader measures are aimed of supporting persons and families being impacted by the current situation. The measures mentioned here offer also a tangible support for working parents with children.

- On 16th March, the National Security Council has decided that working from home has to become the norm. (Companies where teleworking is not possible must respect the rules of "social distancing".)
- Enterprises which have been completely closed down as a result of the measure imposed may apply for 'temporary unemployment benefits for employees on grounds of force majeure.' This will also be allowed for workers who cannot be employed due to the abolition of events, cultural activities, sports activities, closure of cinemas.... For those cases where only partial closure is imposed (e.g. the retail trade) or where, despite the compulsory closure, limited services can still be offered (e.g. a catering service or room service in a hotel whose restaurant is compulsorily closed), 'temporary force majeure unemployment benefits for employees' can also be claimed for all the days on which the workers cannot be employed

Early childhood institutions (day care centres) remain open.

Pre-primary, primary, secondary and VET schools have to follow the same rules: they have to organize day care for children:

- Whose parents are working in crucial sectors (health, security, food retail, care, etc.);
- Whose parents don't have any other choice than the grand-parents;
- With special needs, in medical facilities/boarding schools;
- From disadvantaged backgrounds (to be identified by the school) in Flanders.

During the Easter holidays schools will continue to provide care for parents who work in strategic sectors. These services are given in a voluntary base, but if a school could not answer to a demand (due to a lack of volunteers), municipalities will provide care for the children.

In the German-speaking Community: Parents inform the school whether their children are being cared for in the school or not. The school ensures that the pupils registered for attendance are actually at the school. Parents can make flexible use of the childcare services.

Extra-curricular supervision

Since Monday, 23rd March 2020, out-of-school care is only available in three locations. Parents are responsible for transport from the school to the out-of-school care if this is necessary.

Since Monday, 23rd March 2020, the centre responsible for ECEC has been organising emergency care from Monday to Friday in addition to the regular care. This consists of continuous care from 6.00 a.m. in the morning until 11.00 p.m. in the evening. This emergency childcare from 6.00 a.m. to 11.00 p.m. is available primarily for the children of parents belonging to the following occupational categories, regardless of the age of the children: doctors, nurses, nursing auxiliaries, family helpers, police and security personnel and firefighters.

In Flanders, The general principle remains that children and young people stay at home as much as possible during the Easter holidays. For primary school children for whom this is not possible, the local authorities, in close consultation with the Flemish Government Agency Opgroeien (growing up), take the lead. Children may not be offered alternative forms of learning during the school's holidays. The interpretation of the holiday care consists of sports and games, taking into account the applicable precautions to the maximum.

In the French Community, the care services organized during the holidays, are given in a voluntary base, but if a school could not answer to a demand (due to a lack of volunteers), municipalities will provide care for the children.

3.

In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?

Education:

As schools are obliged to organize a day care, members of staff must provide supervision for the children in attendance. However since only a limited number of personnel needs to be present in school as “workplace” the majority of the teachers continue to work from home. Most of the Schools’ board or school’s principals have organised an internal "pre-selection" in relation to "at risk" staff.

Nevertheless, schools’ administration have to remain open (reachable by phone or by mail).

There is no obligation for staff to go to school to organise distance learning.

In the German-speaking Community, the schools provide teaching and exercise materials for pupils either send by email or by regular mail (for more details see Q5).

Training:

The training centres and the trainers offer distance learning content where and when possible. Staff do not have to be present at the workplace to organise it.

4.

Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?

Boarding schools and permanent homes are obliged to take in all students who do not have a permanent home or accommodation solutions.

In the French Community: Contact will be made with the Regions to ensure that school transportation is maintained for those students who normally benefit from it. During the day, students must be welcome at the school where they are enrolled.

In Flanders, dormitories are open and functioning but the occupancy is minimal. Most pupils are namely at home.

5.

How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.

Regarding the continuity of learning, no new subjects can be requested from students. If they organized evaluation it can only be formative ones.

To better reach pupils with no access to home internet: Belgians biggest internet providers Telenet and Proximus are opening up there hotspots. Teachers can request a login code from Telenet or Proximus for students who do not have internet access.

In Flanders, distance learning is organised by the schools and the teachers. The governments facilitates the information by providing information to the schools through its channels.

All information can be found on the website: <https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/alternatieve-vormen-van-leren>

The alternative learning assignments should be tailored to the needs of the pupils. The tasks should ensure that they stay in rhythm (it is not a holiday), keep in touch with the school and are able to practise the lessons learned. It is advised that the teachers take into account the possibilities of the parents to follow up digitally at home. The tasks are optional, but parents are strongly encouraged to keep there children engaged with the learning assignments.

These given assignments should not be aimed at discussing new content and they may not count towards the assessment of students.

The Flanders Ministry of Education & Training communicates extensively to teachers and parents of the existing possibilities using the under point 2 described communication channels.

In addition the ministry organises a Facebook Live session on 18/03 on alternative forms of learning.

The Flanders Ministry of Education & Training policy cooperates with platforms such as Smartschool, Microsoft, Google. These platforms offer now free solutions for schools distance learning and virtual classrooms/

Furthermore an additional educational offer is provided through the existing channels. Teachers can, for example, easily and quickly find digital content via the tools they already have at their disposal from the educational publishers (Bingel, Kweetet, Scoodle, etc.). These publishers are currently also exploring how they can make their digital material fully available to pupils and teachers until the Easter holidays (which start on the 6th of april). This is already the case for Bingel.

The Flemish public broadcaster VRT will broadcast additional educational programmes:

On ÉÉN there will be a programme on weekdays between 8.30 a.m. and 12 noon with extra educational value for school-age children and adolescents, whether they are at home or at school. From 8.30 a.m. to 10.00 a.m. there will be an educational programme for primary school children. From 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. there are programmes for young people.

The streaming platform VRT NU also provides an additional educational offer from Monday, March 16

In the German-speaking Community, the schools provide teaching and exercise materials for the pupils (see below "Teaching staff" - "The members of the teaching staff").

These materials may not be collected in person from the schools. Firstly, personal contacts must be kept to a minimum. On the other hand, the journey of the parents or guardians to school is not an essential journey. Non-essential journeys are prohibited according to federal regulations.

If it is not possible to send these materials electronically, the school will ensure that the students receive the materials by mail or that the distribution of the materials to the students' mailboxes is done by the teachers. If the teachers distribute the materials, this is considered a professional trip. Professional journeys are considered essential journeys and are therefore allowed according to federal regulations.

If it is not possible to return processed documents to the schools by electronic means, the school will make the necessary arrangements for the return shipment (e.g. by enclosing a pre-franked envelope).

The ZAWM can issue work orders to the apprentices. The ZAWM can offer distance learning if it can be organized. If it cannot be ensured that all apprentices can follow the distance learning, it must be ensured that the subject matter taught in distance learning is not relevant for transfer.

For Higher Education, the university ensures the continuation of education as much as possible via distance learning.

In the French speaking part:

In education a mixed approach is in place: schools (teachers) are asked to organize the pedagogical followup of their students (via mails, virtual platforms such as Smartscholl, Konecto, etc. or social networking). . If the teacher uses e-learning modalities, it is imperative that he/she ensures that each student in the class group has the materials and support to work on. Beside the decentralized approach, the Ministry of education has extended its offer of distance learning: e-learning platform is now accesible to all the students who are registered in compulsory education and the platform "Ma Classe", which is a dispositif of Adult education, is now accesible to teachers of all level of education. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education is working with the French public television (RTBF) to launch a programme "L'école à la maison". This offer will be aimed at primary school pupils and link to the e-learning platform. All the pedagogical material will be available on the e-learning platform. Beside that offer, local televisions are broadcasting lessons to help the pupils and their parents.

Higher education institutions and Universities have their own platform for distance learning.

Training:

Walloon Region: According to centre digital infrastructure, trainers offer distance learning content through distance learning platforms like Microsoft TEAMS, Claroline, ... or even through social media. Brussels-Capital Region: Distance learning is only available in certain field of training (e.g. languages).

6.

Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

In the French speaking part:

Education:

In Higher education, computers' rooms and libraries stay open for the students in order to give them access to distance learning.

Teachers of all level of education have access to the platform "Ma classe" where they can find online pedagogical material.

Regarding special needs education: all schools must remain open and welcome all pupils/students whose parents request it (no exceptions concerning the work of their parents).

PMS Centres (Centres for psychological, health and social help for compulsory education) stay open and should be able to respond to requests from beneficiaries within the usual time limits.

Training:

Walloon Region: The government directives require teaching and training staff not to dispense any new material at a distance, but only to devote this channel to exercises linked to a subject already covered in face-to-face or remediation. IFAPME (apprenticeship centres) recently launched the implementation of the Office 365 suite across its entire network of training centres. The trainers therefore have integrated tools allowing them to have access to all the digital technology enabling distance learning (additional shared resources online, digital exchange platform, etc.). FOREM (public training centres): has also taken measures to continue collaborative work with the trainers staying at home. A lot of initiatives are taken by colleagues to keep in touch - through a Facebook page "Colleagues in Confinement" - an internal radio broadcasting has been organised with the impulse of public agents.

Brussels-Capital Region: for the SFPME staff (Apprenticeship centre): following the reorganisation of teleworking, computer hardware and various applications (ConnecteMe, OneNet, MS-Teams, Zoom) are made available, as well as access and operating tools and information. Business telephone lines are re-routed to employees' mobile or home phones. For the EFP staff (training centre): Staff members without IT equipment are referred to the IT department; business telephone lines are re-routed to employees' home or business telephones or to the call centre. All teams have access to the Teams application. Management tools are available remotely.

In Flanders, The Flemish Ministry of education and trainings provides support and tutorial materials for teachers on its website. The ministry has set up a dedicated Klascement page. [At the Klascement - What to do if the lessons don't go ahead?](#) Teachers can find inspiration and concrete material that they can use instantly. These materials are aimed at helping to accommodate pupils and to teach at a distance.

The Flemish schooladvisory services of the educational umbrellas have set up dedicated webpages to support teachers. They also organise webclasses to support teachers.

7.

How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. *state matura*), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?

Any decision regarding assessment and grading has not been yet been taken by the Communities. The competent federal bodies make their decisions, including those to suspend classes on the basis of the current development of Covid-19 infections and the associated forecasts. Reliable information on the further course of the 2019-2020 school year (handling of examinations, possible effects on the summer holidays, awarding of study and qualification certificates, etc.) can only be provided once it is known how long the measures to contain the coronavirus Covid-19 will last. As soon as the competent authorities at federal level have taken decisions on continue or terminate the measures, answers to pedagogical and organisational questions will be binding. This also applies to training. The authorities will have to consider all useful measures to guarantee the level of skills acquisition for all learners.

8.

What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?

On March 14th the ministry of Foreign Affairs advises against all trips abroad. The risk of Belgian citizens being stuck abroad is so high that all travel abroad is discouraged. This also counts for EU mobility. For Belgians currently abroad the Ministry advises Belgian citizens to return.

All school trips are prohibited until April 19.

The Belgian National Agencies are monitoring the situation together with the Services of the European Commission. Planned mobilities within Europe may be delayed, cancelled or interrupted. Organisations sending out participants (universities, schools, adult education centres, etc.) may, on grounds of force majeure, finance costs resulting from postponements, cancellations, closures, etc. from the project budget. The advice of the ministry of foreign affairs is a valid ground for force majeure.

The issues currently facing by the Agency mainly concern the implementation of force majeure and the arrangements for bearing the costs incurred by the beneficiaries. A communication has been disseminated to our beneficiaries and published on the Agencies website, and procedures have been put in place for both mobility projects and strategic partnerships. It should be noted, however, that the Commission's guidelines are currently imprecise and evolving. The main principles have been established but not the precise implementing arrangements (what will actually be recognised as eligible and on what basis, actual costs or unit costs, etc.). A FAQ should be sent to the Agencies again this week to clarify all these elements. The Agencies procedure will be adapted accordingly.

As far as student support is concerned, it is not the responsibility of the Agencies but of the institutions.

For the French Community, a file for collecting information on students currently abroad and wishing to be repatriated has been drawn up by ARES (Academy for Research and Higher Education).

In the German-speaking Community, In the area of community education, school trips lasting several days and school events (e.g. performances, parents' evenings, diploma ceremonies, information events, open days, high school graduation ceremonies, etc.) are prohibited until 30th June 2020 inclusive. This procedure is also recommended to all other school authorities.

9. In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?
Arrangements to this end have already been made under the Erasmus+ programme (in particular the possibility of following distance learning provided it is organised by the host institution) and should also be specified in the FAQs referred to above.
10. What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?
At the level of the Erasmus+ National Agencies, what the Commission has been asked for is maximum flexibility in, on the one hand, taking account of the costs incurred and, on the other hand, the recognition of study courses.

## **BULGARIA**

**Last update: 13/4/2020**

1. Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?
In connection with the extended declared state of emergency (Decision of the National Assembly of 03.04.2020) and the recommendations of the national operational headquarters, an order was issued to the Minister of Health, which introduced anti-epidemic measures until May 13, 2020, inclusive. The measures include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- termination of school activities and all extracurricular activities in schools, universities and other training institutions and organizations;</li> <li>- Visits to children in day nurseries and kindergartens were suspended;</li> <li>- all group forms of activities and work with children and students, outside the system of pre-school and school education, which are organized and conducted by individuals and legal entities, have been discontinued.</li> </ul> <p>Discontinuation of education in schools and colleges is offset by the provision of e-learning at a distance. Until now no decision has been made to declare a zero academic year for higher education institutions and the educational process will continue according to the curricula of the respective specialties. Therefore, there is no need to refund the tuition fees for the summer semester of the 2019/2020 academic year. It is up to the discretion of the academic leadership to decide on the extension of the school year.</p> <p>In connection with the measures announced by the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria on payment of job preservation allowances in the affected sectors, it is envisaged that private kindergartens will be also included in this list and will be able to apply for funding under the 60:40 scheme (60 - State aid, 40 - employer).</p>

<p>2.</p> <p>In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?</p>
<p>All institutions for ECEC are closed until 12 May incl. Kindergartens and nurseries do not carry out distance virtual learning because at this age it is not appropriate for children to use electronic devices so actively. Most of kindergartens have taken initiatives related to the disseminate and publicate suitable home-based activities with parents in order to support families during this difficult period without being compulsory. Kindergarten teachers are on leave and do this voluntarily. If a particular kindergarten does not maintain contact with the families of the children enrolled in it, and parents need ideas and support, then they could use the electronic versions of activity books for the relevant age groups, which are granted free and are approved by the Ministry of Education and Science.</p> <p>Parents of children up to grade 8 who are unable to leave their children at home are relieved of their workplace attendance.</p>
<p>3.</p> <p>In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?</p>
<p>Nearly 89 percent of students enrolled in e-learning. Each student is enrolled in distance learning 6 hours a day, including through broadcast lessons on national television channels.</p> <p>According to the amendments made in the Labor Code through the State of Emergency Act, employers are obliged to allow the use of paid annual leave or unpaid leave at the request of a mother of a child up to 12 years of age.</p> <p>There are very few teachers doing their jobs in the workplace. Teachers from the following protected groups are not present at work: pregnant women, people with disabilities, people with chronic diseases, people over 60 years of age, women undergoing in vitro procedures, parents of children up to grade 8 who are unable to leave their children on their own, teachers who are unable to leave other family members alone.</p> <p>The presence of staff, including mothers of young children, in higher education institutions to perform their duties in cases where this cannot be achieved through remote access to the institution's official resources is determined by an order of the rector of the relevant institution. In some universities, the work of the administrative staff is envisaged entirely through remote access and access to the buildings of the respective higher school is provided, if necessary.</p>
<p>4.</p> <p>Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?</p>
<p>Due to the introduction of distance learning, almost all student dormitories are not currently occupied by students. The management of the higher education institutions, which manage student dormitories and canteens, and SSO EAD, develop measures for compliance with the hygiene requirements in accordance with the regulations of the Ministry of Health.</p>

5.

How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.

Each school chose the format - synchronous or asynchronous. The choice is dictated by the age characteristics of the students and their ability to use the electronic resources offered by the school. Schools should tailor distance learning according to the technical devices at their disposal - with a virtual classroom, via e-mail or internet application, with assignments by telephone, with the help of parents or with the help of mediators.

Every day on national television, lessons and educational programs are broadcast for primary and secondary school students to support the educational process and, in particular, to prepare for national external assessment in grade 7.

In connection with the conduct of distance learning, the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) has developed a National Electronic Library of Teachers (e-Content Repository), which provides an opportunity for the publication and sharing by pedagogical specialists of author training, didactic and methodological materials for working in e-learning environment - video lessons, training programs, innovative methodologies, tests, films, exercises, entertaining pedagogy, presentations and most of all projects related to both independence in performing in an electronic environment, as well as with research, student work, curiosity, motivating elements, feedback, group and individual work, creation and application of skills, etc.

Each higher education institution independently organizes the distance learning process of its students by using various online platforms and video conferencing software through which distance learning sessions are conducted as well as other communication channels. At this moment, it is not known that problematic situations have arisen in the distance learning of undergraduate, doctoral, and graduate students. Programs such as Office 365, Skype, Blackboard are used. Access and cloud services are being created.

6.

Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

All schools have been sent accounts to work on the Microsoft TEAMS platform, which is free of charge. Profiles have been created for all students and teachers. A helpdesk and a phone for questions at the MES are provided.

For the full implementation of distance learning, it is recommended that parents: monitor the information sent by teachers, provide a quiet and peaceful environment where the child is comfortable and able to focus on communication with the teacher and the learning of the material. Parents assist pedagogical specialists in the implementation of the instructions and tasks they set, assist the younger children with the equipment available and provide an opportunity to watch lessons on Bulgarian national television.

Mediators and social workers from schools and kindergartens, for an additional fee, provide printed materials at home, for all security measures, to students not involved in distance learning will assist the police in conversations with the community to comply with the measures for social exclusion as well as supporting the work of social workers when needed.

Students not covered by distance learning will be further included in attendance forms in the Support to Success project after the school process is restored.

On the website of the Ministry of Education and Science is announced "Telephone e-education, which can be answered questions and suggestions related to the educational process.

In the context of distance learning for children and students with special educational needs, additional support for personal development is provided; including resource support, online counseling and psychological support, speech therapy.

<p>Plans, for example distance learning training have been prepared to assist pedagogical specialists, reflecting both the specifics of the work and the conditions under which the training is conducted - via electronic platforms, via Skype, Viber, Messenger and others.</p> <p>For children and students from vulnerable groups, including those who do not speak Bulgarian, additional training is provided remotely, adapting study materials for this purpose.</p>
<p>7.</p> <p>How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. <i>state matura</i>), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?</p>
<p>Recommendations have been sent to the schools, at the discretion of the teachers, to alternate lessons for lessons with the teaching of new knowledge, and to make better use of project-based learning opportunities. At this stage, school records do not need to include grades, and teachers need to monitor the commitment and activity of each student.</p> <p>The dates for conducting the national external evaluations and the state matriculation exams are outside the period of the state of emergency and there is no obstacle to their organization and holding at the moment. The Ministry of Education and Science is ready to shift these dates, as well as to adapt the content to the training in all schools.</p> <p>Each higher education institution has to decide according to the specifics of the training provided.</p> <p>Possible solutions are to postpone the exams at a later stage and extend the school year.</p>
<p>8.</p> <p>What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?</p>
<p>A letter from the Minister of Education and Science to higher education institutions recommends that all trips under mobility programs, as well as any other trips to countries affected by coronavirus, be canceled or delayed. HRDC, responsible for the Erasmus+ programme in Bulgaria, sent to all HEIs updates on the situation with COVID-19 and instructions how to manage it. They have instruction how to deal with cases of force majeure in KA103 and KA107 of Erasmus+ Programme. Erasmus coordinators and other administrative staff from HEIs are in contact with all Erasmus students – outgoing and incoming. We face problems regarding the return of Erasmus students because of the cancelled flight, closed borders and other restriction of the movement of people. Every HEI decides case by case how to support students regarding their return, following learning activities, etc. We encourage HEIs to be as flexible as they can about the learning activities of the return students (to have individual educational plan, follow online courses in their host institution, follow courses in their home institution, etc.). All students are treated equal but for the moment Bulgarian HEIs do not enrol students from other countries, because all HEIs are closed for attendance classes (only for the period of emergency situation).</p>
<p>9.</p> <p>In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?</p>
<p>By facilitating the sharing of educational resources in the field of vocational education and training.</p> <p>By providing funds to build and / or upgrade already existing online learning platforms in higher schools that are adequate to meet the current requirements in the IT sector. Also by providing access to digital devices for disadvantaged students.</p>

10.

What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?

Opportunities for translating e-vocational education and training resources developed in other European countries would be useful.

It is envisaged that the higher education institutions that have requested online training assistance for the construction of platforms, the purchase of equipment, etc. will receive the necessary support to ensure a full-fledged learning process.

## CROATIA

**Last update: 10/4/2020**

1.

Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?

The regular work of all education and training institutions in Croatia has been suspended since Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>. The current decision is valid till April 19<sup>th</sup>, but will be adjusted depending on the epidemiological situation in Croatia and the EU. Online distant learning systems for primary and secondary education are running successfully. For higher education, universities organize distant education on their own, but there is a central LMS system and support for all of them.

2.

In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?

Schools are open in minimum capacity, so there is an everyday possibility of day care for younger children. ECEC institutions are under local jurisdiction and they adjust to local needs, but there is a possibility for working parents in key professions to ask for care for their children.

3.

In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?

There is an obligation for a headmaster to organize schoolwork so as to enable and support distant learning. There is no need for all teachers/other staff to be present every day, but the system and all distant learning activities have to be operative. Headmasters received instructions in order to prepare teachers for work from home. Every day some teachers have to be in school, as well as other staff required to perform other tasks (administrative, cleaning, heating, etc.), but only in minimum capacity.

There are no special measures for teachers with younger children who need to be present at the workplace. The system is seen as a whole, so the measures that apply to everyone, also apply to teachers. Work is organized so that all urgent tasks, which enable the functioning of the system, are performed, whereas the elderly, the sick, and people with younger children may be exempted. This applies to all public and state services, including schools and teachers.

<p>4. Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?</p>
<p>All dormitories with students have to be open and have to prepare meals for students. There are around 10% of students still in dormitories.</p>
<p>5. How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.</p>
<p>The Ministry has developed different approaches for different levels of education.        For grades 1-4 of primary school, classes are being organized via the public TV (actual teachers are being filmed holding classes and this is produced; there are no ready materials), and teachers send additional exercises for practice to parents. Considering their age, these children do not use the Internet directly themselves, but they communicate with their teachers via their parents.        For grades 5-8 of primary school and for secondary school, video lessons are being filmed for every day, in the duration of 15 minutes for one subject, according to the national schedule which is envisaged in a way that, in case the situation lasts until the end of the school year, would enable pupils to acquire the learning outcomes defined in the curricula. The national schedule foresees approximately 5 hours of schoolwork a day, but schools can add extra hours for their pupils. Video lessons are available both via TV and online. Besides that, each school has organized a virtual teachers' room and virtual classrooms on various platforms (Loomen, Microsoft Teams, Yammer), where teachers communicate daily with their pupils, give them instructions, check their activity and completion of tasks. For now, parents are complaining that pupils have a lot of workload, but both parents and pupils should be aware that pupils normally spend 5-6 hours a day at school, and now they are expected to do all the work from home.        Links: <a href="http://mzo.gov.hr">mzo.gov.hr</a>, <a href="http://www.skolazazivot.hr">www.skolazazivot.hr</a>        (instructions in English are available here: <a href="https://mzo.gov.hr/news/coronavirus-organisation-of-distance-teaching-and-learning-in-croatia/3634">https://mzo.gov.hr/news/coronavirus-organisation-of-distance-teaching-and-learning-in-croatia/3634</a>).        For higher education, the Ministry has issued a note according to which higher education institutions should organize online classes by themselves but central support and LMS is ensured.</p>
<p>6. Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?</p>
<p>For children of 6-10 years of age, no special resources have been foreseen, since classes are delivered via TV and teachers communicate with parents via phone. For grades 5 and 7 of primary school, the Ministry has provided tablets for all pupils within the implementation of the reform, but since the project is still ongoing, they have not been provided for other generations. For that reason, the Ministry asked schools for data on socially disadvantaged pupils, and has allocated financial resources for schools to provide tablets for them. Moreover, there are individual donors who wish to provide tablets for pupils of lower socioeconomic status. According to our experience, it is very important to provide devices for pupils of the lowest socioeconomic status, because in fact most pupils do have devices and Internet access in their household. In addition, telecommunications companies are also ready to contribute and provide free Internet access (via SIM cards) to pupils of lower socioeconomic status. We believe this is one of the most important preconditions to ensuring equal access to online education for all pupils, therefore we consider that identifying those who are at the highest disadvantage is essential.</p>

Instructions for organizing virtual teachers' rooms and virtual classrooms, and setting up communication channels, were quite detailed. In addition, a helpdesk was set up by public agencies who provided help for users. All communication channels were set up in 3 days, with some problems related to network congestion and breakdowns, which have been successfully solved in the meantime.

For children with special needs and disabilities, at first it was foreseen that, if parents agreed, personal assistants would work with them at home (if they agreed with that as well). However, since the epidemiological situation changed and social distancing measures were introduced, the Ministry had to recall that recommendation. Therefore, the Ministry made a recommendation to pedagogical staff at schools to design online classes adapted to such children and that way help teachers.

In order to enhance support for online learning for students with special needs, the Minister asked that non-teaching professional staff such as school pedagogists, psychologists, educational rehabilitators, in line with their competence, and in cooperation with parents and students, prepare the analysis of the situation and suggest concrete support measures for students, in particular for those with special needs, including gifted students. Moreover, this professional staff should make themselves available to students and parents for providing support.

Psychological support is provided to pupils, teachers and families by dedicated crisis teams who offer daily counselling via phone or online.

7.

How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. *state matura*), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?

In the first two weeks we did not expect teachers to assess and grade their students. We are updating legislation concerning grading and assessment, in order to take into account the distant learning context.

During the first two weeks of distance learning, to prevent imbalances in student workload, the Ministry published the document Recommendations for organizing a students' work day in distance teaching and learning which defined the age-appropriate workload to help teachers plan. Ministry prepared the *Guidelines for assessment and grading in a virtual environment*, targeting primarily teachers but partially also being directed to parents, caregivers and students themselves. These have been circulated on 3 April to all schools, complemented by the additional material with practical examples of assessments in different subjects, as well as with information on digital tools that can be used for assessments (English version of the Guidelines is available here:

<https://mzo.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/Engleski/7-4-2020/Guidelines%20for%20assessment%20and%20grading%20in%20a%20virtual%20environment.pdf>

The *State Matura* is in June, so at the moment we are not shifting the dates, but we are considering alternative options in case we will have to postpone the exams. For example, testing might focus on the main subjects and facultative ones would be left out or testing would be minimal.

8.

What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?

In order to address the impact on learning mobility, the Ministry of Science and Education is in daily contact with the Agency for Mobility and EU programmes (E+ National agency and implementing body for regional / bilateral mobility programmes). The Ministry is monitoring data on interrupted mobility, cancelled mobility, and notably on students and staff that have still not returned to Croatia.

The Ministry will recommend to all HEIs in Croatia:

- to recognize assessed learning outcomes acquired online by domestic students (in case of interrupted outgoing mobility);

- to assess learning outcomes acquired by foreign students online (in case of interrupted mobility).

The Agency for Mobility and EU programmes regularly updates its web page with information for HEIs and mobile students, following consultations with the Ministry. There are some problems with gathering personal data of students in order to identify students in need of assistance. Students are advised to contact the relevant Embassy of the Republic of Croatia.

Changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries primarily relate to the integration of virtual mobility into the Learning Agreements. It is realistic to expect that the physical mobility will not be fully operational in September 2020.

9.

In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?

The Commission could provide support in facilitating virtual mobility, in terms of special projects for cooperation and sharing experiences in distant education, as well as research of practises. To update the Digital Education Action Plan by taking into account current challenges arising in the context of covid-19 situation, as expressed by Member States.

10.

What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?

Since the Ministry has started online classes for all levels of education, which has received a highly positive response from pupils, teachers and parents and even ECEC institutions are asking for an online programme to be organized for them, the Ministry would like to invest in development of online classes and materials, as well as provide devices and Internet access to pupils and students of lower socioeconomic status. We are planning to amend the existing projects financed from EU funds, but this is a lengthy procedure.

## CYPRUS

**Last update: 30/3/2020**

1.

Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?

The in-school operation of all public and private schools, pre-primary, primary, lower and upper secondary schools, vocational education and training schools and special education, has been suspended until the 27th of April 2020 (including Easter Holidays). The same applies for all afternoon and evening lessons (Music Schools, Sports Schools, State Institutes of Further Education, Adult Education Centres, Optional All-day Schools, Afternoon and Evening Technical School Programs and all the activities of the Program “Activities for Educational and Social Inclusion” ). In the higher education sector, all universities have suspended their operation and many of them are working virtually, until the 27th of April.

The issue of compensation of tuition fees has not been considered since the operation of private schools and Universities continue through on-line and distance learning programmes.

2.

In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?

Day care institutions are closed. The Government has decided on measures for the support of working parents. Working parents of the private sector are entitled to financial support, in order to be granted special leave of absence for up to 4 weeks. The Government also facilitates civil servants, who are parents of young children (up to 15 years of age), to stay at home with their children. Working from home is encouraged and facilitated whenever is possible.

Within the framework of emergency support measures, a Special Sick Leave Allowance will be paid to:

- Employees who have particular health problems and fall within a list published by the Ministry of Health, who must be absent from work for the purposes of protecting their health and not deteriorating it. A certificate by their personal physician is required.
- Cases of compulsory absence from work by persons instructed or ordered by the Authorities (Category I [compulsory isolation under medical supervision (quarantine)] and Category II [self- isolation under telephone surveillance]), provided that the isolated employees hold a certificate issued by the Ministry of Health.
- Persons over the age of 63 up to the age of 65, who do not receive statutory retirement and continue to work and fall into Categories I and II, as categorized by the Ministry of Health, provided that the isolated employees hold a certificate issued by the Ministry of Health

3.

In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?

Teachers (except those who belong to vulnerable groups) were recalled to schools during the first days after school closure, in order to plan their next steps to offer synchronous and asynchronous education to their students. According to the action plan that each school made and the instructions of the Ministry, teachers work mainly from home using online tools, in close cooperation with the school head of their school. They are present at the school when necessary and in line with government instructions for the safe operation of all public and private organisations. Schools are operating with limited staff who are present at the school for coordination purposes.

Teachers of Pre-primary and grades 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> of Primary education are using asynchronous methods (email, individual school websites) in order to provide material to their students, with the involvement of their parents.

<p>Grades 5 and 6 of Primary School and Secondary Schools teachers are using blended methods of synchronous and asynchronous education.</p> <p>Uploading digital material on the Ministry and individual school websites and offering distance learning courses using Microsoft Teams are the main tools of teaching. Alternative tools of distance learning may also be used depending on the level of the students and capacity of teachers and schools.</p>
<p>4.</p> <p>Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?</p>
<p>The Cyprus Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth informed all Higher Education Institutions that according to the Governments decrees they are not allowed to have students in their premises and encouraged institutions to continue their operation using on-line learning methods. Furthermore, the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education provides support to the Institutions and has proceeded to the setting of quality assurance criteria for the Institutions of Higher Education that will use on-line education. Based on the above, all Universities with student dormitory facilities (four out of nine) gave the option to their students to choose, if they want, to stay in the dormitories or go home. Most of the students chose to go home and very few students continue to stay in the dormitories (most of them are foreign students). Despite this fact, the Universities proceeded to take preventive measures for COVID 19 which are the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Installation of antiseptics in all common areas at the Student Halls.</li> <li>2. Increase of the cleanliness in all common areas (kitchens and bathrooms) using antiseptic / disinfectant cleaners.</li> <li>3. On-site demonstration to the Cleaning Services Staff for the correct method of cleaning and disinfect.</li> <li>4. Reservations for using the Event Centre are cancelled. Reservations or new applications for using the Event Centre, are only allowed for gatherings that will NOT exceed ten people (1 person per 8m2).</li> <li>5. Technical Staff and/or other University personnel are not allowed to enter the bedrooms of the residents, expect in the case of emergency. In that case, extra measures will be taken to ensure that both parts are safe.</li> <li>6. Full record about every resident and we keep contact with all of the remaining residents, offering advice and support regarding medical issues and other needs (i.e. a free meal is still offered daily, the First Aid office is available, etc.).</li> <li>7. Have an Action Plan in case a student-resident has symptoms or is a confirmed covid-19 case.</li> <li>8. All residents were informed via various emails of above, and the following measures:       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To take all the personal protective, and hygienic measures as prescribed by the State Medical Services, and regularly ventilate their bedrooms.</li> <li>• Overnight stays of friends and family are strictly forbidden. General visitors and site visits are forbidden as well.</li> <li>• Information and instructions in case a resident has symptoms or is a confirmed case.</li> <li>• Emergency phone numbers for students that may need assistance, was sent to all students including the Student Halls Residents.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<p>5.</p> <p>How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.</p>
<p>Existing infrastructure is used to support distance learning in public schools. As a priority, measures were taken to ensure that all students have access to computer and internet at home. A distance – synchronous education programme is being implemented, using Microsoft Teams, for the students of the final grade of upper secondary education, who are preparing for their graduation exams. Work is undertaken towards the implementation of this distance – synchronous education programme for students of the 5th grade of primary level to the 3rd (final) grade of upper secondary level, soon. For this reason, intensive online training courses are being provided to teachers (starting from the teachers of the upper secondary cycle). Teachers are also allowed to use any other open source e-learning tool.</p>

In addition, supportive educational material has been uploaded to the Ministry's webpage and individual school webpages, for all students in order to minimise the effects of school closure. Each school has arranged its own time schedule for the teleconferencing of teachers with their students. Special educational distance learning platforms are used (mainly MS Teams, Webex and Zoom) but there is also exchange via e-mails in cases teachers are not yet familiar with the use of the other tools.

Private schools at all levels of education also offer distant e-learning programmes.

Furthermore, public and private television stations, are supporting the overall efforts, especially for younger pupils, by broadcasting lessons and other educational programmes.

Main challenges include:

(a) Ensuring that all homes have the right infrastructure, technological equipment and know-how, in order to ensure participation of all students to distance learning offered by the teachers at the school level or centrally by the Ministry.

(b) Communicating with all the parents of younger students to get the written permission for the use of their personal data for the purposes of distance learning.

(c) Getting in touch with immigrant parents/students that do not speak Greek in order to communicate the new teaching and learning reality.

(d) Students of younger age need support and guidance in the use of technology, while a number of parents cannot provide such support.

(e) The limited suitable resources of online/digital learning material in Greek.

Generally, although the distance learning approach was not used widely, teachers and students are doing their best in order to adopt to the current circumstances. In any case, collective and individual efforts are painlessly taken, in these times of an unprecedented crisis. However, there is much room for improvement.

Resources to share in Greek (for both students and teachers):

[http://www.moec.gov.cy/endeiktiko\\_yliko.html](http://www.moec.gov.cy/endeiktiko_yliko.html)

[www.schools.ac.cy](http://www.schools.ac.cy)

[www.pi.ac.cy](http://www.pi.ac.cy)

[http://www.moec.gov.cy/edu\\_psychology](http://www.moec.gov.cy/edu_psychology)

[http://www.moec.gov.cy/edu\\_psychology/arthra\\_erevnes\\_meletes.html](http://www.moec.gov.cy/edu_psychology/arthra_erevnes_meletes.html)

<http://www.moec.gov.cy/dkpe>

<http://office365.schools.ac.cy/>

6.

Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

During the last days more than a 110 thousand teachers and students have gained access to the distance learning system which is developed by the Ministry (Microsoft teams).

The Pedagogical Institute offers training centrally to teachers. At school level networks of teachers have also been formed to provide peer assistance on the use of tools for distance learning. Students learn with the assistance of their teachers the use of distance learning tools.

All public school administration teams have contacted all parents/guardians and students through the teachers and informed them about Distance Learning arrangements and the way students will be engaged.

School units have developed action plans and distance learning education programmes, which will follow the provision of the curricula.

A needs assessment was undertaken so that any lack of technological equipment in households will be filled. In this effort there is contribution from the private sector.

Children and families will be supported through governmental measures so that no student will be left behind.

Educators have undertaken initiatives for peer support.

The website of the Ministry is continually uploading updated material for all classes and levels.

With regards to pupils with special needs attending mainstream classes or special units the same instructions apply for their pedagogical support as for the rest of the pupils. With regards to pupils with special needs attending special schools, instructions were given to headteachers to communicate with parents/guardians to provide suggestions for creative activities, during the suspension period, on an individual basis, depending on the particularity of each child. At the same time, special schools are encouraged to upload on their websites educational material that teachers have developed or use in the classroom to further support children as well as suggestions for pedagogical and therapeutic activities that can be implemented at home, in collaboration with parents/guardians. Special education material (e.g. for deaf students) has also been uploaded and will be disseminated to other special education groups of students.

Cooperation of the Counseling and Career Guidance Service of Secondary Education with the Educational Psychology Service of the Ministry is in progress for the development of an appropriate framework to support students emotionally and potentially maximize teacher and student success in online teaching and learning processes, respectively. Also in schools, counselors have created networks of communication with students when need arises.

In addition, the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy and the Directorate of Mental Health Services of the Ministry of Health are providing daily distance psychological services to psychologically vulnerable people.

7.

How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. *state matura*), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?

In regard to public education, the Ministry is currently assessing the situation bearing in mind the development/containment of the virus outbreak and will take these decisions based in due time. At present, it has been announced that any educational material provided or activities realised via distance learning, will not count for examination purposes.

8.

What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?

The Ministry has decided to postpone school excursions and trips abroad and is elaborating ways for undertaking the cost of the cancellation. In addition, the National Agency for Erasmus+ informed the participants that any mobility in the affected areas of the program countries can be suspended, postponed or cancelled if necessary. Some universities are able to facilitate virtual mobility if deemed necessary.

Among the other measures, Cyprus Government has decided to grant a 750 euros allowance to students studying abroad, as a support measure for those who cannot return home and have to stay in their places of study for Easter holidays, as a result of the current circumstances. According to the latest measures, students who belong to "vulnerable groups" in relation to the coronavirus, are allowed to return to Cyprus. The students should hold a special certificate which will be issued after an evaluation of the prerequired medical certificates by a three-member Medical Council. The Cyprus Government will charter special flights from Athens and London in order to facilitate the return of these students back home. An online platform for the registration of Cypriot citizens overseas (including students) for communication and assistance in emergency situations has been set. According to the current directives, all incoming flights (excluding cargo) to the Republic of Cyprus, are forbidden as of 21st March for a period of 14 days.

9. In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?
Sharing experiences, challenges, as well as examples of good practice could be of great assistance, since they could offer useful information at policy level. Creation and/or sharing of digital resources for all levels of education in all EU languages could provide additional support. Special on line training sessions could be provided for teachers in Europe regarding online education (teaching and learning).
10. What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?
Flexibility for reallocation of funds to meet the challenges which emerged due to the Coronavirus outbreak is important. We plan to use these facilities both for teacher training and also for developing and/or upgrading digital material uploaded for teachers and students.

## CZECH REPUBLIC

**Last update: 15/4/2020**

1. Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?
A 30-day state of emergency effective March 12 was declared by the Czech government. On the April 7, the Parliament prolonged the state of emergency until April 30. Personal presence of pupils and students in primary, secondary, tertiary technical schools and higher education institutions was banned already before the state of emergency on 10 March 2020 by the decision of the Ministry of Health. Based on the state of emergency, apart from primary, secondary, tertiary technical schools and higher education institutions, following schools and school facilities are closed effective from March 13: basic art schools and language schools authorised to carry out state language exams as well as to organise one-year attendance language courses which are recorded in the list of educational institutions. The closure of the schools is on temporary basis.. The national discussions on reopening the schools have started to identify and clarify conditions that should trigger the reopening of schools. Based on the press conference of the Government on April 14, schools might be re-open as follows if the pandemic situation in the country does not make worse: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On April 20, students from the senior year of the higher education will have an opportunity to meet in groups of maximum 5 persons in order to participate in individual consultations and sit for their leaving exams. Rectors are consulted on how to enable foreign students to finish their higher education this year.</li> <li>- On May 11, secondary-school students, vocational-school students and conservatory students from the senior year will be given an opportunity to participate in small group classes for starting their preparation for passing state examinations including graduate examinations in conservatories. It is just an offered possibility, not obligation for all students. These examinations will start not before June 1<sup>st</sup>.</li> <li>- On May 25, lower primary schools will have an opportunity to re-open for pupils of 1-5 classes, each class could be organised in a small group up to 15 children.</li> <li>- Upper primary schools (6-9 classes) might be re-open on intermittent basis in June for small groups of pupils, learning at distance will continue to the end of the school year.</li> </ul>

<p>Regarding the private schools, it is within the private school head's authority to decide on exempting pupils from tuition fees or reducing their amount, it depends on a contract made between the school and legal representatives of the pupil. In public pre-school facilities the head defines the maximum amount of the reduced fee on the comparative basis depending on how long the operation of the facility was limited. Dormitory fees will be reduced on the basis of the number of days during which pupils were accommodated in dormitory facilities.</p>
<p>2.        In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?</p>
<p>Regarding early childhood education and care facilities (ECEC), the closure is decided by the head of the facility in a close cooperation with its founder (typically the municipality), final decision is made by the head of the facility. If kindergartens are open, the staff as well as children are obliged to have a cover on their mouth and nose. The cover could be a regular mask or respirator, but it could also be a home-made textile mask or just ordinary scarf.</p> <p>ECEC facilities are usually formed by small groups of children and their closure would have a negative impact on their parents. Nevertheless, the MEYS suggested to the founders of ECEC facilities the closure or limitation of their operation. If so, financial support for working parents with younger children is provided. Working parents whose children have to stay at home due to the closure of schools can apply for a work leave for purpose of care of a family member. This paid work leave (60% of an average salary) was prolonged by the decision of the Government on March 19 and approved by Chamber of Deputies on March 24 in terms of covering the whole period of the involuntary closure of schools and kindergartens and applies to children up to 13 years of age. This measure based on lump sums applies newly also to self-employed parents who take care of their children. Child care groups which strictly observe health rules can be established in business and enterprise premises as well as in NGOs. Child care groups are also organised for parents of a specific professions (police, armed forces and health care staff) at the premises of kindergartens or primary schools.</p> <p>Based on the press conference of the Government on April 14, ECEC facilities might be again in operation beginning on May 25 depending on the measures identified by the Ministry of Health.</p>
<p>3.        In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?</p>
<p>The educational process continues, but in a distant form of learning and teaching as well (self-study, digital tools). School leaders should assign the work (distant assignment of tasks to children, self-study, etc.). It means that teachers do not have to attend schools, they can work from home.</p> <p>University teachers may carry out their research and teach by a distant way. Some of the teachers are asked to help with the child care groups organised for special professions.</p>
<p>4.        Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?</p>
<p>The Czech Republic cannot serve at the moment with a specific example of good practices regarding preventive measures to be used in pupil/student dormitories. Effective March 17 morning, regional administrations were obliged to reserve space in specifically chosen schools, kindergartens and other facilities that will be used to take care of the children (3 to 10 years old) of police, armed forces and health care staff. On voluntary basis, teachers or students of Pedagogical Faculties across the country take care of the children of police, armed forces, health care staff and other target groups who are obliged to provide services in the state of emergency.</p>

5.

How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MEYS) requires from schools to reach the full potential of distance learning taking into account accessibility of tools and instruments that are available both for pupils and their teachers.

MEYS established and launched on March 12 the website “Distance Education” (<https://nadalku.msmt.cz/cs>) which supports schools and teachers in providing distance education. This web involves practical recommendations for pedagogues and parents, links to on-line educational tools, updated information, examples of good practices, as well as sharing experience and inspiration regarding distance education. The web aims at providing elementary orientation in available on-line instruments and information resources which facilitate education based on digital technologies.

Also the Czech national TV broadcasts under the expert supervision of MEYS educational programmes for pupils. On March 16 it set up and launched a unique live programme “UčíTelka” held by teachers for primary-school pupils (1-5 classes) on daily basis. Moreover, afternoon educational TV programmes are provided for lower-secondary pupils (6-9 classes). In addition, inspirational programmes for nine-class pupils who prepare themselves for upper-secondary entrance examinations are provided with the aim to facilitate the revision of lower-secondary subject matter.

The educational institutions have been very innovative in last 2 weeks. According to the age of pupils/students they have been discovering many free-ware software possibilities and they have been sharing them on social media with the others. Many software companies have widened their offer of free software. Microsoft Teams have been widely used to communicate and to provide the space for distant teaching/learning.

E-tools / materials for sharing with other Member States:

Distance Education website of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport: (<https://nadalku.msmt.cz/cs>). This website provides tips and hints on useful communication instruments usable for assigning homework, distributing and correcting tests as well as homework, and for sharing examples of good practice. The website also involves on-line educational resources for pupils and students with links to other websites where pupils and students can practise what they had learned. Last but not least teachers can there find links to methodical portals with teaching materials as well as useful links to training programmes for pedagogical staff. It is intended to update the website with new links, information and examples of good practice.

UčíTelka – a unique live educational programme of Czech national TV (<https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/13394657013-ucitelka/>). It is a daily live-broadcasting programme on the second channel of Czech national TV for primary-school pupils (1 – 5 classes). This entertaining-educational programme is scheduled provisionally for the period of one month under the professional supervision and monitoring of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport. The daily broadcasting starts at 9 a.m., is devoted to the respective subject matter for the respective class and lasts 30 minutes with a short break.

An experienced teacher and three pupils simulate a school lesson.

SYPO (Support for Professional Development of Teachers and School-leaders) provides series of 30-minute webinars on implementation of distance learning. The webinars focus on practical tips and guidelines on online learning techniques and tools which can be used by teachers and parents during the quarantine. Various experts and guests are invited to share their knowledge and examples of good practices. The webinars are streamed in real time on the SYPO YouTube channel and the records are available at [www.projektsypo.cz](http://www.projektsypo.cz). Thanks to this project schools can also arrange online consultations with regional ICT methodologists for the purpose of solving practical issues related to implementation of the on-line education. Moreover, SYPO runs a blog with actualities and a Facebook group with up-to-date tips.

6.

Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

An intensive distant form of teaching and learning is a new situation for teachers, pupils/students and their parents. Especially parents show difficulties in coping with new assignments for the children from their teachers. Teachers are therefore encouraged by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport to focus mainly on revising the principal school subjects and taking into consideration a specific situation of each family.

If pupils have no or limited access to distance learning or if their digital skills are limited, the schools should provide these pupils with traditional learning materials. Teachers are encouraged to maintain a feedback between them and pupils as well as their parents regarding the amount and difficulty of the assigned work. It is the teachers' obligation to assign home work to pupils and control results of their engagement.

Majority of pupils/students have no problem with distance learning. There are few in the class/group identified not to be able to have the right access. In these cases, there is always an alternative way identified how to provide learning materials to pupils/students and get a feedback from them.

Moreover, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has been analysing the possibilities how to help to equip pupils/students in disadvantaged locations or low social conditions.

Non-profit organizations play irreplaceable role in this context. The NGO People in Need (PIN, *Člověk v Tísni*) has launched an SOS Czech Republic fundraising campaign to assist the most vulnerable groups of the society.

One part of the project supports home education for children who do not have internet access by connecting them with schools and teachers, providing them computers and organizing for them volunteer tutoring. PIN has also conducted an extensive survey among families of socially unprotected children and issued a set of recommendations for teachers and educational institutions on how to work with them.

All recommendations for students, teachers and parents which are available at the website <https://nadalku.msmt.cz/cs> consider the psychological aspects of the distance learning. MEYS in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior, Masaryk University and Pedagogical-Psychological Counselling Centre STEP created various booklets and comics for children of different ages in order to explain them basic information about COVID-19 and offer them an entertaining way to deal with the arisen stress. The booklets are available on the website of the MEYS.

The Department of Psychology of the Masaryk University in Brno launched a detailed material with recommendations for different target groups covering various questions and topics (for example: hospitalization, activities for children and their grandparents, how to deal with fear of coronavirus?, what if parent must stay abroad? etc.) Available in English on: <https://psych.fss.muni.cz/en/coronavirus>.

7.

How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. *state matura*), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?

Children's enrolment in the obligatory school attendance for the 2020/2021 school year started on April 1 and will take place in the given legal terms April 1-30 without a personal presence of the children. Applications for the enrolment can be submitted without a personal presence of the child's legal representative (by post, by data box or via a signed e-mail).

Based on the information of the Minister of Education, Youth and Sports in the press conference on March 23, entrance examinations for lower-secondary pupils and state secondary school-leaving exams for secondary-school students will be adjusted to the covid-19 situation as follows:

- Entrance examinations will start no less than 14 days after opening the schools and will be organised only in one round with additional alternative terms.
- State secondary school-leaving exams for secondary-school students will start no less than 21 days after opening the schools, there will be no written exams in Czech language neither foreign language in the state part of the exams. Otherwise the scope of the exams will be preserved (incl. oral and didactic part for Czech and foreign languages). Only didactic tests will be conducted and assessed in schools (approved by Chamber of Deputies on March 24).
- If secondary schools are not open till June 1, the school-leaving exam certificate will be will be a summary of the results of the last three school reports (beginning with the certificate in the second half of the year before last). Approved by Chamber of Deputies on March 24.
- It is not considered to prolong education during the summer holidays.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport will decide on issuing school reports covering the second half of the 2019/2020 school year in the upcoming weeks.

To address the most pressing issues in the field of higher education, Chamber of Deputies approved a new law that enables higher education institutions to organize admission procedures and upcoming state exams remotely. Higher education institutions can organize their entrance exams online and admit and enrol students remotely. The new law makes it possible for all higher education institutions to organize state exams as well as regular exams remotely through online platforms as well as to change the length and the organization of the academic year. The period from March to August 2020, regardless of ongoing distant form of studying, will not be included in the study period for the purpose of extra fees or maximum length of studying. To support the higher education institutions in distance learning, the ministry has created a webpage with recommendations and sources of information on distance learning, including the topic of online assessment (<https://nadalku.msmt.cz/cs/vysoke-skoly>).

8.

What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?

16 March, Czech citizens and foreigners with permanent and temporary address in the Czech Republic issued for more than 90 days must not leave the Czech Republic for at least 30 days. Exception is given to bus drivers, engine drivers, pilots and people who work in border areas up to 100 km. Foreigners with no permanent neither temporary address in the Czech Republic issued for more than 90 days are not allowed to enter the country for at least 30 days. Czech citizens and foreigners with permanent and temporary address in the Czech Republic issued for more than 90 days returning from 15 countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, China, Iran, Italy, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, South Korea, United Kingdom) have to undergo a two-week quarantine.

Concerning the Erasmus+ mobilities the European Commission has informed the member states about the specific measures via the Note 005 sent on 31/01/2020 and via the NOTE 012 sent on 25/02/2020. Further to that the mobility cases under EU programme Erasmus+ are regulated by the note 014 (Coronavirus – specific guidance in cases of force majeure) which was sent by the European Commission on 10.03.2020 and which provides guidelines on how to deal with cancelling or postponement of Erasmus+ activities determined by coronavirus-related situations. Further to Note 014, the new note 018 was sent to NAUs and NAs on 18/03/2020 to provide additional clarifications concerning the scope and application of the force majeure principle as well as to provide additional guidelines and general recommendations in order to support National Agencies in managing the exceptional circumstances.

On March 12<sup>th</sup> 2020, the Czech NA informed on their websites via social media about adoption of new measures (see below):

- All new international mobilities of pupils, students, pedagogical, non-pedagogical, academic, non-academic and other staff in education, funded from programs administered by NA can not be launched.
- Pupils, students, pedagogical, non-pedagogical, academic, non-academic workers and other education workers who are abroad financed from programs administered by NA, it is recommended to consider returning to the Czech Republic.
- Foreign students are advised to contact the sending institution or Embassy.

<p>All the beneficiaries received an email informing them about all the measures taken by the NA and details about further administrating and financing projects, as well as conditions for applying force majeure in necessary cases and advices on safety in case the project is still in realization. The National Agency updates regularly the FAQ website <a href="https://www.naerasmusplus.cz/cz/o-programu/erasmus-a-koronavirus-faq/">https://www.naerasmusplus.cz/cz/o-programu/erasmus-a-koronavirus-faq/</a></p> <p>In the actual situation Czech Republic has been helping to Czech students abroad to return. Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with NA is working on lists of participants in every country.</p> <p>The National Agency provides updated information in English for foreign students studying in the Czech Republic on <a href="https://www.studyin.cz/faq/">https://www.studyin.cz/faq/</a></p>
<p>9.</p> <p>In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?</p>
<p>The Commission could be very helpful if facilitates sharing best practices and initiatives among Member States, provides with crucial guidance regarding the application of the <i>vis maior</i> principle in numerous situations (duties, deadlines etc.), in sharing usable digital and other resources as well as other supportive materials that could serve as an inspiration for Member States. At this moment, it is crucial that the EC provides the MS with clear and quick guidance regarding the possibility to realize the online mobilities and online project activities and that related costs are eligible even if the destination had to be changed. In addition, the EC could for example facilitate organising virtual meetings of ET working groups.</p> <p>Czech Republic also appreciates very open and quick communication of the European Commission with national agencies. The CZ National Agency has been very proactive in reaching all the beneficiaries to offer them help at any stage of the project realisation they are at the moment. Protection of the programme as well as protection of the health of the participants have been taken in account. Significant number of mobilities cannot be finished as they were planned, but high number of beneficiaries were able to find the ways, how to reach the goals of the projects and fulfil the learning agreements via online cooperation. The CZ National Agency has been also in close touch with the national agencies from other countries involved in the Erasmus+ programme.</p>
<p>10.</p> <p>What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?</p>
<p>We believe, that the personnel costs, caused by the precautionary measures should be eligible. E.g. some of the team members cannot perform activities due to extraordinary measures - the employer is obliged to reimburse employees (pursuant to Section 207 or 208 of the Labour Code) with wage compensation or payment of at least 60 % of the average earnings (in some cases the reimbursement can reach 100 % of the average earnings). If these costs are not eligible, there will be higher risk of the increment of serious negative impact of the epidemiological situation on employers. Many public services as well as NGOs might be affected. The eligibility could prevent the number of job losses and therefore potential delays of the projects before the epidemiological situation becomes stable. We would also appreciate the implementation of specific eligible costs which meet special needs of the employees in a situation, when they cannot continue working outside their workplace, i.e. by home office.</p> <p>We would appreciate the possibility to approve the eligibility of expenditures in case of unit costs in activities realized with the use of IT and in the non-personal way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- personnel support unit costs (e.g. Specialized school pedagogue, School Psychologist, Nanny) – in some cases, where schools are closed, it is not possible to fulfil the output of the unit cost at all or exactly the way described in the fiche, such a detail is not part of delegation acts.</li> <li>- these outputs should be fulfilled with the use of electronic communication tools, e.g. videoframes, google classes, skypes etc.</li> </ul> <p><u>Use of equipment acquired from projects budget</u></p> <p>ESF – some acquired equipment e.g. notebooks, tablets are eligible when they are used with target groups. Now some of this equipment need to be used for other purposes, e.g. notebooks can be temporarily used by teachers</p>

or other pedagogical or non - pedagogical staff to continue maintaining the school curriculum. Most of the teachers now work from home using online platforms to continue the school curriculum. Other example could be research projects where the infrastructure could be used to mitigate the impacts of the crisis.

Within the programme Erasmus+ the existing regulations sent by the European Commission via Notes (005,012,016,018) provide guidelines, which offer necessary flexibility concerning how to deal with the cases of force majeure and also the length of the projects. Clarification on the project activities' flexibility would be more than helpful in a current situation. The clear rule should be defined, if the Erasmus+/European Solidarity Corps project promoter is entitled to receive the grant even in a situation when the project activities had been adjusted and also if each participant of Erasmus+/European Solidarity Corps mobility is entitled to receive the grant for the period in which he/she is fully or partly experiencing online mobility.

## DENMARK

**Last update: 15/4/2020**

1.

Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?

In order to delay the spreading of the corona virus and reduce the negative impact, the Government decided late 11 March to close down the public sector at large. All public employees that are not in critical functions were sent home. This decision was based on recommendations from the health authorities. All educational institutions (public and private) were closed as of 16 March.

On 6 April the Danish Government announced a slow reopening of the Danish educational institutions starting with early childhood education and care, primary education up till fifth grade, senior year students in general upper secondary education, and special needs schools starting 15 April. Also senior year students in vocational education and training will start as soon as possible. All other levels of education will remain closed at least until 10 May.

Higher education programmes will remain physically closed until and including 10 May 2020. The Government has decided however, to reopen certain health science programmes deemed to be critically important to society, for students who are due to complete their education this summer.

It is important for the Government that pupils and students receive education and training even though they are not physically present at school.

The ministries have recommended that distance learning is being implemented to the greatest possible extent – through electronic means and lessons designed to be completed at home. Older students are also expected to do self-study.

The Danish public schooling and education system is financed by taxes and therefore free of charge. There are also a number of private schools, including international schools with partial parental payment. Legislation does not contain regulations regarding parental payment at private schools. It will therefore be a matter between the private school and the parents.

As students are expected to continue their studies at home, they will continue receiving grants from the State Education Fund.

<p>2. In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?</p>
<p>The municipalities have established emergency care for example for parents in critical job functions, and parents in the private sector where working from home is not possible. Parents should first have explored other options. Children at emergency care at schools are required to receive emergency teaching.</p>
<p>3. In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?</p>
<p>Schools are still responsible for the compulsory education, and teachers are doing their jobs through distance learning from home. There is only obligation to be present at work for those who are working in the emergency care that is set up in all municipalities in order to make it possible for example for parents in critical job functions or parents in the private sector where working from home is not possible. It is up to the local management to plan the shift pattern in order for it to meet the demands and take into account the situation of teachers with younger children.</p> <p>People working in the public sector will receive their normal pay for the duration of the shut-down.</p> <p>If teachers are working in shift pattern at the emergency care they will have the possibility themselves to send their children to emergency day care.</p> <p>The Ministry of Higher Education and Science are recommending that employees at all higher education institutions work from home. Only employees essential for critical functions, should be physically present at the institutions. Since the closures, the Ministry of Higher Education and Science has established multiple dialogue fora across the sector, where significant challenges associated with the current situation have been discussed in close dialogue with the educational institutions. These dialogues will continue as the closure period is extended.</p>
<p>4. Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?</p>
<p>Upper secondary school dormitories have in general been closed down, but since 15 April they are open to senior year students. Students in VET upper secondary education who live in school dormitories and whose parents live abroad or that due to other factors cannot stay at home are allowed to stay at their school. In doing so, they must comply with all COVID19 national health regulations.</p> <p>The Ministry of Higher Education and Science is not directly responsible for higher education student dormitories but to our knowledge no specific measures concerning dormitories have been taken.</p>
<p>5. How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.</p>
<p>The Ministry of Children and Education has provided guidelines for teachers on conducting distance lessons. The guidelines contain inspiration for how to conduct distance learning via Skype, Microsoft Teams, Google Hangout Meet, Facetime or other electronical means and how to design lessons that the students can complete at home using digital and/or analogue resources. It also contain links to web-based learning resources.</p>

The types of online learning which the Ministry expect will be used being:

- 1) The teacher can conduct distance lessons, via Microsoft Teams, Google Hangout Meet, Skype, Adobe Connect, FaceTime e.g.
- 2) The teacher can design lessons that the students complete via digital learning resources.
- 3) The teacher can use email or other ICT resources, e.g. the platform Aula (used in all public schools), Lectio, Ludus or other platforms (used in upper secondary schools) to send teaching plans/lesson plans and information on homework to students and parents. Students are then responsible for completing the work. The parents are informed about their role in supporting the distance lessons as are the teachers.

Both Office 365/Teams and Google G Suite for Education/Hangout Meet have been made available free-of-charge to all schools.

There has been some difficulties on the first days of the closing of schools as many people should enter the digital platforms at the same time. The Ministry is supervising the issues in order to be able to prioritise the ICT support.

The range of the supply of web-based learning resources is wide as the Danish publishers have made resources available without charge in the period with closing of schools. As they are private suppliers it should be discussed with the suppliers whether it would be possible to share Danish language resources with other Member States.

The use of digital teaching resources has grown steadily during the period of school closures. Many publishers and IT providers have experienced threefold activity on their digital platforms. From week 16 the Ministry redeems digital publisher's products to schools and educational institutions that do not already have an agreement with the supplier in question. The Ministry's purchases will initially last for 14 days from April 14 until Tuesday, April 28, 2020.

The initiative aims to ensure that teachers maintain the best opportunities to complete as good distance education as possible, no matter how the situation develops. Possible agreements will therefore also require an extension of one week at a time.

All Danish HE institutions are now providing online education instead of regular on-site education. This also extends to online tutoring, group activities and examination. However, HE institutions are organising activities using a variety of tools and approaches – for details go to any HE institution website and look for their information for students and teachers. The Ministry of Higher Education and Science is continually concerned with answering mainly legal questions in regards to any obstacles concerning online activities.

In addition to individual initiatives by HE institutions a number of Danish edtech companies and non-profit organisations are supplying their platforms, programmes and know-how for free in order to support the online efforts of all institutions. This is not only for HE institutions but also primary schools and high schools. These can be accessed through the site: <http://edtechdonor.dk>.

6.

Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

The Ministry of Children and Education has provided the schools with advice on digital skills regarding virtual learning and distance learning at the ministerial webpage [emu.dk](http://emu.dk).

The municipalities and schools are aware that the school is responsible for ensuring that families have the necessary ICT equipment available at home or plan the distance learning in a way that does not require ICT equipment. That could be through print-outs, books and phone or e-mail. If it should prove to be a problem to ensure the necessary equipment in the current COVID19 situation, the Minister may apply a new covid-law and provide grants to private and public schools, educational institutions and other institutions receiving state grants to carry out their teaching activities.

The Danish Government is very concerned about pupils with special educational needs and students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Schools have the obligation to give extra support and make sure that they are in

contact with the child and family on a daily basis. This has been emphasized from the Danish Minister for Children and Education on national TV and through letters to the municipalities and schools.

Students continue to receive SU (The Danish students' Grants and Loans Scheme). Students are required to continue their studies while studying at home in so far as it is possible. Furthermore, a law has passed enabling students to apply for an extra loan for March and April 2020 in connection with the COVID-19 situation. In order to be entitled to the extra SU loan you need to be a recipient of SU. Students in paid internships in March and/or April 2020 as part of their higher education are included by the possibility to take out an extra SU loan or completion loan.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Higher Education has a strong focus on the wellbeing of students in the current situation where loneliness and a lack of structure can affect daily life. In order to support students' wellbeing and help them cope with this extraordinary situation, the Ministry of Higher Education and Science has launched a campaign with good advice, for example on how to maintain structure in everyday life.

7.

How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. *state matura*), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?

Danish schools closed on 16 March. The Government decided on 6 April that the exams for 9th and 10th grade are cancelled. The final exam grade will be replaced by a continuous assessment mark that will be given as late as possible before graduating this summer.

8 April it was also decided that for the students of the final year of general upper secondary education, the number of exams are reduced to 3 or 4. The rest of the exams are cancelled and will be replaced by a continuous assessment mark that will be given as late as possible before graduating this summer. For non-final year students of general upper secondary education all exams have been cancelled. Cancelled exams will be replaced by marks given by the teacher.

It will be ensured that pupils in their final years of these education levels will be able to finish school this summer as planned, and that the pupils' benefits from education and their progress in the education system are affected in the least unfavourable way possible.

Upper secondary VET schools with students that are about to graduate and where the final exam is cancelled due to COVID19 and school closing have several options. 1) The length of the VET-education may be prolonged and the final exam held after the schools reopen. 2) Final VET-exams (with very few students) may be held if it is possible to do so while complying with COVID19 health regulations. 3) VET-schools with students that are close to graduation (within 3 months) that have to cancel final exams may provide a student with a degree and diploma (administrative diploma), if the school finds that the students in question meets the required level of skills, competences and knowledge and if the trade council agrees. The diploma has the same legal status as a regular diploma (i.e. it is not temporary).

With regard to VET grades in general VET-schools may replace an exam grade with a continuous assessment mark.

Many upper-secondary VET-programs have uptake several times a year. With regard to enrolment and admissions to VET schools existing minimum grade requirements remain. Yet, students that do not meet the grade requirements are allowed to take an admissions test. However, due to COVID19 and school closing such testing can be cancelled and hence such students may get admitted without taking the test. These regulations regarding grading and VET took effect by Ministerial order of March 23th 2020.

The deadline for applications to higher education programmes via the quota 2 (application through specific requirements defined by individual education programme or with non-Danish upper-secondary education) was postponed with a week in light of the extraordinary situation in order to give more time to the approx. 50,000 applicants who apply to higher education every year via quota 2. The new deadline was on Sunday 22 March, 12:00 noon. Applications were submitted digitally via the [www.optagelse.dk](http://www.optagelse.dk) portal which is regular procedure. Some educational institutions, where there is a requirement to attend in person as part of the quota 2 assessment,

<p>are reorganising their quota 2 criteria so the assessment can be carried out remotely, or by postponing the planned attendance dates.</p> <p>No decision has been made as of yet regarding the deadline for the quota 1 deadline which is July 5 2020. Quota 1 is the main admission procedure for students holding a Danish upper-secondary school leaving diploma applying on the basis of grade average.</p> <p>Regarding examinations at higher education institutions, the individual institution will work to offer an alternative form of examination (e.g. a replacement assignment or an online exam) in situations where it is impossible to hold a planned exam. If the institution decides that it is impossible to replace the exam, they will schedule an extraordinary exam instead.</p> <p>Since the closures, the Ministry of Higher Education and Science has established multiple dialogue fora across the sector, where significant challenges associated with the current situation have been discussed in close dialogue with the educational institutions. For example, challenges around exams, internships, and students who are close to completing their education. These dialogues will continue as the closure period is extended.</p>
<p>8.</p> <p>What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?</p>
<p>Since beginning of March 2020 the Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science has published information and a FAQ on its website targeting both Danish students abroad and foreign students in Denmark as well as the higher education institutions to inform and guide them. The website and FAQ has been updated on a regular basis when the Danish government has announced new restrictions on e.g. border controls, teaching possibility when universities and other education institutions have been closed etc.</p> <p>As for Erasmus+ mobility the Danish National Agency (NA) has regularly updated its website on corona virus (COVID-19) targeting beneficiaries and informed them about the possibilities of applying for compensation of costs based according to the provisions of force majeure. The NA is in close contact with the European Commission regarding simplifications of requests of force majeure to ease the administrative burden for the beneficiaries (universities).</p> <p>The institutions have not addressed any specific problems regarding the return of Erasmus students. It is too early to foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries.</p>
<p>9.</p> <p>In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?</p>
<p>Online security issues – GDPR-issues when using different online clients during close down.</p> <p>The Danish National Agency sees a trend showing that the physical presence is replaced by virtual contact, i.e. some students follow online teaching by using online/digital platforms. The Danish Higher Education institutions used digital platforms in their teaching and communication prior to this situation, and they have not indicated any additional needs for the time being.</p>
<p>10.</p> <p>What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?</p>
<p>The Danish universities have expressed that it would be beneficial to simplify the administration of the requests for force majeure. By end of March 2020 the European Commission provided a flexible framework to the NAs taking into account the high number of force majeure cases within especially the higher education field. The flexible framework and approach are manageable and appreciated by the Danish higher education institutions.</p>

The Danish NA has also emphasised that a good cooperation between the European Commission and the NAs has contributed to workable solutions for the beneficiaries in general.

## ESTONIA

Last update: 13/4/2020

1.

Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?

The Government of Estonia decided to close all educational institutions (basic schools, upper secondary schools, vocational schools, higher education institutions, youth centers and hobby schools), except kindergartens, and will apply only digital learning solutions from Monday, 16 March. The situation will be reassessed every 14 days and, if necessary, a decision will be taken on the need to extend the distance learning period. If the virus spread curve drops, our plan is to reopen general, VET and higher education institutions gradually from 15 May. We only allow children to go to school if it is completely safe for them and we are able to provide all other precautionary measures (enough distance from each other, sanitary facilities, including safe transportation and meals). This means that schools must take into account that students must be in small groups when reorganizing their teaching. Schools are able to continue with distance learning until the end of school year (provisionally 10 June), should they wish so (this means that not all students must go to school buildings from the moment the Government allows returning to regular way of teaching and learning).

Regarding tuition fees, different practices apply:

- In case of a municipal pre-school, the decision on place fee is made by the local government. In case of private institution, the application of a place fee is subject to an agreement between the provider, the parent and the local government.
- In public higher education institutions, learning in full-time Estonian-language curricula is free of charge and no tuition fee is established. In other cases (foreign students, private entities), learning and teaching continues online and tuition fees remain unchanged. In justified cases, payment of tuition fees can be made or payment can be rescheduled to the end of an emergency situation.
- Regarding hobby schools, important component of their budget are the tuition fees collected from parents (which might form up to 100% of private hobby school budget). In case, the hobby school cannot provide the service during distance learning period, parents might refuse to pay tuition fee (which affects sustainability of hobby schools and their service provision in longer perspective). Those hobby schools that can apply distance learning may charge tuition fee or arrange separate agreements with parents on how and to what extent the service will be paid for (although it is still dependent on parents compliance).

2.

In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?

Kindergartens and day-care facilities initially remain open, because closing pre-schools would paralyse vital services, as young children cannot, as a rule, be alone at home. Therefore, kindergarten managers (mainly local municipalities) are tasked to keep providing childcare to all parents who must send their children to kindergarten due to work (medical professions, security, police, etc.). Nevertheless, all parents are strongly encouraged to leave their children at home. The opening hours and organisation of kindergartens and childcare institutions are decided by the local government or other kindergarten manager.

<p>There are no special support measures established for parents with small children. In case a parent needs support services, it is recommended to contact the local government's social welfare department.</p>
<p>3. In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?</p>
<p>Teachers are strongly encouraged to work from home. If necessary, teachers may work in the school building in their classrooms, as long as large gatherings are avoided and a circle of contacts can be identified at any time. There are no special support measures or exemptions established for teachers with younger children.</p>
<p>4. Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?</p>
<p>The school decides, but generally, the students should be sent home. Those who do not have access to distance learning at home can stay, while avoiding contact with other students. If there is a student with special needs or a foreigner who, for good reasons, cannot go home, the school will find a solution.</p>
<p>5. How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.</p>
<p>In general education and vocational education, we have several online platforms in place to facilitate communication between schools/teacher, student and parents (<a href="#">e-school</a>; <a href="#">stuudium</a>, etc.). In general education, all learning materials are in parallel on paper and online. All children have access to online-based study materials (<a href="#">e-schoolbag</a>; <a href="#">opiq.ee</a>; <a href="#">foxcademy.com</a>, etc.). In higher education institutions, e-learning is also the main form of study. Almost all courses have e-support in place. Provision of hobby education is dependent on kind of activity – dance classes and some of the sport activities exercises and results are exchanged through video format. Musical instrument lessons take place over Skype calls. Those who are not able to organise learning through digital solutions, seek to provide alternatives such as study camps over summer period or other similar options.</p> <p>At the beginning, we encountered a few difficulties with e-systems resilience (due to a 30-time increase of the usage overnight) but it was resolved within the first days of distance learning. In recent years, much has been invested in system resilience and reliability and this is to be continued. At first, the availability of internet connection or required speed-levels proved a bit problematic for some families/areas, but the Government and private sector have been actively working on resolving those issues. Schools and municipalities have also provided the equipment needed for learning and teaching. There are community-based initiatives that bring people in need and donors together, such as the Facebook group “Every Computer for Schoolchildren”.</p> <p>Estonia is willing to share all of its digital education tools to support other countries' education systems during the COVID-19 crisis. The good news is that private sector is being active to support schools and universities quickly and also in cooperation with public sector organises free webinars to support educators in achieving the best possible results. Currently, companies like <a href="#">99math.com</a>, <a href="#">Lingvist.com</a>, <a href="#">Clanbeat.com</a>, <a href="#">Speakly.me</a>, <a href="#">ALPA Kids</a>, and <a href="#">DreamApply.com</a> have joined the initiative to offer their solutions for free. The list of tools that are internationally available are here: <a href="http://education-nation.99math.com/">http://education-nation.99math.com/</a>.</p>

6.

Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

Supportive guidelines and information on how to organise distance learning are provided by different institutions to different target groups. Ministry of Education and Research is providing and regularly updating information, including guidelines to parents, teachers and school managers, on coronavirus measures in education system here (in English): <https://www.hm.ee/en/spread-covid-19-recommendations-educational-institutions>

The school have sent clear instructions to students and parents on how to organize distance learning in a specific institution, as well as the contacts from where the parent can get more information. For example:

- Parents and teachers can find help for solving problems that occur with e-learning on [HITSA website](#).
- On 10 March and 15 March, HITSA organized webinars on organizing home-based learning with the help of technology.
- A public Facebook group “[Home-Based teaching through technology](#)” has been set up to support teachers. All teachers are welcome to join the group to seek advice from educational technologists if needed.
- Foundation Innove also provides information on how to support children during the COVID-19 outbreak: <https://www.innove.ee/en/news/information-and-advice-for-parents-for-supporting-their-child-during-the-covid-19-outbreak/>

Overall, teachers’ workload has increased. Therefore, they are currently unable to attend trainings. Fortunately, teachers are already familiar with digital learning, and they possess necessary digital skills. The positive phenomenon is that teacher collaboration has increased. Teachers are asking and helping each other. So, the use of different digital tools in distance learning works well with the support of colleagues.

The situation of students with special needs and SEN schools is approached case-by case and decisions on the organization of studies are made in cooperation with the school, the school manager and the parents. In institutions where full transition to distance learning is not possible, the studies are organized on a case-by-case basis, in cooperation with the school teachers and support staff while taking into account the individuality of each student. The Ministry of Education and Research has sent additional instructions to the SEN schools and is in regular contact with them.

7.

How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. *state matura*), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?

Instead of numerical assessment, (verbal) formative assessment is advised by the Ministry as a more appropriate way to engage and motivate students. This continues to be the recommendation until the end of this school year to all grades besides the final forms who have to sit final exams.

Basic school final exams won’t take place this year which means that basic school is completed on the basis of annual grades. In case of reopening the schools gradually from 15 May, the admission tests for upper secondary schools can be arranged at the end of May or beginning of June. Secondary school graduates must take two state exams instead of regular three. The exam times will be set so that students and teachers have enough time to prepare, i.e. exams do not start earlier than two weeks after normal instruction is restored, which means not before 30 May. By current plan, in higher education institutions, exams are conducted virtually in a planned timescale. Also, final defence of doctoral theses are carried out online. It is definitely not considered as a standard solution for the future but a temporary solution during the COVID-19 outbreak.

<p>The conditions for admission to upper secondary schools, vocational schools and higher education institutions are determined by each educational institution. Admission to higher education institutions for most Bachelor degree programmes may take place starting from 1 July, after the results of the state exams have been announced.</p> <p>In vocational education, it is not possible to defend the final work at school. The school together with the student will find an alternative solution. Qualification exams are postponed.</p>
<p>8.</p> <p>What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?</p>
<p>All short-term physical mobility/exchange programmes have been put on hold. New study visits have been postponed. If someone is studying abroad and considers it necessary to return to Estonia in the current emergency situation, the costs will be borne by him/her while taking into account the restrictions on returning to Estonia from abroad.</p> <p>Regarding the EU programmes (Erasmus+, European Solidarity Corps), participants in a project or study trip abroad can return if they wish and their costs are subject to a force majeure clause in the grant agreement. The National Agency Archimedes accepts costs under the grant agreement if the insurance does not cover the expenses (based on the insurer's decision) and the grantor has used all means to recover the expenses incurred. In fact, we have no clear overview of how many Estonian students have stayed abroad or how many foreign students are in Estonia. Information is owned by universities as they sign a contract. However, not all of them are aware, whether students have left or continue distance learning in Estonia. There are probably not many interrupters, because in that case they may lose points and scholarships. Most of mobile students should be able to continue studies virtually. Universities are quite flexible, and looking for solutions on an ongoing basis. In Estonia, consideration is given to extending the nominal time of the curriculum to complete the required credits, and there is no intention to charge any fee for the credit points that were not obtained.</p> <p>At present, universities have not made any changes to the conditions for admission of foreign students.</p>
<p>9.</p> <p>In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?</p>
<p>The Commission should provide regular update and information to the Member States regarding (dis)continuation of the physical mobility projects. Specific virtual mobility formats should be explored and elaborated to facilitate international contacts and interactions at different education levels. The Commission could organise a pan-European hackathon to tackle the issues related to education systems in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak. Mobilising citizens to solve the crisis and spread information is of utmost importance. Moreover, we would appreciate if the Commission coordinates its requests internally as well as with other organisations (i.e. OECD, UNESCO) for information/actions on COVID-19 crisis so that the experts currently involved in resolving internal crisis would not be overloaded with reporting.</p> <p>According to the feedback from the NA, concrete suggestions to the COM are following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using the ESC programme in a purposeful way. The current situation (responding to societal challenges) is what the ESC was created for. Different projects and activities would be helpful now for communities, such as online counselling, learning assistance to young people, providing information to vulnerable target groups and mapping their problems, online training or support for youth workers, etc. It does not have to be accompanied by mobility; online and local solidarity projects are possible. Unfortunately, the application deadlines for ESC are too long that prohibits implementation of projects in time taking into account current circumstances. The ESC procedures should be made more flexible. Similarly, focus should/could be changed on existing youth projects (E + strategic partnerships in the field of youth).</li> <li>- It is important that the NAs have a flexibility in deciding on costs. For example, if the cooperation project is over and the person is unable to return to his / her country of origin, the costs related to accommodation and eating, and eventually the cost of a return trip, will also be incurred. However, the NA may not be able to</li> </ul>

compensate the costs. If the budget does not allow for additional expenditure, the COM should provide additional funding.

- Commission's support for project managers to deploy digital tools would be also helpful. Certainly, for some institutions, online learning is a new situation and there might be no tools (platform licenses, up-to-date hardware, etc.) to effectively implement e-learning. For example, if the intensive course, which was initially supposed to be physical, is being conducted as e-learning in the current situation, then the project could still be eligible for the full grant intended for study mobility, but the grant can be spent on PC / software purchases if needed.

10.

What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?

We believe that flexibility and additional funds are useful for activities and developments in the digital field. For example, it would be useful for Estonia if each general education school could hire educational technologist to support teachers, also we see the need for funding dedicated to teacher trainings, developing IT-learning in vocational schools, but also developing and updating e-learning materials.

In addition to the digital issues, serious consideration should also be given to the socio-economic impact of coronavirus to NEET youth, young people and adults with lower education and without professional education. We must be prepared to provide everyone with appropriate and adequate study opportunities, as well as career counselling and social guarantees.

## FINLAND

**Last update: 9/4/2020**

1.

Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?

The below-mentioned arrangements came into force as off Wednesday 18 and Monday 23 March 2020 and were planned to apply until 13 April. On Monday 30 March the Government decided that the restrictions on early childhood education, teaching and education and training will be extended by one month until 13 May at all levels of education. At the same time, preparations will be made for extending the exceptional arrangements in education until the end of the term, if this is deemed necessary for containing the epidemic.

- School organise teaching with exceptional arrangements until 13 May 2020 and contact teaching will be suspended. Instruction and guidance will be organised by means of exceptional teaching arrangements. As an exception, however, pre-primary education, contact teaching for pupils in grades 1 to 3 and preparatory education will continue. Pupils who have a special support decision will also be provided contact teaching where necessary. However, the Government recommends that, whenever possible, such children be cared for at home.

- The premises of educational institutions, universities, universities of applied sciences, basic art education as well as civic education and other liberal education institutes will be closed until 13 April 2020, and contact teaching will be mainly suspended. Teaching and guidance will be organised as widely as possible in alternative ways, including distance learning, various digital learning environments and solutions and, where necessary, independent learning. Teaching that can only be organised in the form of contact teaching and that is essential for study progress must be organised so that the safety of students and teaching staff is ensured.

- Closing of the premises of universities and universities of applied sciences doesn't per se include their premises used for research, development and innovation especially in critical fields of research. Entrance exams can be executed in the premises if precautions are followed.

<p>More information at: <a href="http://minedu.fi">minedu.fi</a>.</p>
<p>2.        In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?</p>
<p>Early childhood education and care units will be kept in operation. This will enable those parents to go to work who won't be able to use flexible working arrangements. However, the Government recommends that, whenever possible, children be cared for at home.        As an exception, however, pre-primary education, contact teaching for pupils in grades 1 to 3 and preparatory education will continue. Pupils who have a special support decision will also be provided contact teaching where necessary. However, the Government recommends that, whenever possible, such children be cared for at home.</p>
<p>3.        In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?</p>
<p>Pre-primary education, contact teaching for pupils in grades 1 to 3 and preparatory education will continue. Pupils who have a special support decision will also be provided contact teaching where necessary. However, the Government recommends that, whenever possible, children be cared for at home.        There is no national requirement for teachers to be present at the workplace in order to conduct distance learning. However, an employer can mandate the employees to do so. The Government has explicitly recommended that employees are allowed to work remotely.        Communicable disease act determines the following:        A person who is ordered to stay away from his or her gainful employment or is ordered into isolation or quarantine to prevent the spread of an communicable disease, is entitled to receive an communicable disease allowance as compensation for the loss of income, as laid down in the Health Insurance Act (1224/2004). The same applies to the guardian of a child under the age of 16, if the child is ordered for the reason stated above to remain at home, and the guardian is for this reason prevented from working.</p>
<p>4.        Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?</p>
<p>Schools are asked to ensure to arrange education services in exceptional conditions. Finnish National Agency for Education is guiding schools to plan and organize different kind of flexible learning arrangements.        The pupils are asked to stay at home if the education is organised as distance education. Should the education require staying at the dormitories due to education arrangements or should the students have no other place to stay, the education provider is responsible for the safety of the dormitory incl. ensuring physical distance between the students. The aim however is that pupils who have severe disability can continue their living in the dormitories incl. education and other services.</p>

5.

How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.

Schools are prepared to organize flexible learning arrangements. It is a well-established practice in Finland to arrange the communication between home and school through school administrative online service. Students can do school projects and tasks independently, hand them in online and attend classes online.

Main online learning platform used in primary education are Google G Suite for Education, Microsoft O365 (incl. Teams), different kind of online desktops such as Edison and Dream desktop. In addition, schools use variety of social media services such as mobile messaging tools, online video conference tools and collaborative online tools like online whiteboards.

The main platforms used for secondary education are Helmi, Wilma (Primus), Studentaplust, Sopimuspro, to name a few. These can be used for giving homework, providing feedback and communicating with parents. The most common virtual learning environments are Moodle, Google Classrooms, Ville, Teams, O365, Skype, Zoom depending the sector and education provider. Games, simulators etc are also already used in education e.g. in VET sector <https://youtu.be/X9LJzIEcVdE> and <https://salpro.salpaus.fi/sb/> or [https://www.tts.fi/tutkimus\\_kehitys/hankkeet/alyliikenne\\_ja\\_logistiikka/digivirtu/aineistot](https://www.tts.fi/tutkimus_kehitys/hankkeet/alyliikenne_ja_logistiikka/digivirtu/aineistot)

HEIs have also various tools available such as their own learning management systems (Moodle, etc), streaming services such as Adobe Connect and Zoom, Notebooks (easy-to-use environments for working with data and programming), electronic exams such as EXAM as well joint electronic entrance exam to UAS. In addition, education providers may use various social media tools.

Encountered problems evolve around the availability of equipment (sufficient amount of end user devices) and network capacity when student move to distance learning. Teachers and other staff have been asked to move very quickly to distance teaching which has required very swift change in current teaching methods and practices, especially in the primary education. To support this teachers have multiple ways and channels to share experience and good practice such as local tutor teachers who have provided assistance to their peers in matters concerning distance learning or Facebook groups. The National Agency for Education has also released a set of guidelines on distance learning for teachers.

There are also separate material banks and lists for teaching circulating among teachers and supporting also self-learning:

- Opentunti <https://opentunti.fi/>
- Yle Triplet: <https://yle.triplet.io/>
- [www.amazingeducationalresources.com](http://www.amazingeducationalresources.com)
- Collection of tools and material supporting remote learning
- Yle: <https://yle.fi/aihe/oppiminen>

The openly available open education resources and learning material:

- aoe.fi- Library of Open Educational Resources (OER), which can be used for searching, finding, compiling, and sharing open educational resources from all levels of education
- Finna.fi - the collections of Finnish archives, libraries and museums. There are also separate material banks and lists for teaching circulating among teachers and supporting also self-learning
- <https://www.mooc.fi/en/> - courses offered by University of Helsinki's Department of Computer Science. No prior knowledge is required — beginners can start to learn programming basics from the Programming with Java course, or start to get familiar with artificial intelligence from the course Elements of Ai.

In addition, several Finnish EdTech companies (10Monkeys, 3DBear, Code School Finland, Eduten, EdVisto, Elias Robot, Four Ferries, Freed, Mehackit, Reactored, Seppo, Thinglink and TinyApp) have united to provide elearning-materials for free during the corona pandemic at koulu.me. Their aim is to bring together Finnish educational apps of certified pedagogical quality used by hundreds of schools in Finland and help teachers to discover new educational tools and complement the traditional ways of teaching, especially for distance learning.

With these apps and resources, the teachers can

- Find engaging ways to educate students in problem solving, maths, science or design by means of gaming and AR

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discover visual tools for remote teaching and for organizing their teaching ideas</li> <li>• Find complementary or alternative ways to educate students despite distance.</li> </ul>
<p>6.</p> <p>Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?</p>
<p>The education provider is responsible for ensuring that the pupils have necessary technical equipments and support to implement distance education in the primary education. The aim is to ensure learning and teaching the best possible way during the exceptional measures. The parents / guardians needs to make sure that the pupil takes part to the compulsory education.</p> <p>Teachers have multiple ways and channels to share experience and good practice such as local tutor teachers who have provided assistance to their peers in matters concerning distance learning or Facebook groups. The National Agency for Education has also released a set of guidelines on distance learning for teachers.</p> <p>Pupils who have a special support decision will be provided contact teaching where necessary.</p> <p>The counselling services will be provided based on the available possibilities. If needed, psychological counselling may be provided in distance.</p> <p>School meals will be provided for those who participate to contact teaching. For pupils in distance education, the meals will be provided according to the possibilities available. Any close contacts should be avoided.</p> <p>HEI staff members are sharing their expertise in pedagogy, guiding and counselling among their peers.</p>
<p>7.</p> <p>How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. <i>state matura</i>), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?</p>
<p>Continuity of assessment at the schools will be assured by specific guidance given by the National Agency for Education. Other support activities are currently being planned.</p> <p>The Finnish matriculation examination was organised in a condensed timetable so that it was possible to hold all the spring matriculation examination tests. This way, the students in general upper secondary schools can graduate by the end of May. Instruction in general upper secondary education and vocational education is being arranged ways other than contact teaching. The learning targets in teaching have not been changed. Versatile assessment procedures will be used in grading the studies instead of traditional examinations. In vocational education, the aim is to make sure that students in the final stage of their studies can graduate. This will be done by prioritising their competence demonstrations relative to other students in situations where it is not possible to organise all the competence demonstrations in the traditional way. With these arrangements having been put into practice, it is possible ensure that the students can graduate and enable them to move on to working life and postgraduate studies.</p> <p>Many HEIs have organised exams online, with MyCourses, Moodle or other digital tools.</p> <p>As regards vocational education and upper secondary education, education and training providers decide whether they want to organise entrance exams or aptitude tests and any additional proof of competence. Education and training providers may choose not to organise entrance exams and aptitude tests if it is deemed expedient. Instead, other additional proof of competence that does not require the presence of the student in the same way as entrance exams and aptitude tests may be used as a basis for student selection if necessary.</p>

<p>The aim is that universities and universities of applied sciences will organise their student admissions in spring 2020 according to planned timeline. Entrance exams with large numbers of participants are cancelled and will be organized in alternative ways, for example online. HEIs are making concrete plans currently.</p>
<p>8.        What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?</p>
<p>Finland supports initiatives, which promote national and EU-wide virtual mobility and knowledge sharing. Higher education institutions, educational institutions and other organisations that provide exchange programmes and projects decide how, together with the organisations they cooperate with, to implement their international activities and agree on measures for both outgoing and incoming student mobility.</p> <p>The higher education institutions and educational institutions are essentially the ones to make the decisions on postponing, suspending and reorganising student exchange periods. They must follow the official press releases, contact those participating in international projects and advise them to contact the Finnish Embassy or Consulate, if necessary, for further instructions.</p> <p>The international activities of EU projects can be prematurely suspended, carried out with another partner, postponed to a later date or cancelled. Notice of cancellation or postponement must be given as soon as possible to the Finnish National Agency for Education, which gives advice on how to proceed.</p> <p>It is possible to apply for compensation based on force majeure clauses for mobility periods and expenses financed by the national agency in Finland via the Erasmus Plus and the European Solidarity Corps programmes. Force majeure practices may vary from country to country. The national agency of the country financing the project is always the one to decide on the reimbursement of project costs. For this reason, it is essential that the coordinating organisation should direct the process in line with the instructions of the national agency financing the project.</p> <p>Finnish Government has decided on measures that will limit non-essential traveling between Finland and other countries. Actions at our borders are part of a larger package to ensure functioning of our society. The Finnish government has asked that everyone currently abroad, except for people residing permanently in another country, return quickly to Finland. All returnees will be obliged to spend two weeks in quarantine. Finland shall reintroduce controls to our internal borders, allowing EU and Schengen associate country citizens to return to their home countries from or via Finland.</p> <p>According to National Agency for Education's query to HEIs in late March, about 50 per cent of Finnish exchange students have returned to Finland and more than 60 per cent of the international exchange students have decided to stay in Finland.</p>
<p>9.        In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?</p>
<p>In the short-term, should the Commission be willing to support the member states by providing additional funding for devices, digital learning environments and equipment required in distance learning, in order for this to be effective, it is important that the funding towards these devices and digital learning solutions support the existing practices, resources and digital competences of the education provider or the national approach taken. Facilitating the sharing of open digital resources such as open education resources is one relevant action too.</p> <p>In the long term, the Commission could gather examples of good practice in different fields or dimensions of distance learning. Such fields or dimensions could include for example different age groups, pupils in need of support, pupils with diverse socio-economic/ethnic background. The same applies for teachers and other staff. Finland has good experiences on providing schools with tutor teachers / digital pedagogical mentors, and we are keen to share experiences with interested MS.</p> <p>To build knowledgebase for future actions, the commission could also launch an EU-wide research project to study the impact of the COVID19 situation on distance learning and how the role of distance learning can be further strengthened at the national continuity planning and how cooperation at EU level could support this.</p>

10.

What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?

## FRANCE

Last update: 15/4/2020

1.

Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?

On March 12th 2020, the President announced the closure of primary, lower and upper secondary schools, for security reasons, from Monday March 16th until further notice. This decision is valid in metropolitan France and in the overseas departments and regions. For St. Maarten, St. Barthelemy, New Caledonia and Polynesia similar measures have been taken locally. At this stage, Saint Pierre and Miquelon and Wallis and Futuna are not concerned.

The President announced, on April 13th, prologation of strict lockdown until May 11th. From May 11th, nurseries,

primary, lower and upper secondary school will progressively reopen. It is a priority for the President. The Governement will determined, after consultations, the necessary rules to allow reopening: new organization of timetables and spaces, protection of students and teachers with appropriate material.

The Minister of National Education and Youth indicated that the return to school would be gradual. Priority will be given to the reception of pupils who have been weakened by the confinement, the "social criterion" being central in the decisions that will be taken within the next two weeks. Finally, the summer holidays are not called into question and will begin as planned on 4 July.

For higher education students, classes will not physically resume until September. The most precarious students, sometimes living far away from their families, especially when they live overseas, will be helped financially. The Government will precise for each institution the necessary organization, particularly for standard and competitive examinations.

Detailed and regularly updated information can be found at: <https://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus>.

Pedagogical continuity concerns both state schools as well as private schools under contract with the state.

2.

In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?

Care for children of healthcare staff, social workers and child welfare workers:

In order to ensure upswing of the health care system, the Government has exceptionally decided to provide childcare for the children of healthcare and medico-social staff who are essential to manage the health crisis and who have no other care options. Staff attached to the crisis units of the Regional Health Agencies (ARS) can also benefit from this exceptional arrangement.

Since Monday the 16th of March, reception is organized for pupils from kindergarten to the last year of lower secondary school at their usual place of schooling. Since March 20th, this care system has been extended to the children of staff assigned to child welfare missions under the responsibility of the departmental councils (ASE) as well as associations and public institutions contributing to this policy.

Prefects and directors of the ARS have joint responsibility for deciding and implementing operations within their geographical perimeter. Educational authorities implement these decisions and take the necessary measures for schools.

Pupils are cared for in small groups of 8 to 10, in compliance with health instructions and barrier gestures. These arrangements may be adapted subsequently by the Regional Education Directors/ recteurs, jointly with the ARS, in order to ensure pedagogical coherence for the groups of pupils.

Reception is organised by the headmaster/Principal of the children's school, upon presentation of the parent professional health card or payslip mentioning the employer. For staff dealing with the management of crisis in ARSs, a certificate from the ARS must be presented.

Parents concerned must also certify that they have no other childcare solution available.

During pupils' day attendance, timetable must alternate between classroom times, as much as possible outside physical activity times during which premises are ventilated, and relaxation times. In all cases, barrier gestures, which are the most effective against Covid-19, must be respected, with sufficient distance between pupils and between pupils and adults (teachers or staff). The wearing of masks is unnecessary in this context.

Thorough cleaning of surfaces and toilets must be carried out twice a day by the competent services of the local authority.

A national education nurse can usefully be called upon to support teaching teams, and isolate and guide, according to the recommendations and criteria given by the Ministry of Health, any pupils or staff presenting symptoms.

If one of the parents is identified as a "confirmed case", their children cannot join the school and thus benefit from pedagogical continuity.

Special procedure for work stoppage:

Specific work stoppage and leave of absence procedures were implemented as soon as the first school closures were announced on March 6th. They concern all employees whose work cannot be performed remotely but who must nevertheless take care of their children under the age of 16.

The employee receives daily allowances and, if applicable, additional salary from his employer starting on the first day of stoppage.

For health care and medic staff, their children are cared for in their usual places of schooling, and each Regional Education Authority is responsible for adapting the system to needs. Pupils will be come in groups of 8 to 10 children max. Reception hours are similar to those stated in the internal regulations of each school. Other time slots are to be taken care of by extra curriculum educational sector staff. It is up to each Regional Education Authority to explore possibilities of putting together a maximum of 10 children per class, taking into account the need to keep a geographic proximity either to the child's place of residence or to the parents' work place. For children under the age of 3, reception will be organised by the Local authorities (département level). Nursery assistants in most regions are allowed now to take care of six children under 6 years of age (announcement made by the Minister of Health on March 13th).

3.

In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?

As far as possible, teachers and other school staff are required to respect the containment system implemented throughout France since Tuesday March 17th, for a minimum of 15 days. It was extended for a further 15 days on March 27th.

National education staff benefit from the same measures described above as all employees.

However, although schools are closed, their premises remain open to ensure administrative and pedagogical continuity. As far as possible on a voluntary basis, only those staff whose presence is strictly necessary for these missions shall be present.

Regarding higher education, there is no obligation for teachers to be present at the workplace (HEI) if they can conduct distance learning at home. Likewise for the administrative staff if they can remote working.

4.

Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?

Whenever possible, boarding students are invited to go back to their family home or to the local contact person (whose contact details are usually given at the time of registration). However, boarding schools remain open exclusively for boarding students who cannot return home.

In the event that a boarding school student should present symptoms suggesting Covid-19, the legal guardian or the local contact person must be informed immediately. In any case, students are isolated in their room or in a dedicated room. As such, they are not allowed to go to communal living areas (restaurants, canteen living room, etc.). If there are no individual sanitary facilities (shower and toilet), sanitary facilities must be reserved for them. Exits from their room must be limited to what is strictly necessary and students concerned must wear a surgical mask. Every effort must be made to ensure that students are able to eat and drink in their room. For higher education, the students hosted in the student residences/halls of the Crous (Centres régionaux des oeuvres universitaires et scolaires - Regional centers for Student Affairs) have been invited to go back to their family home, and their country for international students, in order to avoid them staying isolated in their accommodation, especially since the Crous cannot maintain collective activities. However, the Crous continue to host those who have decided to stay for personal reasons. Food aid and the purchase of basic necessities are gradually being implemented in the Crous for confined residents in student halls.

A decree of 18 March 2020 (Décret no 2020-273 du 18 mars 2020 relatif aux missions des services de santé universitaires dans le cadre de la lutte contre le virus covid-19) provided that the higher education institution's health services are responsible for the health monitoring of students and especially those who are isolated and are living in student residences/hall. [https://services.dgesip.fr/fichiers/JO\\_19-03-2020.pdf](https://services.dgesip.fr/fichiers/JO_19-03-2020.pdf)

5.

How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.

The pedagogical continuity service implemented aims to maintain regular contact between students and teachers. To this end, headteachers/principals ensure, in particular by using existing networks (digital workspaces, e-mail or similar tools), that students have access to course materials and are able to carry out the homework or exercises required for their learning.

This pedagogical continuity service can also be based on a free pedagogical platform of the Centre national d'enseignement à distance (CNED) : "Ma classe à la maison" (My class at home).

#### My Class at Home platform

To ensure immediate availability of pedagogical sessions, educational authorities can rely on the dedicated platform of the CNED, Ma classe à la maison. The platform offers pedagogical paths covering a period of four weeks, from kindergarten to the final year of upper secondary school. The presentation video with English subtitles is available on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QaeLMKh2fBQ&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.education.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/2020-03/learn-more-about-insuring-educational-continuity--51966.pdf>

<https://www.education.gouv.fr/ma-classe-la-maison-mise-en-oeuvre-de-la-continuite-pedagogique-289680>

Registration is open, individual and free of charge. Headteachers/principals provide students with the address to connect to My Classroom at Home platform, as well as the terms and conditions for registration. Each student then creates an account and accesses all the content.

In addition, this system allows organisation of virtual classes which offer each teacher who wishes to do so possibility to facilitate distance learning (exchange of documents, live sessions, interaction with students, etc.). Virtual classroom is a tool that promotes class continuity by offering a moment in the day when all students can meet and exchange.

My class at home is building up in France. On Tuesday 17th of March morning, 1.3 million accounts were created, including 188,711 by teachers, representing 600,000 connections as of Tuesday 17 March. On March

20th it accounted to 1.8 million.

Independently of this platform availability or additionally, teaching teams take the necessary initiatives and measures to maintain a teaching link and keep providing teaching, in particular by exploiting the exchanges possibilities of e- messaging and digital workspaces.

#### Digital workspaces

A digital workspace (DWS) is an integrated set of selected digital services available to all stakeholders in the educational community of one or more schools.

It establishes a single-entry point allowing users to access, according to their profile and authorizations, digital services and content.

It provides a place for exchange and collaboration among its users, and with other communities related to the school.

Set up by the communities, it provides educational continuity.

#### Educational online databases

Educational online resources are available nationally on the Eduscol portal for teaching and learning, in primary, lower and upper secondary schools.

Teachers support their students in the use of these resources, by sending them course materials and exercises, via digital workspaces or e-mail for students with Internet access. They also send homework. For the youngest pupils, and for all those who require specific care involving the presence of an adult, implementation of educational and pedagogical activities will have to rely on families. As far as possible, headteachers/ principals ensure that, via digital tools, suitable activities can be carried out at home are offered to them.

For pupils who do not have access to the Internet, a set of documents to be studied and work to be carried out will be proposed, adapted to the situation of family support.

For all pupils, from primary to secondary school, it is essential to establish and maintain a reassuring and customized relationship with each one of them.

The Government indicates that three to four hours of teaching per day - online exercises, "virtual class" by videoconference - should be offered.

In addition, schools' portals offer teaching and educational resources in several subjects. These subjects' portals are freely accessible from anywhere. Links can be found on the Eduscol website:

<https://eduscol.education.fr/pid34303/les-sites-disciplinaires-eduscol.html>

The Canopé network, under supervision of the Ministry of Education, publishes transmedia educational resources (print, web, mobile, TV), meeting the needs of the educational community, in particular:

- "Les fondamentaux"/ The basics: more than 400 animated films to learn, in a playful way, the basic concepts of elementary school in French, mathematics, science, technology, civic education.

<https://www.reseau-canope.fr/lesfondamentaux/accueil.html>

- "Mathador" (Open access during crisis): to do mental arithmetic in a playful way. The game, through the change of scene it involves, enhances and re-motivates students. Notion of challenge adds a social dimension to the practice of mathematics.

<https://www.mathador.fr/#maison>

The Centre de liaison de l'enseignement et des médias d'information (CLEMI) has resources for media and information literacy (unrestricted access). Media and information education enables students to learn to read, decipher information and images, sharpen their critical thinking skills, and form opinions, all of which are essential skills for enlightened and responsible citizenship in a democracy. <https://www.clemi.fr/fr.html>

A platform of the France EduNum initiative lists the French educational digital offers, both public and private. Developed by FEI (France Education International), it is adapted from a platform created by the Centre de recherches interdisciplinaires (CRI), as a genuine hub of ideas that are initiated and developed among the French digital education stakeholder's community. <https://france-edu-num.projets.app/>

The conditions of access for each available resource online are described (to the French education system for professionals, or fully accessible without conditions). Open educational resources are also specified, where relevant.

#### eTwinning Platform <https://www.etwinning.fr/>

Virtual mobility projects on the eTwinning platform can continue during schools closure, depending on possibilities and priorities of teachers involved. Support and online teacher training are still provided.

Among virtual working options offered by eTwinning, the possibility of creating a national project should be highlighted as it offers a potentially useful remote working support during lockout. These projects, initiated between teachers from the same country but from different schools, allow teachers, students and other stakeholders (families/headteachers) to benefit from an online working space for distance learning activities. Several national projects for pedagogical continuity have been registered on the eTwinning platform since the announcement of schools closure, but this format still requires a partner teacher from another school. Since March 10th, i.e. before the measures were announced by the Government came into force on March 12th, 14th and 16th, figures for eTwinning France mobility were as follows: 60,509 teachers registered in 22,239 schools (23,889 projects carried out since the beginning of the action). Progression is steady. 40% of registered teachers teach in lower secondary schools, 35% in upper secondary schools and 25% in primary schools. 37% of the projects are in lower secondary schools, 32% in upper secondary schools and 31% in primary schools.

#### A new initiative Learning Nation launched on March 18th by the French Minister for national education and youth

The Ministry of National Education and Youth and several audiovisual and print media have signed a partnership to offer quality programmes in line with school curricula as part of the "Learning Nation" initiative. As for instance Lumni, an educational platform of the public audiovisual sector, accessible to all and developed in partnership with the French National Education system, and Educ'Arte, Arte's educational platform accessible to teachers and their classes, have joined this "Learning Nation" operation.

All of these programmes will also be accessible by podcast, streaming or replay on the ministry's websites or on the digital sites and platforms of the public audiovisual sector. The Radio France application thus now offers a "Learning Nation" section including all the educational content of its channels.

Since the launch, many television channels such as france5 or radios such as France culture have joined forces. The Ministry in charge of Higher Education is implementing a plan of pedagogical continuity ('plan de continuité pédagogique'). On a strategic level, the Minister in charge of Higher Education is in regular contact with the representatives of the rectors' conferences of higher education institution to prepare and take necessary decisions.

Higher education institutions benefit from enduring important investments taken on a national level in digital infrastructure to provide pedagogical resources in terms of MOOCs and SPOCs (France université numérique (FUN) is the French national platform to promote the use of these tool). FUN provides specific services for higher education institutions (<https://www.fun-campus.fr/>) and for the general public (<https://www.fun-mooc.fr/>). Higher Education establishments can also use existing online learning platforms (e.g. Moodle) The Ministry is making available all regularly updated information on a specific website:

[https://services.dgesip.fr/T712/covid\\_19](https://services.dgesip.fr/T712/covid_19)

Questions to the administration can be addressed via a specific e-mail-address: [continuitepedagogique-covid19@enseignementsup.gouv.fr](mailto:continuitepedagogique-covid19@enseignementsup.gouv.fr)

For exchanges of good practices among higher education institutions and teachers, a specific area has been created on the social network 'Whaller': <https://whaller.com/sphere/xjtzxi>

6.

Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

#### Call centre

The Ministry of Education agreed with an educational staff medical insurance company to set up a call centre for all staff who express the need to speak with a psychologist, without an appointment (free service and call). The company ensures that this service remained operational during the crisis.

#### Support for teachers

Headteachers organize pedagogical continuity and provide teachers in their school with the necessary support in carrying out their mission. Teachers inform them of unavailability of digital equipment or impossibility of

accessing the Internet. Where appropriate, computer equipment may be made available by schools.

#### Pupils with disabilities

Referring teachers continue their mission of following up their students. They may be asked to provide support to headmasters, management staff and national education inspectors in charge of school adaptation and schooling of pupils with disabilities (IEN ASH). Regular class teachers and special unit coordinators have all families contact information (telephone numbers and e-mail addresses). They maintain a reassuring pedagogical link with students and families. Throughout pedagogical continuity and the pedagogical path that is set up for the class each student follows, the teacher communicates adapted pedagogical supports and documents. When necessary, additional advice can be provided to families.

Teachers provide their disabled students with accessible materials. Where paper format is necessary, the documents will be distributed under conditions specified by the headmaster or head teacher.

Accompanying persons for pupils with disabilities (AESH/AVS) contribute to maintaining the link with the families of the pupils they accompany, by telephone or e-mail. If they are volunteers, they can go to schools and institutions to help with the reception of children of staff who are essential to the management of the health crisis. The AESHs should not, however, visit students' homes.

#### Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds

Pedagogical continuity applies to all pupils. Pedagogical teams decide locally on specific support to be given to families in difficulty, providing additional advice, ensuring a close link by telephone or e-mail, and providing paper documents to families without digital material by sending them by post. Parents or legal representatives may, exceptionally, travel to the schools, with the necessary authorisations, in order to collect the necessary teaching materials.

#### Families not equipped with digital tools

Families who are unable to offer their children digital tools to ensure remote continuity of teaching must make themselves known as soon as possible to their headteacher in order to benefit, where possible, from a loan of digital equipment, where appropriate in conjunction with the local authority, or, failing that, teaching materials. As far as possible, teaching materials shall be distributed by post, taking advantage of the new agreement between the Ministry of National Education and Youth and La Poste (French national postal services). This agreement provides for secure distribution of computer equipment and, for pupils who are digitally disconnected, weekly teaching materials. In this case, postal return of homework completed by the pupils is free of charge.

The delivery of teaching materials on paper must remain an exceptional practice for the benefit of students who do not have a digital solution and in territories where delivery by post is not possible. It must be organised in such a way as to limit as far as possible the movements of the legal guardians of the children concerned. At this stage, exceptional travel of a parent to a school or educational establishment to collect digital equipment or documents of an educational nature in paper format is considered to be equivalent to a trip "to purchase supplies necessary for the professional activity and basic necessities". The legal guardians of the children will then have to strictly respect the barrier gestures and will be obliged to have a document attesting to the educational necessity to travel given by the headmaster at the time of the first trip as well as the dated and signed certificate of derogatory travel downloaded from the internet or written on blank paper. Headmasters ensure that pupils and their legal guardians are informed that the journeys authorised in this respect are limited to one journey per week by a single member of the pupil's family or legal guardian. They will also ensure that documents are handed over in strict compliance with barrier gestures and that the organisation set up locally does not under any circumstances lead to groupings of people within the school.

The services of the Ministry in charge of Higher Education have developed guiding documents as part of the plan with the objective to best support institutions and teachers in their efforts regarding distant teaching (including online available resources on the institution's learning platform, virtual classes, etc.).

Food aid and the purchase of basic necessities are gradually being implemented in the Crous for disadvantaged students and for lockdown residents in student halls.

Scholarships provided on social criteria will be maintained for concerned students for the period of the health crisis and for the academic year 2020-21, even without validating courses due to the closing of higher education institutions.

7.

How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. *state matura*), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?

For all levels of compulsory schooling, pedagogical continuity aims to ensure that pupils pursue school activities enabling them to progress, based more specifically on a variety of skills backed up by the pupils' autonomous studying.

To this end, teachers submit a set of works and activities that pupils take up as part of their personal work. Teacher coordinate, supervise and identify the work to assess in order to ensure the acquisition and/or consolidation of concepts or skills, aiming to provide appropriate assistance to each student.

Homework requested must be regular. It must be possible to complete it within a reasonable period of time, which is explicitly indicated. The time devoted to each subject must not exceed the usual timetable, taking into account the conditions, particularly in terms of concentration, which are those of the pupils at home. Dialogue with parents and regular contact must be encouraged to ensure close follow-up of pupils.

On 3 April, the Minister of National Education and Youth announced the adaptation of the modalities for taking the national exams.

The general principle: all the evaluations for the national brevet diploma and the general, technological and vocational baccalauréat are validated on the basis of the marks in the school report (continuous assessments), with the exception of the oral test for the French baccalauréat, which is maintained.

In addition, after the students return to class, the main challenge will be to devote most of the time to learning in order to limit any delays and to enable them to continue their studies in high school and higher education under good conditions. Attendance of classes up to 4 July will be taken into account to obtain the diploma. For students in the final year of lower secondary schools: the national diploma of the brevet will be obtained on the basis of the average of the marks that the student will have had during the three terms of this final year, with the exception of the marks obtained during the lockdown in the disciplines concerned.

-For pupils in the second year of upper secondary school :

o The French Baccalaureate written examination: The mark in the French Baccalaureate written examination will be the average of the marks obtained by the student throughout the year in that discipline, excluding marks obtained during the lockdown period.

The oral assessment of the French Baccalaureate will be taken under the conditions provided for, at the end of June and at the beginning of July, on the basis of a list of at least 15 texts for the academic baccalaureate students and 12 texts for the technological baccalaureate students, which will be validated by their teacher;

o The common continuous assessment tests: history-geography, modern languages, mathematics in the technological stream, do not give rise to an evaluation. In these subjects, the average mark that will be taken for the baccalaureate will be the sum of the marks obtained in the common tests taken this year and those taken in their final year.

Evaluations of the speciality subject which is not continued in the final year and the scientific subjects are validated by the marks obtained throughout the year by the candidate in these two disciplines, with the exception of marks obtained during lockdown.

For students in their final year of upper secondary schools : For students in the academic and technological final year, all the evaluations are validated by the marks obtained in the disciplines concerned during the three terms of the final year, with the exception of marks obtained during the lockdown period.

o The marks of the tests already passed in the second year of upper secondary schools are kept.

o Grades such as honours are maintained

o An Examination Board will decide on the final marks. This panel will study the school reports in order, if necessary, to value a commitment, the progress of the students, to guarantee equity between the candidates, and to check, it is an important point, the school attendance of the candidates.

o Candidates who have obtained marks between 8 and 9.9 out of 20 will be able to take remedial oral tests.

o By decision of the examination board, and after studying the school reports, some candidates will be allowed to sit for the baccalaureate in the September session.

For students in vocational high schools: BEP, CAP and vocational baccalaureate exams are validated on the basis of the examination in progress already passed and the school report book. They are also awarded by a jury of examiners, presided over in each regional Education authority by a university teacher. This board/panel ensures that marks are fair and that candidates are treated equally. Each school report and each individual situation will be examined.

A list of questions and answers, regularly updated, is on line to answer any questions that students, their families and teachers may have. [https://www.education.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/2020-04/questions-r-ponses-surles-examens-nationaux---session-2020-66513\\_2.pdf](https://www.education.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/2020-04/questions-r-ponses-surles-examens-nationaux---session-2020-66513_2.pdf)

Concerning higher education, national exams which could not be held or which are to be held in the coming weeks will be rescheduled at a later date. The written tests allowing access to the selective training courses of the first cycle of higher education will be replaced by an examination of the academic files of the candidates. Finally, particular attention will be paid by the Ministry in charge of Higher Education to university exams canceled or postponed, so that students are the least possible penalized by these exceptional circumstances. The Ministry of Higher Education is already starting consultations with the HEI's to find appropriate solutions. Regarding summer holidays, it must become a profitable period to meet the needs of children. The idea is to rely on summer camps, particularly to support those children who need support in acquisition of the basics.

8.

What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?

Learner mobility is suspended; however, virtual mobility projects on the eTwinning platform can continue during school closure times, depending on possibilities and priorities of teachers involved. Remote support and online teacher training will continue to be provided.

With regard to French people currently on temporary trips abroad, including exchange students, as more and more countries are taking measures to interrupt air links to France, often at very short notice, we advise them, when they can, to take the necessary measures for their quick return to France as long as commercial routes remain open.

New instructions on this subject are currently being studied, particularly for students abroad.

<https://www.etudiant.gouv.fr/cid150278/covid-19-%7C-fermeture-des-etablissements-d-enseignementsuperieur.html>

Incoming mobility of any kind (school trips, exchange of correspondents, language assistants, etc.) must be postponed until further notice.

For higher education, all new international mobility with Erasmus + or other programs are postponed due to containment measures. For French students already on mobility, with Erasmus + or not, the Ministry of Higher Education recommends that students go back to France if their stay is coming to an end or if they consider to be in a vulnerable position, given that the epidemic situation in the host country. Ditto if the host higher education institution has closed.

Embassies and consulates will be able to assist French students and direct them to the appropriate commercial lines (additional costs due to the return of French students to the national territory would be covered by the Erasmus + program). Once back in France, each home institution will take the necessary measures to guarantee that students can continue their studies without being penalized.

However, if the mobility has started recently, and continues for the next few months, the Ministry of higher education recommends to the student to stay in his host country. The Erasmus + scholarship is maintained throughout his stay, even though he is free to return to France at any time.

Even if the French universities are closed, international students can stay in France. Those who lived in Student residences/halls may have been asked to leave their residence, if they wanted to, before the quarantine period.

International students still living in France are invited as far as possible to contact their consular authorities to help them make a decision. They continue to benefit from access to care and housing in student residences/halls during their stay in France. International students engaged in training in France and whose residence permit would expire soon are subject to special government attention so that their residence permit could be extended.

9.

In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?

Among the virtual working options offered by eTwinning, possibility of creating a national project should be highlighted as it offers a potentially useful remote working support in time of confinement. These projects, initiated between teachers from the same country but from different schools, allow teachers, pupils and other stakeholders (families/heads of schools) to benefit from an online workspace for remote learning activities. Several National Projects for Pedagogical Continuity have been registered on the eTwinning platform since the announcement of school closure, but this format still requires a partner teacher from another school. In addition, the EPAL platform can be useful for enriching knowledge and keeping abreast of pedagogical innovations, enhancing projects' value, looking for partners to make an Erasmus + project a reality, broadening professional networks and dialoguing with pairs in Europe.

Eventually, the European commission can provide digital resources or finance online courses for HEI's.

Furthermore, in the further development of our European education cooperation, three fundamental priorities should be taken up by the Commission:

- There is a clear need to develop a shared digital strategy for education which Member States can assimilate quickly.
- The development of a European investment in education strategy. France supports forthcoming launching of a economists working group to brainstorm on this strategy.
- The environment sustainability of our systems, in line with the European Green deal. Beyond education measures, the school buildings have to adapt.

10.

What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?

Regarding resources from the current programming, development of remote learning continuation is possible in the 2014-2020 programming of the EFSIs, in particular though ERDF, via the financing of digital infrastructures (such as computer hardware and creation of digital workspaces).

Regarding the next programming period 2021-2027, it would be appropriate, under the ERDF, to develop digital workspaces that are sufficiently robust to be able to absorb the entire educational community flow over several weeks. Eligibility of projects should also focus more on production, delivery and dissemination of e-learning.

At this stage, the national program project has the following focus:

- teacher training ;
- training of educational teams, training engineering and support for pedagogical innovation, in particular for students with special needs (pupils with disabilities, newcomers, etc.), priority themes (key skills, ecological and/or digital transition), innovative drivers (digital teaching tools).

Regarding Erasmus+, it is necessary to introduce maximum flexibility in the management of deadlines for committing funds: for example, it should be possible to redistribute unused money for the benefit of programme beneficiaries who have to face repatriation expenses or continue to support participants confined abroad.

However, the contractual schedule for the use of funds does not allow this to be done at this stage.

Also, concerning higher education, the European Commission should give clear instructions concerning Erasmus + mobility students, in particular by facilitating the administrative burden for HEI's wishing to repatriate their students and allow them to keep their Erasmus+ grant in full or by allowing students who wish to stay in the host country to do so and continue to receive the Erasmus scholarship even if their stay lasts longer than expected.

## GERMANY

**Last update: 9/4/2020**

1.

Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?

At this point, all educational and training institutions throughout the Federal Republic are closed. Re-opening dates vary between the Federal States.

With regard to tuition fees none are charged by public schools and higher education institutions. The issue of tuition fee reimbursement by private schools or training institutions has not yet arisen.

At Higher Educations Institutions attendance events and teaching activities were discontinued. The Länder coordinate their approach and find out about their measures.

2.

In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?

A substantial number of educational institutions remain open to provide priority day care for younger children. Parents who work in key professions such as medicine, emergency services and those responsible for the maintenance of essential services rely on such educational institutions which offer full day care depending on the age and the requirements of each child. Particular activities undertaken at such institutions will vary.

3.

In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?

Due to the nationwide school closures, teaching and other staff are generally working from home, preparing and conducting distance learning activities. Concerted efforts are being made in all areas of daily life to minimize social contact as much as possible to reduce the risk of infection. Only on very rare occasions do teachers/other staff need to be present in their workplace, and then, maintaining safety standards as a top priority.

In instances where teachers/educational staff themselves have young(er) children, or where a member of their household is unwell, they must remain at home. For teachers at higher education institutions obligations are not known.

4.

Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?

Responsibility for pupil/student dormitories belongs to school management and no uniform policy has been adopted. Most school dormitories are closed, but have provided for emergency care for those pupils/students who are unable to return home for some reason. Where dormitories remain open to any degree they have introduced strict health security measures to reduce to a minimum the risk of exposure to the virus.

The dormitories for higher education students, which in most cases are run by local student unions, were not closed. No information is available on further measures by the local student services.

5.

How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.

A wider variety of channels are being used to provide distance learning/e-learning activities, tailored to the age and level of educational attainment of the children concerned.

The younger the age group, the greater the assistance necessary to provide appropriate material and ensure continued educational progression. Schools usually rely on a mixed approach involving both e-mails and websites/special distance learning platforms to deliver schooling.

<https://www.zdf.de/wissen/schulersatzprogramm-100.html>

<https://www.ndr.de/nachrichten/info/Geschlossene-Schulen-NDR-Radioangebot-fuer-Schueler.radioangebot100.html>

<https://www.daserste.de/specials/service/schule-daheim-lernangebote-schueler-corona-krise100.html>

To make it easier for schoolchildren to learn at home in times of the Corona crisis, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Länder together with science, civil society and companies have launched the initiative “We’re staying smart!” Especially for mathematics, computer science, natural sciences and technology, a variety of tasks and suggestions from various providers can be accessed online. The website [www.mintmagie.de](http://www.mintmagie.de) is primarily aimed at children and young people. The site [www.bildung-forschung.digital](http://www.bildung-forschung.digital) contains information and links for parents and teachers.

Secondary school students in particular are generally more familiar with computers and the various learning platforms available, and are able to work with more independence. In most cases a mixed approach of both e-mails and a learning platform (e. g. IServ, Moodle) that caters for all students is employed. These platforms offer a number of customized features for courses and teaching goals.

The Higher Education Institutions are supported by the Länder organizing online courses; the available resources, e.g. teaching / learning platforms for HE-teaching (universities, across universities, across the Land and across the Länder) are used or expanded.

6.

Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

Supervision of distance learning is generally facilitated by both teachers and school administrators who provide additional support or help where necessary. At this time, the learning groups are very closely connected and help to keep one another updated.

Depending on the availability of IT-equipment of individual educational establishments, computers/digital equipment can be made available where necessary. The need for these varies between educational establishments.

Employees of educational establishments are keen to assist those with special educational needs and/or disabilities to the extent possible. The measures taken go in very different directions, e.g. translations can be provided in instances where a student’s German language ability is less developed.

In Higher Education, counseling and support services for study or social issues are in most cases continued online or by telephone. Information is often published in several languages.

<p>7.</p> <p>How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. <i>state matura</i>), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?</p>
<p>At the moment, the assessment and grading of students' work takes place online, where possible. At the same time, schools are currently developing standards for the assessment of grades based on online work/course work. Schools are currently coordinating such responses to ensure as much consistency as possible. Nationwide, it was agreed that at this point the completion of exit exams for both lower and higher secondary education will be maintained. Also, the recognition of the various degrees is guaranteed this year throughout the Federal States as confirmed by the Conference of Ministers of Education.</p> <p>For the exit exams schools would have to take safety precautions to minimize the risk of infection. The application deadline for universities/secondary/higher education is not yet in jeopardy, however, these institutions are aware of the situation and may be able to extend deadlines, if necessary.</p> <p>The extent to which the end of the academic year will be affected as a result of the virus is not yet known. Federal States are currently developing possible alternative models. They are trying to make a balanced decision, taking into account all factors.</p> <p>In Higher Education the Länder are closely coordinated on these issues. The aim is to solve the consequences of the corona crisis also for the students in a socially responsible manner and to find cross-border solutions. Final answers cannot yet be presented due to the dynamic development.</p>
<p>8.</p> <p>What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?</p>
<p>The Federal Foreign Office has issued general travel restrictions. Partly, HE-students who return from high-risk areas will be asked to quarantine for 14 days.</p>
<p>9.</p> <p>In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?</p>
<p>In the school sector schools use a large variety of different virtual platforms. For Erasmus+ eTwinning offers possible solutions for virtual meetings replacing project mobilities. For the moment there is no need for further support from the Commission.</p>
<p>10.</p> <p>What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?</p>
<p>The Commission has published a very generous set of „force majeure“ rules, so far there is no need for further financial support from the Commission for Erasmus+ beneficiaries or National Agencies.</p>

## GREECE

**Last update: 15/4/2020**

1.

Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?

Aggressive preventative measures were implemented by the government, since early on in the outbreak in an effort to prevent the uncontrolled spread of the COVID-19 virus. As of the 10th of March 2020, all schools, kindergartens and universities in Greece have been shut down for a period of at least 14 days, which has been renewed until May 10th, as a precautionary measure, in an effort to limit the spread of coronavirus. In addition, the possibility of extending the school year is under investigation.

2.

In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?

No institutions are open to provide day care for children.

Special provisions have been made for working parents with small children. A special leave has been instituted, whereby only one out of four days taken off to care for children during this period will be deducted from the workers' annual paid leave. More specifically:

The Greek government provided a special leave of absence for employees who have children and work in the public and private sector. Such a leave will be granted specifically for the period during which the academic institutions stipulated by the above article have been shut down and up until the 10th of May 2020.

According to the provisions of the legal Act, the special leave of absence to be granted entails the following: All employees with children going to nursery, preschool and daycare, or studying at any facility of compulsory education (Kindergartens, Primary Schools, High Schools) or studying at Special Schools of Special Education, as well as parents of disabled persons who receive care or are educated at special facilities where open care services are provided, are eligible for the special leave.

3.

In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?

School directors are obliged to be present at schools, in order to coordinate distance learning and administrative tasks. Teachers are not obliged to proceed to work, on the contrary, they are motivated to stay at home and conduct distance learning. There is no provision for emergency day care, since all such institutions are closed.

4.

Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?

Student dormitories were shut down from March 25th until May 10th for the moment for precautionary reasons. However, a new decision allowed students to remain, if they have no other place to stay. Foreign students who are currently in Greece, participating in European or international programs, may remain in the hotels where they are already hosted - although hotels are generally being shut down as well (with a few exceptions).

5.

How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.

We have three pillars of distance learning: synchronous education (live lessons on Webex platforms for all levels of education), asynchronous education (educational material on websites and platforms, available to all teachers and students of all educational levels) and educational television for elementary school students.

Remote learning is accessible through internet connection or by phone.

Platforms with digital educational material, accessible to all (including Member States):

- E-Books: <http://ebooks.edu.gr/new/>

- Digital Educational Material: <http://photodentro.edu.gr/aggregator/> and

- Digital Seminars („Aesop“ Platform ): <http://aesop.iep.edu.gr/>

E-tools: Webex meetings, e-me, e-class.

Webex meetings work well so far, as well as e-me and e-class, e-tools based on the Panhellenic School Network (PSN). The Ministry reinforced the capacity of existing servers in order to support the unprecedented rise in digital classrooms and online users.

6.

Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

We have constructed a website (<http://mathainoumestospiti.gr/>) and a help desk at the Ministry, that provide all information about distance learning. We have also proceeded to delivering informative seminars for all school directors, ICT teachers and all teachers who wanted to take part in them.

In addition, one of our primary concerns was ensuring that no one was left behind due to the socioeconomic barriers that could prevent someone from being able to continue to pursue an online education. As such, we have assured zero rating cellphone access to all educational platforms and easy access to synchronous e-learning using landlines as well as the provision of additional devices (tablets) to all high schools (under way).

Within this framework, the Ministry has taken measures for the participation in the distance learning for refugee/migrant in collaboration with the UNICEF, regarding the translation of all distance learning guidelines and instructions into 11 languages. Respective measures have been taken for the participation of students with disabilities and/or special needs in the distance learning process, with a variety of special educational techniques and digital tools already available through the Ministry's platforms as well as the use of subtitling and sign language on Educational Radiotelevision.

<p>7.          How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. <i>state matura</i>), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?</p>
<p>We have already launched the period of applications for exams for entrance into higher education and have decided of cutting back on the material to be examined at the National exams at the end of the year. They may be postponed for later in the summer or for September. Higher education is fully implementing distance learning since the beginning, so Universities won't have a great impact. School and academic year are secured. Prolonging the school year and shortening vacations are among the possibilities we are examining.</p>
<p>8.          What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?</p>
<p>Our Ministry made a mapping of the 3,000 Greek Erasmus Students abroad and special flights were scheduled, with the collaboration of the Ministry of External Relations, in order to repatriate students.</p>
<p>9.          In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?</p>
<p>Facilitating the sharing of digital resources and good practices could have added value.</p>
<p>10.          What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?</p>
<p>It would be useful to support distance learning with infrastructure, digital equipment, internet services etc. E-courses to enhance teachers' and students' digital skills could also be helpful. Assessment tools and practices could be useful, as well.</p>

## HUNGARY

**Last update: 15/4/2020**

1.

Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?

On March 11, the Government ordered in its Decree the prohibition of students attending Hungarian higher education institutions (remaining in force until further decision).

From 23 March, all higher education institutions had to switch to distance education;

On 14 March, the Hungarian Government ordered to switch to the work schedule outside the classroom in schools and VET schools from 16 March.

2.

In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?

Day care services are guaranteed in schools and kindergartens if parents are unable to provide it. These children also participate in the digital work schedule outside the classrooms.

3.

In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?

In schools, directors are on duty. If needed, teachers have the opportunity to enter the buildings for the purpose of digital education.

4.

Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?

The Ministry has sent official letters to all schools with practical information concerning hygiene, travelling and participation in events. Student excursions, operation of camps have been postponed or suspended.

All foreign travels, programs as well as domestic mass events are postponed. Special attention must be paid in schools to hygiene, disinfection and cleaning. Updates on COVID-19 are continuously, centrally published in KRÉTA electronic administration system for public education, on the governmental information webpage (<https://koronavirus.gov.hu>) and on the webpage of National Public Health Center <https://www.nnk.gov.hu/>

As for VET: student dormitories are evacuated and transformed as quarantine.

As for higher education:

- minimizing the use of shared kitchens (preferably by only 1-2 people at a time)
- disinfecting all handles 2-3 times a day
- disinfecting public spaces and corridors, several times a day
- the placement of hand disinfectants in the dormitory area
- prohibition of receiving guests
- prohibiting the letting out of empty rooms to third parties
- moving home of students of Hungarian citizenship

5.

How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.

We believe that digital education and internet-based platforms can be the solution for education.

Students and staff in public education are provided by the educational version of Office 365 within the framework of Microsoft's Clean Software Programme. The package includes a communication and collaboration platform - *Teams* - which enables teachers to stay in contact and teach their students. Students can learn and receive all necessary information through using this tool.

As for public education:

The Ministry of Human Capacities offers advices on digital education for teachers and students via the website of Educational Authority. Educators can find a list of suggested IT solutions.

For all secondary educational institutions, KRÉTA (basic system for administration in public education) is the official channel, therefore students and their guardians, parents can be informed on centrally determined decisions and further actions via central messages on the bulletin board of each class.

Ways to ensure smooth operation of education in the home environment:

Teachers can give individually homework through the KRÉTA system. Both teachers and parents receive notification of the homework. After completing the homework, student submits the homework to the teacher's KRÉTA account or uploads it to the selected lesson through the KRÉTA system.

With the use of different community channels (YouTube, Facebook) teacher creates and uploads short videos and tutorials. The KRÉTA system is IT-capable to support the upload of online learning materials and has a direct information channel. However, due to the diversity of the classes, it is possible to hold only central lessons, which does not take into consideration how certain classes of certain institutions are progressing with the curriculum in a given moment. KRÉTA system also allows to attach e-learning materials. Teachers can share e-learning materials they have created with their students.

The national TV broadcaster supports the education through M5 cultural-educational channel. In daytime educational contents are being broadcast every day for students in primary and secondary education.

Where no IT solutions could be used the teachers find other creative solutions (paper based or through phone) to distribute learning materials, homework etc..

As for VET: the aim of the Hungarian education and training government is that a high quality on-line education be provided.

The basis for this was laid down in the national Digital Education Strategy.

As it is put into practice, already on public television, there are, since the closure of schools, education classes provided. Also, educational materials are sent to pupils through internet, also in the form of youtube videos.

On the home page of the Educational Authority, methodological guidelines are provided to teachers, there is a link towards books, educational videos are available and methods for self evaluation and assessment.

Homework is provided through the online KRÉTA system which is available both for pupils and parents.

As for the VET Centres throughout the country, they provide care for those children who have no digital devices or wifi at home, these are organised for 5 pupils = 5 in one group. This is also provided by the digital welfare points (places where digital tools are available.)

As for higher education: applications and tools:

- online document management applications/services (e.g. [Google docs](#), [OneDrive docs](#))
- online presentation applications/services (e.g. [Prezi](#), [Google prezentáció](#))
- online spreadsheet applications/services (e.g. [Google spreadsheet](#), [OneDrive spreadsheet](#))
- online survey services (e.g. [Google Forms](#), [SurveyMonkey](#))
- blogs (e.g. [Blogger](#))
- microblogs (e.g. [Twitter](#), [Tumblr](#))
- community bookmark management webpages (e.g. [Diigo](#))
- online mind mapping services (e.g. [Mindomo](#), [Mindmeister](#))
- mapping tools (e.g. Google Tour Builder, [MyHistro](#))
- timelines (e.g. [TimeToast](#), [TimeGlider](#), [Tiki-Toki](#))
- quizzes (e.g. [Quizizz](#), [Kahoot!](#))

- infographics (e.g. [infoagr.am](#), [visual.ly](#), [piktochart](#))
- online photo-sharing (e.g. [Google Photos](#), [Flickr](#))
- online video-sharing (e.g. [YouTube](#))
- online worksheet maker services (e.g. [Redmenta](#), [LearningApps](#))
- online voting (e.g. [Socrative](#), [Mentimeter](#))
- online frameworks and community platforms (e.g. [Moodle](#), [NeoLMS](#), [Facebook](#), [Google Plus](#), [Schoology](#), [Google Classroom](#))
- online video-conference services (e.g.: [Hangouts](#), [Skype](#)).

Digital Text Library: 15,000 books <https://dtk.tankonyvtar.hu/>

Developed by the Educational Authority of Hungary, the dynamically expanding and continuously renewed digital textbook library (DTK) aims to support the learning and academic work of higher education students by publishing high-quality textbooks. The materials available for free to anyone and can be downloaded. The 15,000-volume knowledge repository provides a wide range of materials in various fields. Users can also choose from a variety of legal, technical, art, IT, and medical curricula.

6.

Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

The Ministry of Human Capacities offers advices on digital education for students and teachers in schools via the website of Educational Authority.

Mobile internet providers agreed to not count data generated by using educational portals.

Municipalities are responsible for the delivery of meals, which is free of charge among others for children with disabilities, for children who live in families with low income or in families with at least 3 children.

7.

How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. *state matura*), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?

As for higher education: Tertiary students in Hungary cannot attend higher education institutions since 12 March 2020. From 23 March 2020, higher education is provided in distance education. Teachers are expected to modify the requirements of each subject and the methods of assessment so that no personal contact takes place. Heads of higher education institutions may, within their remit, rearrange the Spring term of the 2019/2020 academic year as necessary, including the rescheduling of the teaching activity and the exam period. Education in higher education is therefore ongoing in Hungary. The very aim of these measures is to help students to complete successfully their studies of the Spring term. The requirements of the higher education admission process are also modified in such a way that no personal contact occurs.

The Government Decree 101/2020. (10.IV.) on the measures affecting higher education institutions and students during the state of danger introduced the following:

- According to the Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education university bodies may, on the initiative of their leader, vote and take decisions electronically outside personal meetings.
- The spring semester of the 2019/2020. academic year does not count towards the maximum possible period of continuous suspension of the student's status.
- In the 2019/2020. academic year higher education institutions may deviate from the periods specified for the length of the semester or the academic year.

- Reclassification cannot take place for the 2020/2021. academic year.
- Anyone who has passed their final examination by 31 August 2020 is exempted from the obligation to pass the language examination required as a precondition for the issuance of the higher education diploma.
- If a language examination has been started by the applicant but has not been completed due to the emergency, the language examination certificate must be issued on the results of the partial examinations.
- In the 2020 general higher education admission procedure:
  - an intermediate (B2) or an advanced (C1) level partial language certificate entitles to specified extra points if the applicant acquired the partial language certificate during the 2019/2020. school year.
  - The Hungarian language aptitude test for non-Hungarian citizens, the oral aptitude test and the higher education entrance examination must be organised in such a way that they do not require personal contact between the applicant and other persons.
  - Instead of an aptitude orientation interview, an aptitude test may be organized in accordance with its purpose and content, which does not require personal contact with the applicant.
- Higher education institutions are allowed to organise the final examination for their students. (For the duration of the exam, the student may enter the territory of the higher education institution. During the final examination, it must be ensured that it does not require personal contact between the applicant and other persons and a distance of at least 1.5 meters must be kept.)
- During the state of emergency the composition of the final examination committees may differ from the provisions, provided that the committee has a chairman and at least one other member, and that it is composed of at least one university or college professor and a university or college associate professor.
- In case of doctoral schools, the order of doctoral procedures and habilitation concerning the number of members of the complex examination committee and its external member may be deviated from the provisions during the state of emergency, provided that the committee consists of at least two members and that all members may have an employment relationship with the institution operating the doctoral school.
- The Government extends the validity of this Decree until the end of the state of emergency.

As for VET: the Ministry of Innovation and Technology has requested the directors of NOVETAL (National Office for VET and Adult Learning) to work on a proposal for how to organise the matura examinations in VET but details are not available of this proposal.

We would be grateful to receive information from other countries how they organise, other than request the pupils one by one, to go to the school for their practical exam?

As for public education: The Ministry of Human Capacities offers advices on assessments in digital education for students and teachers in schools via the website of the Educational Authority.

We do not plan to cancel matriculation exams. If needed the exams will be postponed. We are examining the possibilities. The current situation does not affect deadlines for secondary education application but a simplified process has been introduced.

The primary school application period has started, parents can contact the schools via e-mail, telephone or on-line (KRÉTA, basic system for administration in public education).

<p>8.</p> <p>What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?</p>
<p>As for public education, all student excursions, camps have been postponed or suspended. As for VET individuals are asked to postpone their private travels. Individuals arriving home from the most infected areas are asked to stay at home for 14 days. Official meetings and conferences are cancelled or being organised online.</p> <p>As for higher education, the national agency responsible for mobility has sent an electronic information letter for those participating in individual mobility (to reschedule mobilities if possible, and on what to do in case of interrupting a mobility), and a procedural guidance for international offices at higher education institutions (including monitoring students participating in outward/inward mobility). The national agency also provides constantly updated information on its website.</p> <p>The Government of Hungary empowered the competent Minister to suspend international mobility programmes in his/her area of competence.</p>
<p>9.</p> <p>In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?</p>
<p>As for higher education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of digital education hub for schools and universities - (maybe also open for the public / unemployed)</li> <li>• Collection of online courses - open them to recently unemployed - to prepare them for new jobs (for example online programming courses - to diminish shortage of IT experts)</li> <li>• Online collection of platforms for collaboration, communication, webinars, etc. (using the project results of E+ and other programmes)</li> <li>• Licences for upgraded versions of digital tools for educational institutions</li> <li>• Sharing of best practices of online, digital education</li> <li>• Launching of international thematic weeks for pupils and students on global issues (not only on the virus)</li> <li>• Providing solutions for safe, secure online examination procedures</li> <li>• Clear guide on on-line learning and the supported grant for this period</li> <li>• Up-to date and step-by step guidance to participants, institutions concerning the crisis and its aftermath</li> <li>• Tuning the new programme in such a way that will be able to tackle the effects of the upcoming economic crises. I.e. the programme should be able to offer much more to underrepresented, economically disadvantaged groups.</li> <li>• Targeted communication and action plan in order to gain back confidence in mobility and internationalisation in general</li> <li>• Priorities and augmented support for projects and institutions that will be able to tackle the negative effects of the pandemic and prevent similar situations in the future.</li> </ul>
<p>10.</p> <p>What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?</p>
<p>As for Higher Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regional flexibility: It is necessary to provide additional EU funds for non convergence regions (transition and more developed regions) in order to support online/digital (higher)education provided by non convergence (higher)educational institutions. In the 2014-2020 programming period they have got less or no subsidies for digital infrastructure and/or content development and/or competence and skills development, therefore they may suffer disadvantages in these fields.</li> </ul>

- Degree of priority axis flexibility: It is necessary to supervise the degree of priority axis flexibility in a way that serves the needs generated by the coronavirus of the educational institutions in a better way. (The degree of flexibility is up to 10% per priority axis for funding activities only eligible for co-financing from ERDF or ESF from the other Fund, where the actions concerned are necessary for the satisfactory implementation of the specific operation and directly linked to it.)
- Eligibility of expenditure: Depending on the duration and the effects on beneficiaries of the coronavirus, the date of the eligibility of projects should be regularly supervised and modified. It might be necessary to revise and to extend the date of the programming period beyond 31 December 2023.
- Flexible performance monitoring: the indicators connected to the 2014-2020 programming period, set in the Europe 2020 strategy and affected by the coronavirus (e.g. ESF mobility indicator) should be revised and modified as necessary regarding the definitions and/or the target values. The 75% performance condition of eligibility of these indicators should also be modified in light of the virus.

As for VET: It is not yet seen and decided how to move forward in the long run, as the digital VET educational toolkit is already in progress, it is being developed and soon it will be available for VET schools. Further development fields are yet to be decided.

As for public education: Some projects under the Human Resource Development Operational Programme are under examination due to the corona epidemic. Managing Authority seeks to ensure flexibility within the current regulatory framework when review development projects. It supports possibilities of online learning and delivery insofar as the education thus implemented fulfils the objectives set out in the relevant calls and legislations.

## IRELAND

**Last update: 15/4/2020**

1.  
Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?

All schools, pre-schools and further and higher education settings will remain closed to students until further notice.

2.  
In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?

All education and training institutions are closed to students.

3.  
In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?

Teachers are available to work and have been asked to put in place arrangements to continue the delivery of education to students. In line with the most recent Government directions, only staff involved in certain critical functions are permitted to attend in workplaces.

4.  
Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?

These decisions have been taken on an individual basis by institutions in line with public health guidelines.

5.  
How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.

The Professional Development Service for Teachers (<https://www.pdst.ie/DistanceLearning>) has created a page of curated content has been developed to support schools and teachers engaged in distance learning in order to provide continuity to pupils/students. Using some of the online platforms and/or tools that are detailed on this page, schools will be enabled to limit the impact of school closures by giving learners access to materials, support, classwork and feedback.

Using the tools listed on this page, teachers can easily make educational resources and exercises available to learners, who can then study and complete assignments from home.

- Depending on the digital tools available to each school, teachers could also use flipped learning strategies to source and/or create online lessons that learners can access remotely.
- Using many of the online tools explored in this webpage, learners can complete activities digitally that demonstrate their understanding, with teachers being able to provide feedback to improve the learning experience.
- Learners' knowledge and understanding can be effectively demonstrated using some of the edtech tools explored on this webpage (eg. Edpuzzle, Flipgrid, Kahoot, Quizlet and WizerMe).

Scoilnet is the Department of Education and Skills (DES) official portal for Irish education: [www.scoilnet.ie](http://www.scoilnet.ie). Scoilnet collaborates with practising teachers to maintain and manage the content on the website and it contains a range of resources for teachers. ([www.scoilnet.ie](http://www.scoilnet.ie))

Issues which have arisen include the challenge for all students and especially disadvantaged students arising from use of online learning; interpretation of GDPR issues; availability of broadband and limitations of mobile data caps. These are being addressed on an inter-agency basis.

6.

Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

The Government has been working to ensure continuity of provision for school meals in ways which are consistent with the latest public health advice.

The Ministry's National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) psychologists have developed advice and some resources for young people to manage and stay well when schools are closed.

- [Advice to young people while schools are closed](#)
- [Plan for the Day](#)
- [Relaxation techniques](#)

NEPS psychologists have developed guidance for parents supporting children to create new routines at home. Having a Plan for the Day is key for children/young people to manage and stay well at this time.

- [Guide for Parents Supporting Children with Routines](#)

NEPS psychologists have developed advice for parents and schools on talking to children and young people about Covid-19 [here](#).

In order to support schools in getting public health messages across to school communities information notices in 17 different languages have been made available here: [www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/covid-19-translated-resources/](http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/covid-19-translated-resources/)

RTE, the national broadcaster, has put in place a daily television show aimed at primary school children (<https://www.rte.ie/learn/home-school-hub/>) and TG4, the Irish language broadcaster, is putting in place a similar show (<https://www.tg4.ie/en/information/press/press-releases/2020-2/cula4-ar-scoil-starts-soon-on-tg4/>).

7.

How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. *state matura*), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?

Oral and practical performance tests of the state examinations which were originally scheduled to take place from Monday 23 March to Friday 3 April 2020 have been cancelled. All students who were due to take these tests will be awarded full marks for this portion of the exam. More detail available here:

<https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2020-press-releases/PR20-03-19.html>

On Friday 10<sup>th</sup> April, it was confirmed that Leaving Certificate (upper secondary school exit) examinations will be postponed and will now begin in the last week of July or early August, subject to public health advice.

Junior Cycle (lower secondary) final examinations due to take place in June will be replaced by school-based exams and assessments held early in the new school year.

A series of other decisions has also been taken –

- As part of the wider public health measures, schools are closed until further notice.
- Practical examinations for Leaving Certificate students, which were due to have been held in May, are deferred. They will be rescheduled for late July/early August.
- The new Leaving Certificate exam timetable will be confirmed in early June.

8.	What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?
	The focus to date has been on ensuring the welfare and facilitating the academic completion of students on learning mobility. No changes are envisaged at present to higher education requirements for students from other countries.
9.	In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?
10.	What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?
	Ireland welcomes the measures taken so far and supports the proposed broadening of the flexibility available to Member States to use available EU funding to assist in our fight against COVID 19. Irish officials are linking up with the relevant authorities to exploit the potential use of these funds where possible.

## ITALY

**Last update: 9/4/2020**

1.	Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?
	<p>After a concerted decision among all stakeholders, the Italian government has adopted progressive measures leading, on March 4th 2020, to the resolution of interrupting in-presence didactic in all educational institutions, including higher education, in order to decrease the spread of Covid 19 and reduce accordingly the burden of potential patients in need of intensive care. At the moment over 90% of the 10 million Italian students are reached by some forms of e-learning/distant learning activities, and 89 % of schools has developed specific material for students with disability.</p> <p>The present deadline for the stop to all in-presence didactic activities is April 13<sup>th</sup> 2020 but it is clear that the Government will most probably extend the period of suspension, also taking into consideration the advice of the Health Authorities and the possibility of resuming normal activities in full safety. For the time being, the education system in Italy will go on working on the above modalities. For example, University exams and final dissertations are carried out online since March 4<sup>th</sup> 2020, date of the suspension of all in-presence didactic activities while the final exams for the conclusion of the academic year 2018/2019, usually placed within the spring session of the next year, are authorized until June 15<sup>th</sup> 2020. All higher education institutions have established appropriate modalities in order to assure the regular deployment of exams and final degrees, according to their statutes.</p> <p>As for tuition fees, we highlight that the attendance of public and private educational institutions under public management is free of charge. Families must just pay the fee for the use of the school catering service, available</p>

in pre-primary and primary schools. Fees are paid directly or indirectly to the managing local authority. At the moment, the National Association of Italian Municipalities has communicated that almost every Municipality has suspended fees for transport and catering services and, in some cases, they have been returned to families. Where the families of the pupils have paid a voluntary contribution, in the amount decided by the school board of the educational institution, such funds could be used according to a specific deliberation.

As for private educational institutions, attendance is subject to payment of tuition fees. According to the current legislation, it is not possible to allow exemption from payment but the Government is considering the problem. As for Higher education institutions, they are presently authorizing the delay of tuition payment, according with the disposition of the respective government bodies, within their respective academic autonomies.

2.

In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?

The Legislative Decrees concerning the suspension of educational activities did not provide exceptional day care for specific categories. The Legislative Decree n. 18 of March 17<sup>th</sup> 2020 provided measures supporting working parents with younger children, such as an extension of parental leaves for the period of Covid-19 emergence up to 15 days and vouchers for baby-sitting (1000 euro) for the children of health care professionals.

3.

In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?

Teachers and professors have the possibility to conduct their distant learning activities both from home or from the facilities offered within the teaching/academic institutions, even if most of the higher education institutions have decided to close their facilities. The Legislative Decree n. 18 of March 17<sup>th</sup> 2020, concerns measures for school staff, allowing principals to organize smart-working activities for teachers, administrative and auxiliary staff and keep schools open just for non-deferrable activities, such as those developed in agrarian educational institutions.

The mentioned Decree has also clearly stated that all the distant learning activities are valuable for the yearly academic obligations of Higher Education professors.

4.

Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?

All the dormitories for primary and secondary students are closed or progressively closing. In the higher education sector, the structures defined in the category “Collegi di merito” (University residency / student housing dedicated to the best students with low income) are still hosting the resident students (about 30-35%) in the impossibility to come back home for several reasons. They strictly follow all health and safety measures, including the absolute interdiction of mutual contacts. All common spaces are anyway closed to the students.

5.

How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.

In Italy we have a decentralized educational model so, according to the regulation in force and the principle of autonomy of educational institutions at all levels, the Italian approach for distant learning is completely decentralized. The competence to activate forms of distance learning is in charge of principals or rectors and each teacher/professor is organizing distant learning activities, with modalities agreed with their principals/rectors, and with their students.

According to the decentralized model, it is not even possible to ask to use a single platform for online classes in Italy.

For this reason, the Ministry, in order to support schools in the activation of distance learning, has promptly made available to all territorial institutions the expertise of the network of digital experts of the National Plan for Digital Schools.

It has also set up a web page dedicated to virtual learning (<https://www.istruzione.it/coronavirus/didattica-a-distanza-rai.html>) offering schools a range of instruments and tools from which they can choose: exchange of best practices and twinning arrangements among institutions, training webinars, multimedia contents and certified platforms for distance learning, according to national and European privacy regulations.

Finally, there is a specific section of the website page that is dedicated to the inclusion of students with special needs and offers tailored material. All these initiatives are carried out in cooperation with the national partners of our Ministry of Education, such as the Public Research Institute INDIRE, the Institute for the national encyclopaedia Treccani and the public television RAI, with which the Ministry has signed a Charter of Intent on March 24<sup>th</sup> 2020 for the strengthening of its channels dedicated to school with real video lessons and special in-depth material such as the one on coding (<https://www.raicultura.it/speciali/codinginfamiglia/>).

The Italian eTwinning National Support Service, which is part of INDIRE Erasmus + National Agency, decided to give a contribution to the offer of distance learning available in Italy in this period of emergency, by setting up an eTwinning group called SOS “Didattica a distanza” in the eTwinning platform. The group is managed in collaboration with a number of eTwinning ambassadors with specific experience for the different school levels. As it is customary in eTwinning, peer learning is promoted. The objective is to share examples of good practices put into place by teachers. The experiences proposed in the forum are selected by the ambassadors and the teacher is invited to deliver a webinar to colleagues. The group was launched on March 18<sup>th</sup> 2020 and already seven webinars have been delivered. The group is receiving new members each day.

The Italian National Support Service has organised as well webinars delivered by experts that are hosted on the eTwinning national website and the on Indire's main section on distance learning.

For details of the webinars you can refer to the special page created on the Italian eTwinning website: <http://etwinning.indire.it/didattica-distanza-dallindire-ciclo-webinar-quotidiani-supportare-le-scuole-nellemergenza-covid-19/>

eTwinning is an action that has distance learning in its genetics and it is not possible to distinguish the normal activity, from the special activities taking place in this period.

In the current school year about 3340 projects have been activated, of which 276 have been funded in the last month. Since the beginning of March, more than 2000 new teachers have registered in eTwinning, joining a community that at European level counts nearly 800.000 teachers.

6.

Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

On the issue of financial resources, in order to cope with COVID 19 consequences on education, with the Legislative Decree n. 18 of March 17<sup>th</sup> 2020 the Italian government decided to allocate extra 85 million euro for primary and secondary schools support and 50 million euro for the system of Higher education.

Of this appropriation, 10 million euro could be used by educational institutions for the immediate availability of platforms, broadband connections and digital instruments for distance learning or to strengthen the school equipment according to criteria of accessibility of students with disability; other 70 million euro could be used by schools to distribute digital devices for distance learning, included the connectivity, to students with a socio-economic disadvantage; finally, 5 million euro will be used for teacher training on the methodologies of distance learning.

The 70 million euro for the digital devices will be distributed to schools according to the total number of pupils and, above all, according to OECD Escs indicator that allows the individuation of the areas in which more vulnerable groups are present. Moreover, the Legislative Decree n. 18 of 2020 allocates funds to primary schools to enrol 1000 I.T. Technicians to support teachers in organising distance learning. The Decree also increases of 2 million euro the educational emergency funds, which could be used for the inclusion of vulnerable groups in distance learning activities.

Finally, said decree provided measures concerning socio-educational services and home services for students with disabilities, through an extension of the existing contracts with third sector associations.

Fewer funds have been allocated to the Higher education system because it is already strongly digitalized and the implementation of such restrictive measure is not causing serious difficulties. Even the practical activities such as the practical laboratories for Engineering and Architecture have found their appropriate virtual modalities.

7.

How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. state matura), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?

With the Ministerial Circulars of March 6<sup>th</sup>, March 8<sup>th</sup> and March 17<sup>th</sup> 2020, the Ministry of Education has clearly defined the concept of distance learning and, subsequently, the procedure to follow in order to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading.

Well aware that nothing can substitute completely the in-presence educational process, the concept of distance learning implies a direct or indirect connection through videoconferences, videolessons or chats; the reasoned transmission of didactic materials, through digital platforms and the use of electronic journals with their communicative and support functions, followed by the discussion with the teacher. Keeping that in mind, it appears clear that this kind of distance didactic needs a constant formative assessment in order to inform the student of his/her mistakes, not with a sanction but with in-dept further focus and explanation which put once again the student at the centre of the entire learning process.

For Higher education institutions each university is deciding the modalities for exams and final degrees for their own students, but anyway with an approach following all health and safety measures, including the absolute interdiction of mutual contacts, and using teleconference modality.

The major problem related with final exams in Italy is that the Constitution states that the transition from one education cycle to the next must have the value of a State exam. This implies the organisation of final exams sessions on the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> year of school (first cycle) and at the end of upper secondary school. The same

applies for higher education with reference to the final exams sessions at the end of first cycle (laurea), second cycle (laurea magistrale), and doctorate, which all require a high level of legality. In Italy, educational qualifications have a legal value.

With the Decree of April 6<sup>th</sup> 2020, it has been introduced a derogation from existing legislation on the final assessment of educational pathways and school exit exams (State Matura), valid only for the current school year. The Council of Ministers, evaluated the situation of emergency, will choose among two different modalities of final examinations, depending on the restarting of in-presence classes or not. We have also foreseen a massive initiative of remedial classes at the beginning of next school year in order to cope with possible difficulties of students.

As for Higher Education, up to now several universities have decided to ask the student to discuss the final dissertations under the control of a State officer with modalities such as a teleconference from the municipal building of the place residence.

8.

What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?

All students at any level of education, since the moment of their return from mobility actions, are reintroduced in the regular track of their original education pathways, with the maximum assistance from our institutions. In Italy we are presently registering few problems concerning the final evaluation of educational activities abroad. Some foreign institutions that are still concluding the distant learning activities with Italian students, are refusing to give the appropriate final evaluations/scores, required in Italy as well as in many EU countries in order to fill out correctly the Diploma Supplement. Similar problems are registered for students in mobility from secondary schools. Italy is strongly supporting the principle to prevent any disruption for student careers due to COVID 19 and an EU guidance on this specific matter would be useful.

As for the Erasmus mobility, Italian institutions are following up their students according to the specific guidelines issued by the National Agency (INDIRE) which are updated almost weekly according to the issuing of new dispositions by the European Commission. Institutions are supported by the Agency through the usual contacts, email and phones on a reinforced time frame, in order to keep the communication flow coherent and coordinated among all institutions involved.

Many Italian students tried to go back to their hometowns and some managed to do so with the help of the specific crisis unit of the Italian Foreign Office. Institutions are advised how to give all the support needed: a financial one for the extra costs incurred, due to the emergency, that can be provided for by the Erasmus programme; and the academic one, adopting a flexible approach that allows to complete the learning activities foreseen during the Erasmus period, through the distant learning activities which are offered by the host institutions, and recognizing the acquired credits and grades. Thanks to the new dispositions of the Commission, mobilities partly or completely cancelled can be postponed to next semester or next academic year. The general approach taken is the most flexible one, appropriate to the current emergency, so as to minimize the negative impact on students.

9.

In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?

Italy is stressing the importance to dedicate specific calls for reinforcing EU digital infrastructures, with the development of EU centred innovative solution for distant learning activities. This will imply a major EU attention/effort on innovative models and platforms for virtual activities in any sector, not only in the educational one, with the positive effect of reducing the financial burden of daily displacement. An important lesson-learned from COVID 19 emergency, is that a number of activities does not essentially require a physical presence in order to ensure democratic consultation processes.

The strong EU/Member states control on Digital infrastructure and platforms UE based, it is also motivated by the necessity to be aligned with the privacy requirements of millions of EU citizens and especially students.

The Commission could also provide support with further additional funds dedicated to the educational emergence.

10.

What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?

The Italian government strongly believes that flexibility and additional funds would be beneficial to give an answer to the educational emergency that is accompanying the Covid 19 emergency. In particular, they would be essential to support distance learning and inclusion activities.

## LATVIA

**Last update: 15/4/2020**

1.

Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?

According to the Law on Emergency Situation and State of Exception, Latvia has declared a state of emergency situation on 12 March. At this stage, all schools and universities are closed for on-site studies as of 13 March until 12 May. Learning is provided remotely.

All education establishments for on-site studies are currently closed.

Fees for the acquisition of pre-school, basic and secondary education at an institution established by the state or local government shall be covered from the state budget or local government budgets. A private educational institution may determine the fees for the acquisition of education. At the same time the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) encouraged certain types of private educational institutions to review and minimize their expenses in order to reduce tuition fees for children, who do not attend educational institutions because of COVID-19.

In higher education institutions payments of principal amounts for study and student loans are postponed.

<p>2.</p> <p>In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?</p>
<p>According to the state emergency regulation, pre-school educational establishments and institutions providing childcare will have to ensure the work <u>only</u> of ‘on-duty’ groups that will look after those children whose parents are unable to do so. To receive this service, once a week parents have to submit a written statement informing that the child and a family have not visited any COVID-19 affected country and have not been in contact with COVID-19 infected persons or contact persons. The statement should also include information that parents do not have any other option of providing childcare. It is estimated that currently pre-school institutions are attended by 6-7% of children in Latvia.</p>
<p>3.</p> <p>In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?</p>
<p>There is no such obligation stated by any regulation that requires presence of school workforce on a mandatory basis. It is up to the school/principal how the distance teaching-learning process is carried out. But school has to ensure that there is a contact person being present at school.</p> <p>In order to assess the situation more quickly and effectively, as well as to plan and implement improvements in the distance learning process, together with the Educational technology company Edurio the Ministry is constantly carrying out surveys on the implementation of distance learning in the emergency situation. Over 60 000 respondents – teachers, pupils, parents, as well as school directors (99.6% of schools) have been surveyed. Data from surveys helps to adjust the education policy to the situation more rapidly.</p> <p>On 12 March, the Ministry of Education and Science introduced and disseminated a set of „<a href="#">Distance learning guidelines for general and professional education institutions</a>” (translation available also in EN and RU). This document contains recommendations that are mainly proposed to the management, teachers and coordinators in order to ensure pedagogical continuity during a temporary suspension of obligatory regular attendance of pupils. These recommendations should be adjusted to the specific context and needs, making it possible for schools and teachers to develop their own strategies. This document is dynamic and will be updated whenever necessary.</p> <p>It is recommended that the schools use formative assessment; therefore guidelines are currently being updated regarding how to assess the achievements of pupils in the distance learning process. These will also provide recommendations for the assessment of summative evaluation, given that the on-site learning process is unlikely to be resumed in this school year.</p> <p>According to the state emergency regulation, pre-school educational establishments and institutions providing childcare will have to ensure the work <u>only</u> of ‘on-duty’ groups that look after those children whose parents are unable to do so. To receive this service, once a week parents have to submit a written statement informing that the child and a family have not visited any COVID-19 affected country and have not been in contact with COVID-19 infected persons or contact persons. The statement should also include information that parents do not have any other option of providing childcare.</p>
<p>4.</p> <p>Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?</p>
<p>VET institutions are invited to provide a place for the students in the dormitories in the following cases: students perform internships, qualification practices or are involved in work-based learning at the employer. In other cases, students are advised to return to their permanent places of residence.</p> <p>Student dormitories at universities – taking into account the restrictions at country level; it is the responsibility of each university to regulate the measures according to the provisions of state emergency situation.</p>

5.

How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.

As of 13 of March, Latvia has suspended on-site learning. Since 23 March (there were school holidays 16-21 March), pupils are engaged in school activities remotely. In general, first three weeks of distance learning have been completed successfully. Now, each family with pupils has at least one digital device per household in order to perform distance learning.

Because of the state emergency situation, subsequently distance learning is prolonged until 12 May in Latvia. There are several tools, which are used during the period of distance learning: E-class ([e-klase](#)) is the most widely used platform for all most important information, including guidelines for teachers for providing distance learning. Pupils follow the study timetable, study subjects and receive exercises using the digital fora. Other platforms widely used are [uzdevumi.lv](#) and [soma.lv](#), allowing to exercise online and to receive immediate feedback.

Several free of charge tools are widely used, such as WhatsApp for teaching workforce and parents – for prompt and easy communication, or [Mykoob.lv](#) platform – a social network which ensures administration of learning process, exchange of information and communication in schools.

E-mails are used for those, who are not using digital platforms.

Learning content is ensured by using Google Drive or Dropbox tools, also providing videolectures. In cooperation with the Riga Technical University digital tools for learning Physics are available on [fizmix.lv](#), a platform for study materials which can be accessed by anyone free of charge.

There is a platform for immediate questionnaires, tests or interactive activities ([home.edurio.com/lv](#)).

Zoom (<https://zoom.us/>) is also used for webinars, communication, and virtual meetings.

[Drossinternets.lv](#) homepage for pupils on the safety in internet includes animated educational movies.

The National Film Centre of Latvia is providing pupils with free of charge movies on history, politics, culture etc. issues included in the curricula.

Educational TV channel "Your class" ([tavaklase.lv](#)) for pupils has been created in two weeks and is on air since 6 April. It supports pupils, parents and teachers in the implementation of distance learning for 1st to 6th grade pupils. Since 14 April the channel broadcasts also for upper grades. More than 70 teachers are involved in the project, and also a volunteering Parents Group is taking part in the project. This new TV channel is to help to address the challenges identified in the first week of distance learning: the need for a high-quality learning environment for pupils in grades 1 to 6 who may not necessarily learn the planned amount of content independently. We believe that this approach will also facilitate the distance learning process in families with several pupils. This project creates equal opportunities in education all over the country, reducing inequalities arising from lack of teachers or lack of infrastructure. It is as well seen as a long-lasting project when necessary substituting teachers or delivering lectures for those pupils, who are not able to be present at school. After first days it has become one of the most watched channels and in average it has been watched by more than 240 thousand persons from 70 countries.

At the higher education level and in VET, distance learning is provided in a decentralized way. It is the responsibility of each university and college to make sure the study process continues in the time of crisis. Institutions provide such remote learning opportunities to their students as live online classes, seminars, discussion forums, and consultations via Skype, Webex, MS Teams, Zoom and other online tools, pre-recorded lectures, learning materials for independent studies, and feedback on submitted exercises and tasks. Previously used distance learning materials now are made available to all students.

6.

Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

We have developed roadmaps and guidelines for distance learning for teachers and parents. [Guidelines and advice for teachers, parents and ICT is available in 3 languages: LV, EN and RU.](#)

VET institutions provide IT tools to support those students who do not have them to ensure that they can study and learn remotely.

For psychological support there is a hotline and Chatbot for children and also for parents hosted by the State Inspectorate for Children's Rights. Usually it is aimed to approach children, but in these circumstances also parents are invited to use this mean of communication.

MoES together with municipalities is organising and providing free meals for pupils in grades 1-4, children from disadvantaged, poor or large families during distance learning conditions.

Access to pre-school educational establishments and institutions providing childcare for only 'on-duty' groups that look after children in exceptional cases when parents are unable to do so is provided and as estimated, currently attended by 6-7% of children in Latvia.

In order to support their pupils in an emergency, some schools have created an informative e-mail for pupils to send questions and provide a special informative phone number.

Assistant service for children aged 5-18, at all levels of education, for those having functional disabilities is not suspended.

7.

How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. state matura), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?

There are no centralised state exams during the period of emergency situation.

The emergency situation is prolonged until 12 May. State exams for grades 9 and 12 and vocational education institutions have not been cancelled at this stage. A decision to postpone, perform remotely or cancel examinations will be taken on the basis of the development of the epidemiological situation and on the advice of experts from the Ministry of Health, assessing public health and safety above all other considerations. A number of scenarios under strict safety measures are considered to conduct the examinations. Dates of the state exams are currently moved to June for grades 9 and 12, with a possible additional deadline in July (by the end of July). It is planned that grade 9 will have one integrated exam including Latvian language, foreign language, as well as history and mathematics. For grade 12, three mandatory exams are scheduled– in Latvian, foreign language and mathematics, in addition the possibility of taking a fourth exam, which is voluntary and on optional basis. It is expected that schools implementing study programmes with minority language of instruction will be organising the national language exam in a content-wise unchanged form.

In vocational education, the issue of examinations and tests is currently being discussed with partners, teachers, universities and other stakeholders. In the field of vocational training, a number of scenarios have been developed: A crisis situation until mid-May – vocational qualifications exams are remote, partially remote or on-site in June; B if the crisis situation is extended until July, then diplomas of graduation are issued based on average grades.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) currently plan to complete their studies in accordance with their plans and to complete their studies in time. Depending on the developments of the crisis and on the extension of the emergency decision, it is likely that the annual extension of studies will be required in study programmes with specific requirements for the final-exams (final year students) which cannot be carried out remotely. HEIs have previously accumulated experience in distance learning and often have utilised recorded video lectures, IT

systems for remote content delivery and learning management systems, as well as other solutions, including technologies which allow remote testing. MoES is regularly organising webinars involving HEIs' rectors in order to identify the topical issues, in which the involvement of MoES is necessary. In the form of surveys, MoES will also monitor issues that cover all aspects of studies, including Latvian students abroad and foreign students in Latvia. The HEIs rectors also confirmed that universities are in the process of adapting to the consequences of the emergency situation, including the deferral of study fees. The work done so far includes: 1) deferred payments of principal amounts for the credits of studies and students; 2) extended periods for the accreditation of study programmes (amendments to the Law on Higher Education have been prepared); 3) an extension to the schedule has been made by the MoES for the implementation of international assessment of scientific institutions (including universities), which includes institutional visits undertaken by the panels international experts.

Currently we do not foresee to extend the school year for general education institutions and for vocational education and training institutions in most cases. The school year might be extended for those programmes in vocational education institutions and higher education institutions where remote examination is not possible and it requires on-site presence.

8.

What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?

All public events, meetings, conferences etc. are cancelled and banned until 12 May 2020. Only virtual meetings are allowed.

Erasmus+ mobility projects' are adjusting the solutions to minimise the possible impact of COVID-19 – rescheduling and postponing planned mobilities, extending project implementation periods, optimising the use of allocated financing.

Returning of those involved in VET finished and interrupted mobilities was organised by project coordinators with assistance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, some mobilities still continue under careful supervision of the responsible partners.

Currently, the number of both incoming and outgoing Erasmus+ students has shrunk: there are 590 foreign students staying in Latvia, and 558 Latvian students studying abroad. Majority of students are continuing their mobility period by online learning either in their respective home countries or in their mobility destination countries. Higher education institutions are assisting mobile Erasmus students with issues regarding returning to their home countries, students are well informed on up to date information provided by the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

Detailed information (contact information, destination countries and planned return dates) on students and learners abroad has been gathered by National Agency and forwarded to Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to give additional support to mobility participants if necessary.

Ministry of Welfare in co-operation with municipalities has offered support for incoming Erasmus students currently staying in Latvia. Type and amount of support differs based on each municipality.

Effective and timely communication regarding Erasmus+ *force majeure* issues, announced emergency situation in Latvia, subsequent restrictions for minimising spread of COVID-19 epidemic etc. are ensured via Erasmus+ co-ordinators e-lists, Erasmus+ final beneficiaries e-lists, on the Erasmus+ web-site, in the social networks, etc. Full consequences of COVID-19 outbreak will be estimated after evaluation of the affected Erasmus+ projects' final reports.

9.

In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?

The Commission's support in the form of clear administrative guidance regarding *force majeure* and related acceptable exceptions from the standard rules and procedures is always welcome.

Latvia will take part in both strands (school education and higher education) of an online group on continuity of education during the COVID-19 crisis initiated by the Commission and supported by Yammer.

Sharing of digital resources is of particular importance. Given the vast variety of these resources all over Europe, special focus would be needed on targeted promotional activities, in order to reach particular target groups/ address identified or unidentified challenges of member states/ specific target groups.

Project consortia (EU country acting as the coordinator) would need to be encouraged to share digital resources' promotional/ explanatory videos entered in EU supported data bases (e.g. in CEDEFOP (ReferNet database on vocational education and training), presenting digital resources developed/ or used within their particular projects. This could become a compulsory demand for any EU funded project (where relevant) to facilitate the shift from digitally available descriptive information on digital resources to a more lively and user friendly promotional approach and subsequent overtaking of tested digital resources where appropriate.

More promotion would be needed on the existing various virtual platforms (with promotional/ explanatory videos) – enabling an informed choice of a particular platform for a particular reason (for teachers, trainers, public servants).

10.

What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?

The development of teachers' professional competence is considered in some programmes; they should provide competences for the delivery of distance learning, incl. proficient use of digital tools.

To mitigate the consequences of the current situation the programme that supports students at risk of early school leaving remains very important. Especially in terms of flexibility in providing psychological support and consultations during the distance learning process, as well as reducing risks of material deprivation by the delivery of catering, individual study means and individual items, etc.

ESF and ERDF cross-financing in complex support can be considered, especially in providing digital devices. Solutions for sufficient internet capacity and last mile internet services should be monitored and delivered as well.

In the framework of the [Nordplus programme](#), beneficiaries are invited to carry out digital activities in the projects from 16/03/2020 and until the end of June 2020: 1) "Digital mobility" exceptionally is accepted as "regular mobility"; 2) Costs linked to on-line meetings replacing planned physical meetings exceptionally is accepted. Beneficiaries with open grant agreements also have the option of extending the project period to be able to carry out postponed activities.

## LITHUANIA

**Last update: 15/4/2020**

<p>1. Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?</p>	<p>During the quarantine period, which started from March 16 (initially set until March 30), but with evolving situation, has been prolonged until April 13, all educational institutions (kindergartens, schools, universities, colleges, non-formal education institutions, etc.) are closed. On April 8 the Government decided to prolong the quarantine period until April 27.</p> <p>Regarding HE tuition fees, no changes have been foreseen at the moment. The study process is continued online, where possible. The situation is observed and evaluated every 2 weeks. State-funded loans to cover study fees and subsistence costs, which were administered by a private bank, are currently problematic to administer, because the bank is not ready to provide such services online (agreements with students have to be signed in the bank physically). Currently MoESS is negotiating with the bank and looking for alternative solutions.</p>
<p>2. In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?</p>	<p>Day care institutions are closed. In cases where it is impossible to ensure childcare at home (e.g. for parents who work in critical positions (e.g. healthcare) and cannot work remotely, or for children with serious or very serious special needs) municipalities are required to provide emergency childcare in municipal day care institutions.</p>
<p>3. In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?</p>	<p>Education and training institutions have flexibility to organise their distance learning process, in line with the provided Guidelines.</p>
<p>4. Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?</p>	<p>LT higher education institutions plan to provide comfortable and safe living conditions for foreign students staying in Lithuania in dormitories during the emergency period. For incoming students from abroad, these facilities will be isolated. In the absence of such facilities, additional facilities will be sought from the municipalities. Some municipalities have already offered such facilities to students of their universities.</p> <p>The Ministry is collecting information about the number of higher education and VET students who stay in dormitories during the quarantine, how many students have no possibility to leave (e.g. orphans, students from socio-economically disadvantaged groups, etc.), what their living conditions are (single rooms, double rooms, etc).</p> <p>No specific recommendations for dormitories have been issued, but the Ministry of Health has provided common guidelines for accommodation service providers, which are recommended to be applied.</p> <p>The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport has also distributed the guidelines of cooperation with municipalities to VET schools and HE institutions, since a number of municipalities have turned to them</p>

requesting the possibility of using the dormitories as places for isolation of possibly infected persons with coronavirus.

5.

How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport has issued Guidelines on distance learning during the school closure period:

[https://www.smm.lt/uploads/documents/ISAK%2Bdel%2Bnuotolinio%2Bmokymo\\_03\\_16.pdf](https://www.smm.lt/uploads/documents/ISAK%2Bdel%2Bnuotolinio%2Bmokymo_03_16.pdf)

From 30 March educational institutions at all education levels must ensure provision of distance learning. To help schools, the digital teaching base with learning environments, methodological materials, teaching aids and other school-relevant information is currently being constantly updated on the National Education Agency's website: <https://www.nsa.smm.lt/total>

Until March 20 schools had to assess each school's ability to organize distance learning, develop a plan of measures and agree internally on rules for distance learning. By March 27 schools had to develop and collect digital instructional materials, assignments for distance learning, and teachers had to prepare themselves for distance learning, in accordance with the provisions of the Guidelines.

School providers coordinate the schools' readiness to organize distance learning and provide assistance to schools.

Schools have to evaluate and ensure not only accessibility of digital curriculum but also communication and collaboration, which would be as close as possible to real classroom communication environment. Schools should provide children from socially vulnerable families with the tools needed for distance learning (e.g. provide or buy school computer, tablet or mobile phone, including internet connection). By March 25 schools had to inform the parents of pupils how distance learning will be organized in their school.

Schools had to nominate ICT coordinators, who would advise teachers and students on the use of technology. For the implementation of distance learning it is recommended to use videoconferences and other possibilities for virtual class communication. Teachers are encouraged to create teachers' groups (e.g. via social media) where everyone is invited to share their experiences.

It is recommended for schools to follow the information provided by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport on the organization of work, distance learning of pupils as well as on the National Education Agency's website, including on Teacher TV broadcast for teachers: <https://www.smm.lt/web/lt/nuotolinis>

The Guidelines provide recommendations on digital resources and other aid.

When organizing distance learning, it is recommended that information systems and / or virtual environments already in use at school should be evaluated first. Schools can choose from a big variety of tools. Currently, various options are available on the market, such as electronic journals/digital platforms (used for communication with pupils as well as parents, record keeping, homework assignments, tasks carried out at school, calendar of tests, school activities, etc.), virtual learning environments, collaboration platforms, etc.

It is recommended to use the existing national digital curriculum that is freely accessible to all schools:

- E-school - Emokykla (<http://lom.emokykla.lt/public/>) - search for digital tools;
- Educational Garden – Ugdymo sodas (<https://sodas.ugdome.lt/mokymo-priemones>) - a repository of learning materials (Lithuanian language and literature, mathematics, natural, social and other sciences), where learning materials are available to all students, teachers and parents;
- material of the project “Provision of schools with science and technology tools” (<http://www.vedlys.smm.lt/>);
- Tutorials and Answers for Matriculation Examinations, Basic Education Achievement Testing, National Student Achievement Testing (<https://egzaminai.lt/668/>, <https://egzaminai.com/692/>, <https://egzaminai.com/610/>);
- Links to other methodological material for distance learning by subject will be kept up-to-date and available on the National Education Agency's website (<https://www.nsa.smm.lt/total>)

It is advised to contact other schools and discuss possibilities of sharing digital curriculum and best practices. There are schools in Lithuania that have been successfully applying distance learning for many years. [A list of

them can be found at: <https://www.smm.lt/web/en/smm-section/information-incoming-internal-international-international/international-international-and-learning-international>.]

It is also recommended to use temporarily freely available digital tools/content offered by various LT and international companies (e.g. platforms, which allow to design your own assignments, tests at different levels of difficulty, enabling to individualise teaching/learning process according to the pupil's ability and level of achievement).

Here are some examples of free online materials in Lithuanian, which can be found at <https://smp2014ma.ugdome.lt/> (for mathematics); <https://gamta5-6.mkp.emokykla.lt/> (for natural sciences for 5-6th grades); <http://gamta7-8.mkp.emokykla.lt> (for natural sciences for 7-8th grades). Would there be interest, more examples could be provided.

It is also recommended to use open EU and other resources in foreign languages, such as, for example, European Schoolnet, Learning Resource Exchange, School Education Gateway, Khan Academy in English (<https://www.khanacademy.org/>), etc.

As of April 6 the national TV broadcaster “LRT” started broadcasting a programme “LRT lessons” for children of preschool and pre-primary school, as well as for pupils of 1-4<sup>th</sup> grades of primary school. The programme is a joint project of the national TV, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, and the Ministry of Culture under the patronage of Lithuania’s First Lady Diana Nausėdienė.

6.

Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

To ensure the availability of distance learning for all pupils, 35 000 digital devices (15 000 tablets and 20 000 laptops) are bought for schools to equip 35 000 pupils from lower socio-economical background. 9,2 mln euros has been foreseen for the acquisition of these digital devices, including Internet connection in the package. The necessary digital equipment will reach schools next week. Teachers are offered free courses to enhance their digital skills.

According to the March 16 Order of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania on the approval of the Guidelines for the organisation of remote educational process, the school must agree on the specificity of the education of pupils with special educational needs and the provision of educational assistance. Schools are recommended to follow the information provided by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports on the organization of work, distance learning of pupils and the National Agency for Education on its website for distance education (<https://www.nsa.smm.lt/nuotolinis>).

They are also recommended to watch webinar series on distance learning on VMA MOODLE platform, organised by KTU university E-Learning Technology Centre (<https://mokymai.vma.lm.lt/>) or other National Education Agency web-based distance learning, seminars and consultations (information is constantly updated).

Meals (packages of food products are delivered by social workers) continue to be provided for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds who used to get free warm meals before closure of schools.

7.

How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. *state matura*), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?

After discussions with stakeholders, on April 9 the Lithuanian Government made a decision to organise national school graduation exams (*state matura*), which will start almost a month later than usual - on June 22.

This will allow graduates to have more time to prepare for exams not only by distance learning, as is currently the case, but it will also provide our graduates with a possibility to meet teachers directly on school premises after the end of the quarantine regime or ease of its conditions, provided that all safety and health requirements are met.

The Working Group set up by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (it includes officials from the Government and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, representatives of Lithuanian higher education institutions, Lithuanian general education schools, members of the Lithuanian Students' Union and the Lithuanian Pupils' Union) has agreed on the schedule of the *state matura exams* as well as on the dates of admission to higher education institutions.

It has been decided that the main graduation exam session will take place from June 22 until July 21. The retake session for graduation exams will be held from July 22 until August 18.

Regarding the general admission to higher education institutions, submission of applications will start on June 1 and continue until August 18. The admission to higher education institutions will be organized in two rounds (the first one will take place from August 25 until August 28, the additional admission will start on August 31, ending on September 11). Thus, higher education institutions are given recommendations to start the new academic year later this year – September 14 (instead of September 1).

The dates of part of the graduation exams, which were scheduled for April, were moved to May and June (up to the end of June 2020). The graduation exams which are carried out during the educational process (school-level art exam, school-level technology exam and optional school graduation project) will be finalised by remote means (the final part of the exam, i.e. the presentation of the work to the evaluation panel, will be done remotely). Also, the speaking part of the Lithuanian language and literature exam will be carried out remotely. As to the ending of the school/academic year, the situation is observed and evaluated every 2 weeks, no decision has been taken yet. The first two weeks of the quarantine were advanced spring holidays for pupils and for preparation for distance learning for teachers.

8.

What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?

The NA responsible for mobility has provided information on the European Commission's position and NAU recommendations as well as the descriptions of circumstances that may be subject to *force majeure* on the Erasmus+ programme's website <https://erasmus-pliers.lt/naujienos/svietimas/informacija-erasmus-programos-dalyviams-del-koronaviruso/> Information is updated when necessary.

Lithuanian Erasmus+ NA actively use virtual tools for information and monitoring activities (e.g., webinars). For the time being, mobility activities are postponed and not replaced by virtual forms although educational institutions have such opportunities.

We don't experience major problems regarding the return of Erasmus+ students. Those students who were willing to return, returned home, those who decided to stay stayed. HEIs offer studies on-line.

9. In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?
It is very important that the Commission provides the same information/explanation for all stakeholders: NAs, HEIs, students. At national level it is important to ensure that it is the NA, which formulates messages in order to ensure the integrity of information.
10. What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?
Since Programme funds might not be sufficient to cover <i>force majeure</i> expenses, it would be very useful if the Commission could consider additional funding possibilities for that. When the Programme is co-funded by Structural funds, it is extremely important that the same flexibility could be applied to structural funds as to the Erasmus+ Programme.

## LUXEMBOURG

**Last update: 9/4/2020**

1. Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?
The suspension of all education and training activities has been extended a second time until May 4 <sup>th</sup> , for two more weeks after the end of Easter Holidays. This was communicated on Friday April 3 <sup>rd</sup> , together with a series of measures taken in respect to the ending of the school year, programs and evaluations. <u>Tuition fees for both private and public institutions?</u> There are no tuition fees in public schools. As learning must continue during this period of suspension, private schools, just as public schools have the obligation to ensure that their pupils and students are offered the best possible opportunities for distance learning. Therefore, no changes are foreseen in regards to the tuition fees to be paid by the parents and the government continues to fund the school according to the provisions foreseen by law and the specific agreement between a particular school and the government (there are different types of funding depending on the extend the school follows national curricula).
2. In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?
There are services opened for young children of parents who work in crucial sectors. These are mainly day-care centres that are attached or close to hospitals. There are sufficient places for these children, the demand is met. Working parents are allowed to take “leave for family reasons” during the time of suspension of activities without impact on the annual paid leave or the amount of days granted for “leave for family reasons” by law and under normal circumstances. Parents with children under the age of 13 or parents with children with special needs (under 18) are entitled to benefit from this measure.

<p>3. In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?</p>
<p>Since mobility and large people gatherings are to be reduced to a strict minimum, there is no obligation for teachers to be present at the workplace, they are entitled to work from home. There are no measures for emergency day care except for the cases mentioned under point 2.</p>
<p>4. Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?</p>
<p>All dormitories (boarding houses of secondary schools) are closed. Other socio-educational or socio-therapeutic institutions for children are closed as well, the professional teams however stay at disposal and help at a distance if help is needed. Other socio-therapeutic institutions remain opened.</p>
<p>5. How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.</p>
<p>Insuring continuity in learning for pupils and allowing them to remain in contact with their teachers and peers is, besides keeping everyone safe and healthy, the main concern of the ministry. Existing online tools and platforms are being used to offer learning opportunities online and they are being adapted to the specific situation in which a whole student population is learning from their homes. In order to ensure continuity of learning, teachers have to plan the necessary measures to stay in close contact with the students. Students will have to consult their daily electronic journal and their allocated mailboxes. They will have to follow their teachers' instructions and complete the assigned tasks. Parents of students that do not have the necessary technological devices or an internet connection at home, are invited to contact the administration of the school. Classes that are already equipped with other digital tools (for instance Ipad, electronic platforms, ...) will of course use these. The ministry has developed two websites, the first one is called <a href="http://schouldoheem.lu">schouldoheem.lu</a>. It offers educational material for primary and secondary education, links to interesting platforms, online challenges in various topics, constantly updated information on the situation, links for helplines, counselling etc. This platform is constantly being updated and new material is shared. The staff of our national department for pedagogical innovation has been recruited to work on finding, selecting and putting material online. A second website called <a href="http://kannerdoheem.lu">kannerdoheem.lu</a> offers recreational material, as well as suggestions and ideas for non-formal learning, ideas for games and leisure activities tailored to the specific situation of limited movement or social contacts. We have set up a questionnaire which has been published online today. We have been asking parents and teachers to give feed-back on the first weeks of suspension of classes and how distance learning had been lived so far, what the difficulties were. We received valuable information out of this survey and we are able to make improvements, complete our offer and issue recommendations for the next period of distance learning.</p>

6.

Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

In preparation of the shut-down teachers had to identify the pupils and students that do not have sufficient or adequate equipment at home. Secondary schools are at the disposal of parents if they require help with these matters and try to provide them with the necessary material if available. For primary school pupils, teachers are required to stay in regular contact with the families and the children and to provide them with the necessary learning material. If this is not possible online, they try to bring it to them or to invite them to come to school and pick it up, whenever this is possible.

All teachers have to report the children that do not participate in distance learning or whom they cannot reach directly. The regional education authorities will do everything possible to contact the children and the families and they will be allowed to make home visits if necessary. In certain cases, children with special needs will be able to receive the specific care or treatments that they need on a one-t-one basis (for example physiotherapy for children with physical disabilities).

As schools will not reopen until May 4<sup>th</sup> the measures to take care of vulnerable students that cannot actively take part in distance learning and of children with specific needs will be reinforced. It is foreseen to offer them provision of punctual and individual care, in accordance with the instructions by health authorities.

After resumption of classes additional resources will be allocated to the schools to enable them to offer support to the pupils in need.

We are also providing psychological counselling via our helpline in the first place and our psycho-social teams from the schools are constantly at the disposal of pupils or families if needed. Information and material on our website are translated gradually into 4 languages, intercultural mediators are also at disposal for contacting and staying in touch with families.

The competence centres for children with special needs are at the disposal of families, they have also put measure for distance learning in place. Social services on local levels are assisting and monitoring vulnerable families. Social and socio-therapeutic services are considered as part of the crucial sectors and benefit from the same child-care offers than medical staff. An important part of this workforce are cross-border workers who are given the possibility to stay in Luxembourg, Hotel rooms are placed at their disposal by the government. They can also have their children taken care of in the services opened for the workers in crucial sectors.

7.

How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. *state matura*), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?

In collaboration with all stake-holders a plan ensuring a coherent ending of the school year has been elaborated. The objective is to ensure continuity of learning in the best possible way. In any case each pupil and each student will have the opportunity to complete his or her school year.

For all levels of education, distance learning during the first period of suspension of activities was to be focused on revising and repetition of contents already seen in class, however new contents and subjects need to be worked on during the next period of distance learning. But to ensure that all pupils and students will have the best chances to progress, the ministry is defining core contents for the progression to the next school year. Teaching and learning must focus on these contents until the end of this school year.

As a general rule, for the additional period of suspension there will be no tests or assignments for grading. The teachers are required to monitor each student's learning based on the work done in distance education and provides regular feedback on progress made and work to be done.

For primary education (fundamental schools):

The second and third trimesters of the current school year are merged into a single reference period which runs from Monday 6 January 2020 to Wednesday 15 July 2020.

For each pupil, an interim report is drawn up for the period from 6 January to 15 July 2020. For pupils moving on to the next cycle of learning, an end-of-cycle evaluation will be drawn up at the end of the school year.

The national tests which pupils take at the end of cycle 4.2 (end of primary school) and which are part of the orientation procedure for secondary education are cancelled. The decision of orientation will be based on the pupil's productions during cycle 4, on the intermediate assessments of cycle 4 and on the information of the psychologist - if the parents have opted for his intervention.

The orientation interviews, during which the class teacher and the parents take a joint orientation decision, are maintained. Enrolment at high schools will take place between 29 June and 3 July 2020.

For secondary education:

During the period of suspension of classes, in languages and mathematics and in the specialisation subjects of the different sections in upper secondary education classes, teachers regularly give each student constructive feedback on progress made and elements to be worked on.

After classes resume tests will be organised in each of these subjects.

For the calculation of the semester average grades in each subject, the lowest grade will not be considered.

To reward the student's participation in distance learning during the interruption of classes, teachers may add a bonus of 1 to 4 points to the average mark obtained by the student in each of these disciplines during the period from 6 January to 9 July 2020.

As for the other subjects, from the date classes resume, students will revise with their teachers the work done during the period of interruption and have the opportunity to rework it. The work is then assessed by a numbered grade.

For the calculation of the semester average grade in each subject, the lowest will not be considered.

To reward the student's participation in distance learning during the interruption of classes, teachers may add a bonus of 1 to 4 points to the average mark obtained by the student in each of these subjects during the period from 6 January to 9 July 2020.

The criteria for passing the school year remain unchanged.

Secondary education leaving exams

Distance learning continues to be provided from 20 April to 3 May 2020. It covers new subjects in order to guarantee students the continuity of learning necessary for their university career.

Teachers regularly provide feedback to each student on the progress made and the elements to be worked on.

The high school leaving exams start as planned on 25 May 2020 and take place according to the schedule initially set.

However, the examination questionnaire will focus exclusively on the subject matters studied in class and will therefore not cover the content students had to learn during the period of distance learning.

The examination syllabuses for all subjects will be adapted and published on a specific platform.

The final grades of the graduation class (last year of secondary education - Première) are based for 1/3 on the annual and for 2/3 on the examination grades.

it will be ensured that the results obtained during the school year shall not be prejudicial to the students. to ensure this, the pupil will have the choice between three options:

- option 1: the grade obtained in the first semester is considered as an annual mark.

- option 2: the grade obtained, if applicable, in the second semester is considered the semester average. At the student's request, an optional class assignment may be written in a maximum of three subjects a week prior to the exam. The grade of this optional test is added to the grade already obtained for the calculation of the semester average.

- option 3: in the absence of a grade/average from the second semester on the last day of class, there are two possibilities: either a class assignment may be written in a maximum of three disciplines during the week prior to the exam and the grade obtained on the class assignment constitutes the semester average; or the grade from

the first semester is considered as the annual average. Criteria for admission, deferment or refusal remain unchanged.

For Vocational Education and Training

Training at school, as well as in the company providing the training are both interrupted since March 14th until May 4th (until further notice).

All necessary measures are taken to ensure continuity of learning and to enable students and apprentices to graduate in the 2019/20 school year. Therefore, a number of options will be offered to help students succeed and complete their school year and the evaluation procedures are adapted to the constraints of the current situation. After courses resume, wherever possible each training module will be evaluated

Distance education focuses on the essential content needed to enable students to progress. Regarding the subjects to be covered after the Easter holidays, an important part of the teaching is theoretical. Practical teaching can also be provided through distance learning using digital tools wherever possible.

Apprentices will be exempted from the modules usually taken during the second semester. These modules will therefore be considered as passed.

For students in the final/graduating classes, a dispensation is granted for all internship modules that cannot be evaluated. For all other classes, students are also granted a dispensation for all internship modules that should have been completed between 16 March 2020 and the end of the school year.

Apprentices are eligible for partial unemployment benefits.

8.

What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?

The Luxembourg National Agency (NA) is closely monitoring the situation together with the Services of the European Commission (EC).

Many of the planned mobilities and activities within European Erasmus+ (E+) or European Solidarity Corps (ESC) projects are delayed, cancelled or interrupted.

The NA welcomes that the EC recently provided more precise guidelines for NA on how to deal with force majeure cases – at the same time the solid framework provided by the EC leaves necessary flexibility to the NAs to adapt to national circumstances. Regular webinars / online meetings with the EC and the directors of the NAs ensure good cooperation and communication during this state of emergency.

Regarding E+ and ESC projects (and mobilities), the Luxembourg NA has regularly updated the information provided on its website regarding the COVID-19 and possible impact on ongoing projects. Beneficiaries have been informed about the possibilities of applying for compensation of costs according to the provisions of force majeure. Special procedures and instructions have been defined for all the types of E+ and CES projects.

The NA is in close contact with the EC regarding simplifications of requests of force majeure to ease the administrative burden for the beneficiaries. The general approach taken is the most flexible one, appropriate to the current emergency, so as to minimize the negative impact on beneficiaries and participants. Project beneficiaries may, on grounds of force majeure, finance costs resulting from postponements, cancellations, closures, etc. from the project budget.

All project beneficiaries were informed about health and safety warnings, received information by repeated newsletters and mailings and guidance is provided by the NA regarding individual requests linked to Covid-19.

Virtual mobility projects on the eTwinning platform can continue during school closure times, depending on possibilities and priorities of teachers involved. The eTwinning National Support Service (NSS) in Luxembourg welcomes the fact that the possibility of national projects has been introduced by the Central Support Service upon request of several NSS and in response to the Covid-19 crisis.

Most individuals have returned to Luxembourg.

The NA will soon send out a survey to all E+ and CES project beneficiaries in order to know how many participants are still abroad – and how many participants are still hosted in Luxembourg.

For the moment, beneficiary organisations have not addressed any specific problems regarding the return of participants.
9. In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?
The EC has been very active in listening to the needs of NAs and beneficiaries, providing crucial guidance for dealing with force majeure cases and organising online meetings with the directors of the NAs. Those efforts are being very much appreciated by all the NAs. Among the virtual working options offered by eTwinning, the new possibility of creating national projects has been very much welcomed too.
10. What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?
The Luxembourg E+ and CES NA welcomes the fact that the EC foresees maximum flexibility in E+ and CES – both for NAs and beneficiaries of the programmes. The NA believes that additional funds might be useful for supporting distance learning and inclusion activities.

**MALTA**  
**Last update: 10/4/2020**

1. Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?
Schools were originally ordered shut as from 13 March 2020 as part of restrictions to limit the spread of the coronavirus. The shutdown, originally due to expire on 19 April 2020, has now been extended to the end of the academic year. A Legal Notice, No 41 of 2020 was issued in connection to the closure of schools. State schools in Malta are non-paying, thus no tuition fees are applicable. Further details will be provided in due course as regards private institutions.
2. In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?
Regular work has not been suspended; however Malta has closed down all non-essential retail stores and services to help contain the spread of COVID-19. The Government is providing free childcare services to children below the age of 13 whose parents work in the health sector, including those in the care of the elderly and disciplined forces. The public service already provides family-friendly measures including teleworking. A Directive that was recently issued by the Head of Civil Service lays down for teleworking requests by public sector employees to be accepted in their entirety, as long as work carried out and service to clients remains consistent. Government is also encouraging all employers to provide teleworking to their employees, whenever possible.

<p>Additional leave for two months will be paid at the rate of €800 per month to families with children where both parents/guardians work in the private sector and neither is able to telework. This measure is intended to ensure that parents/guardians can take care of children while schools remain closed.</p>
<p>3.        In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?</p>
<p>At compulsory education level, educators are highly encouraged to conduct distance learning. The Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes and the Directorate for Digital Literacy and Transversal Skills within the Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE) together with all schools from all sectors are providing continuous support to all parties in online teaching and learning. As indicated further below, through the website <a href="http://www.curriculum.gov.mt">www.curriculum.gov.mt</a>, educational resources are freely available to teachers, students and parents. Support to teachers on providing online learning is carried out through <a href="https://digitalliteracy.skola.edu.mt/">https://digitalliteracy.skola.edu.mt/</a> and specific help lines have also been set up. Microsoft Teams is also being used.</p> <p>At post-compulsory and tertiary education level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) published a communication to encourage all Licensed Providers for Further and Higher Educational Institutions to keep supporting their students via online teaching and learning when this is possible. Providers are to inform NCFHE which courses are ongoing online. Providers are requested to seek necessary approval in case of changes in methods of assessment.</li> <li>- Higher Education Institutions, such as the University of Malta, have made arrangements to significantly reduce the number of employees on campus at any given time. Staff are teleworking and a roster has been drawn up by each Administrative Director to determine the minimum number of people that are requested to be on the different sites on any given day.</li> <li>- VET institutions such as the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) and the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) are conducting distance learning lectures on Microsoft teams for all theoretical lectures. Practical lectures have been temporarily postponed. Lecturers are encouraged to communicate through the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) platform and Microsoft Teams to lecture, provide educational material and assess students.</li> </ul>
<p>4.        Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?</p>
<p>Regarding student dormitories, these preventive measures have been taken:</p> <p>At a church owned care residence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A separate apartment has been allocated in case of the need of an emergency isolation</li> <li>- Staff is having temperature checked when coming in or going out of the building</li> <li>- Instructions on hygiene have been given to the children</li> <li>- Towels have been replaced by disposables</li> <li>- Fixtures in sinks have been replaced with ones allowing less contact</li> <li>- Physical activity is taking place in the residence's own grounds</li> </ul> <p>From the side of Independent Schools, there are a number of dormitories at St Martin's College. These rooms have not been in use since the 25 February 2020 and all the rooms and common areas have been aired, thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. All beds have been stripped and bedding and curtains have been washed. All the pillows have been discarded and will be replaced by new pillows.</p> <p>At the University of Malta's Residence:</p>

- Instructions have been placed in each accommodation unit and shared on group Facebook pages and by email indicating the required level of basic hygiene – washing regularly of hands with soap and regular use of hand sanitisers placed in each bathroom, avoidance of unnecessary gatherings both inside and outside the facilities and so on.
- Regular updates are being provided to clients on the changes in measures decreed by Government especially those relating to mandatory quarantine. The Residence gives clients in quarantine a basic level of support such as buying and delivery of goods.
- Housekeeping staff have been thoroughly briefed on what needs to be done whilst cleaning (e.g. personal hygienic steps to take between cleaning of rooms) and have been provided with all hygienic material needed such as protective clothing gloves and products.
- Specific accommodation units to be used for quarantine have been identified should it be necessary.

University of Malta, through its Group of Companies, offers accommodation services to students through Hotel Kappara (a small 27 room facility) and the University Residence (170 rooms) at Lija. In none of these facilities do they have dormitories (being big halls hosting a large number of beds). The Residences offer single or twin sharing bedrooms.

5.

How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.

At compulsory education level:

- The 'iLearn' - <https://ilearn.edu.mt/> - is one of the tools available for teachers. This online platform helps to further facilitate our students teaching and learning. Teachers can use a number of tools in preparing tasks for their students. For example, teachers may ask students to read some articles online and complete certain homework.
- 'MySchools' - <https://mis.edu.mt/> - is an administrative tool used by teachers for record keeping: attendance and exam results. Students have a government account that provides access to the platform.
- 'Microsoft Teams' and other 'Office 365' tools are increasing their use for distance learning. The Malta Union of Teachers has rejected requests for lessons to be livestreamed to students who are in quarantine after returning from a country impacted by the coronavirus outbreak.
- Students have access to the online platform via their government-supplied tablets. Tablets are provided to children from year 4 to 6 in all schools for free.
- A Working Group has been set up by the Ministry for Education and Employment in light of the current closure of all schools. The group is made up of representatives from the all three sectors: State, Church and Independent Schools, together with the Malta Union of Teachers. The Group's remit is to explore methods of online teaching during this period as well as to explore the impact of the present situation on the curriculum.
- The Group agreed on two initiatives:
  - 1) Educational resources available on [www.curriculum.gov.mt](http://www.curriculum.gov.mt), whereby resources and material for each year group and each subject will be made available and freely accessible to all. The Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes will be uploading relevant curriculum material.
  - 2) Educators providing resources directly to students, whereby educators are being encouraged to use online means to provide educational material and resources to their students. Educators are encouraged to continue using the digital online methods they may be already using in their respective schools. Further information and support on how to use online platforms to provide educational material directly to students is available on: <https://digitalliteracy.skola.edu.mt/>
- A series of webinars have been launched for educators working in primary schools. The focus of this series is to give ideas on online pedagogy, sharing of good practices and training on ready available tools. Issues tackled include: collaboration, feedback and assessment online using J2E; using Microsoft Forms as an assessment tool in the Primary; Features of Microsoft Teams; creating a Microsoft Sway presentation for the Primary Class; Creating collaborative class books with Book Creator; creating spaces where primary

students interact with videos using Flipgrid; Web 2.0 tools to engage students: using J2E to promote creative writing tasks; and learning online - sharing experiences.

- Helplines related to the above initiatives have also been set up.
- Microsoft Teams is also being used.
- Regarding the question on difficulties encountered regarding the use of such tools and materials; in Malta, at compulsory education level, the Ministry for Education and Employment have had some technical issues due to increased user traffic which, to date, have been resolved.

At post-compulsory education level:

The following are tools which the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), Malta's main VET institution, is currently using:

Officially recognised tools (Any of the following is acceptable according to respective lecturer's choice):

- Classter Management Information System (for communicating with students, issuing assessments and marking attendance) - <http://mcast.classter.com>;
- MCAST Moodle Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) – for sharing of online material, fora and chats - <https://moodle.mcast.edu.mt/login/index.php>;
- Schoology;
- Northumbria University Blackboard VLE (in case of Nursing students);
- Microsoft Teams (through Office 365 Online access) for Live sessions.

At the Institute of Tourism Studies, in order address the Covid-19 emergency challenge:

- All theory classes are being delivered online;
- Specific platforms, e-tools and materials are being used are: Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) on Moodle; and Microsoft teams.
- With regard to difficulties encountered regarding the use of such tools and materials, no difficulties were encountered except for some slowdowns.
- Regarding e-tools or materials (regardless of the language) that ITS is willing to share with other Member States, the tools are available worldwide, such as Moodle and Microsoft teams.

At the University of Malta, the University of Malta's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is well-established and many staff have been using the platform for a number of years.

The current challenge is to upskill the remaining academics in as short period of time as possible.

Additional information is available at the following links:

<https://www.um.edu.mt/itservices/vle/staff>;

<https://www.um.edu.mt/itservices/facilities/lecturecapture>;

<https://www.um.edu.mt/services/coronavirus/instructionalcontinuity>.

6.

Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

On a general national level:

- A national helpline was established by the central authorities: 111 or 21324086.

At compulsory education level:

- Free of charge support will be provided by the Government to students who do not have access to a computer or internet connection at home under a scheme of assistance for people who are on the risk of poverty.

- Regarding the support offered to teachers, students and parents for distance learning please refer to MT reply to question 5 above which explains the initiatives taken including online support, helplines, webinars and distribution of training material.
- Standard operating procedures (SOPs) in both Maltese and English were issued to both parents and schools.
- A helpline was also established for those who have questions about the educational sector and the impact of the coronavirus: 25981000.
- For students in need of psychological counselling, special educational needs and disadvantaged backgrounds:
- Some students with disabilities still follow the online lessons / activities as their peers with support from their parents/ guardians;
- Some teachers /Learning Support Educators (LSEs) are sending adapted work to the parents;
- National School Support Services are sending resources to Heads of Department [HoD] (Inclusion) so that they can share with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and LSEs in their respective schools;
- National School Support Services is sending resources (mainly related to socio-emotional literacy) to Nurture Classes / Learning Support Zone teams every week to share with the students of their respective schools;
- Resource centres are communicating with parents through online resources on various strategies to continue with their children at home;
- Online support is provided for parents for inclusion and special education (calls and emails);
- Online support “Am listening” is provided for students who can share their concerns as they would have usually done with their guidance teacher at school;
- Students who are at risk of poverty who usually benefit from lunches at school will be receiving their daily lunch at home;
- Families who do not have internet connection will be assisted with installation so they can follow online lessons like their peers.

At post-compulsory and tertiary education level:

- Concerning pupils with disabilities, at the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST):
- During the MCAST lockdown period the MCAST Inclusive Education Unit is sustaining its support to students with particular needs and/or disabilities through the following activities:
- Learning Support Educators (LSEs) are in touch with all the students who were attending additional individual support sessions in Maltese, English, Mathematics, and general support. Support is being provided according to students' feedback through email communication.
- An infographic on the use of a text-to-speech software was designed and circulated among all students and staff. The free software can read text on web pages, PDF files and Google Documents out loud, thus facilitating access to the increased online communication for students with dyslexia and literacy difficulties.
- Sharing of online resources among LSEs to be used in supporting students.
- Liaison with multiple stakeholders in institutes and other support services to address individual issues of student support.
- At the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS), students with disabilities are being supported by learning coaches remotely during online lecturing sessions, within an online classroom setting. Students with disabilities are also being supported by learning coaches through one-on-one online sessions.
- During these stressful times, the University of Malta has also taken the necessary measures for the Health and Wellness Centre to provide services to staff and students alike. A team of professionals is on call from Monday to Friday between 8:00 and 20:00 to attend to these needs.

7.

How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. *state matura*), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?

All students in primary and secondary will progress to the next year for scholastic year 2020/21. All state school annual examinations from year 4 till year 10 have been cancelled. The End of Primary Benchmark assessment in Year 6 has been cancelled. Assessments will be used to grade students instead. SEC (O Level) examinations will not be held, and a predictive assessment for the students will be carried out by the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations Board (MATSEC) instead. MATSEC will still issue a certificate to those students who pass, so that they may be able to attend post-secondary schools. Every SEC student will nonetheless retain the right to sit for SEC exams in the coming September. Intermediate and A Levels will be postponed for the coming September, with resits to be available in December so that students will also have the opportunity to continue with their tertiary education without penalizing students who sit for resits. Arrangements will be made so that the University of Malta, including the Junior College and other sixth forms, and Malta College for Science and Technology (MCAST) students will be able to continue with their studies, whilst online learning at all levels will continue. Students at the University of Malta, Junior College and MCAST will be assessed using online technologies. At the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS), lecturers have been asked to propose alternate modes of assessment in case that normal modes, i.e. in class examinations, cannot take place. Proposed methods of assessment will have to be reviewed and approved accordingly by the ITS Board of Studies, Programme Quality Validation Board and Board of Governors. A set of detailed FAQs covering all cycles in the education sector have been published. A copy of the FAQs is being enclosed.

8.

What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?

The government provides regular updates via media broadcasting and press conferences. The Ministry for Health issues updated circulars. All travel by air and sea between Malta and Italy, France, Spain, Switzerland and Germany. has been banned except for merchandise, medicinal and food purposes. Flights to Malta have been stopped as from Saturday 21 March 2020, except for cargo and humanitarian flights. Efforts are being made by Government to help Maltese people abroad return to Malta. A helpline has also been set up – 22042200. All non-essential travel to the countries effected by Covid-19 infection is advised against. Where possible video and teleconferencing are encouraged. Co-ordinators/partners in Erasmus+ projects have been advised that there will be no financial implications when Erasmus+ mobilities are being postponed due to the current circumstances. Throughout the past few weeks, the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) has been in contact with its students who had been abroad for study purposes. ITS made the appropriate arrangements for all students to return to Malta and announced that such a disruption in the students' internship would not affect the students' successful completion of their study programme. As part of their programme of studies, students undergo an international internship and there are also students who go abroad for a semester with collaborative Institutions and Universities. In view of this, ITS had multiple students in various countries across Europe. 6 students who were studying at the Institute Paul Bocuse (IPB) in Lyon, France, as part of their Bachelor Degree in Culinary Arts programme, have returned back to Malta and will be continuing their learning in different methods and would

get the opportunity of returning to IPB in 2021 to finish their practical lectures. Students who are reading for a Bachelor Degree in International Hospitality Management, amounting to 19 students, and who were currently studying at the Haaga-Helia University of Applied Science in Helsinki, Finland have also been repatriated and will continue their lectures online through a dedicated platform with the same University. Students who had been on their 12-month international internship in various countries have also returned back to Malta. These include 3 students who were in the Czech Republic, 14 in the United Kingdom, 1 in Hungary, 3 in Ireland, 1 in Jersey (Channel Island), 13 in Scotland and 17 in Wales.

9.  
In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?

The use of digital platforms and video conferencing tools is essential at this time to ensure that students can continue receiving information and tuition remotely. Sessions are also being recorded so that learners can review the online session at a later date in order to refresh their memory.  
The Commission could provide additional support through the sharing of digital resources and funding for a comprehensive digital system including digital content and tools to be used all year round by all teachers, students and parents to facilitate continuous learning and distance learning.  
This could also include a VET and hospitality depository of video and online lectures so that institutions can share material.  
Furthermore, the Commission could aid in providing students with limited resources, with the necessary tools to further their education.

10.  
What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?

One could use EU funds for a comprehensive digital system (platform) including digital content, tools and video conferencing.  
Additionally, EU funds could help bolster virtual learning environment, buy new software and increase hardware which is fundamental for lecturers and administrative staff to deliver the necessary support for all students.

## **THE NETHERLANDS**

**Last update: 3/4/2020**

1.  
Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?

On Sunday, March 15, the Dutch government, in close consultation with the education and ECEC sector, decided to close regular lessons at schools for primary and secondary education, as well as VET schools and ECEC facilities, from March 16 up to and including April 6. Schools and day cares stay open for children whose parents work in “vital sectors”, such as health care. The government has issued a list indicating vital sectors.  
The government decided on Tuesday 31 March that [all measures taken in the Netherlands to combat coronavirus](#) will be extended until Tuesday 28 April inclusive. Schools will remain closed until at least the end of the May school holidays (3 May). The ban on events still applies until 1 June. In the week before 28 April, the government will assess what measures are necessary in the period after that date.

<p>Higher education institutions had already been recommended on Thursday, March 12, to suspend all physical courses, an advice the institutions adopted. Distance learning has been put in place as much as possible. Education will continue as much as possible though digital means. Schools are organising ways for distance learning at this moment; pupils in secondary education and VET that will have to do their exams this spring, are a priority target group.</p> <p>Compensation for tuition fees is not applicable at this moment.</p>
<p>2.</p> <p>In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?</p>
<p>Everyone is being asked to stay at home as much as possible. People should work from home if they can. It is important that working parents are able to make full use of the digital possibilities to work at home; teleworking is recommended as much as possible.</p> <p>Childcare is provided at schools and childcare centres for the children of key workers, so that these parents can continue going to work. Key workers are people who work in healthcare, public transport, the police, fire services and other crucial sectors. This also includes teachers and support staff who are needed to provide distance learning, childcare at schools and exam supervision. The childcare will be provided at no extra cost. It is up to the schools and day cares to foresee in activities for the children.</p>
<p>3.</p> <p>In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?</p>
<p>Education is classified as a crucial sector. Teachers and support staff are needed to provide distance learning, childcare at schools and exam supervision. Priority is given to pupils in secondary education and VET that will have to do their exams this spring.</p> <p>Parents and guardians who work in one of the crucial sectors can make use of childcare for their children. Every school or university is responsible to discuss with their teachers and staff the specific situation. Basic rule is that persons working in the crucial sectors should stay at home if they themselves have a fever.</p>
<p>4.</p> <p>Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?</p>
<p>Not applicable in the Netherlands.</p>
<p>5.</p> <p>How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.</p>
<p>In The Netherlands schools and universities, have a large degree of autonomy when it comes to issues such as choice of curricula, learning materials and human resource policies, and also in the field of offering digital education. Therefore, it is up to the schools and universities to make full use of the possibilities for online classes and virtual learning on distance. Pupils in secondary education and VET in the year of their final exam are a priority target group in organising distance learning.</p> <p>The schools and universities use platforms, e-tools and digital material developed by commercial parties. The central government has no specific role in this. However, the ministry, in cooperation with the education umbrella organisations, is providing information on the possibilities with digital applications, material and</p>

suppliers through the website [www.lesopafstand.nl](http://www.lesopafstand.nl) (in Dutch). This concerns school education and VET. The website also gives tips, tricks and inspiring examples of digital learning for schools and teachers. In higher education, the Dutch ‘acceleration plan for innovation’ plays a significant role. They have introduced a central website where institutions and teachers can find information and raise questions: <https://versnellingsplan.nl/actueel/vraagbaak-online-onderwijs/>

6. Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

It is extra important that schools, childcare organizations and municipalities jointly have an overview of the children who need extra guidance, for example because parents do not have a good command of the Dutch language or cannot provide proper guidance. Local customization is necessary to ensure the development of children in a vulnerable position. Municipalities, in close contact with the schools, will take the initiative to identify the children for whom extra measures must be taken. Special attention is also paid to children who stay in refugee centres.

For the pupils and students in primary, secondary and upper secondary vocational education who do not have the necessary devices themselves and for whom this is not arranged through the school or the municipality, an investment of 2.5 million euros to ensure pupils and students have the necessary devices for online learning.

For some children education at home is not a good option, as they need extra care or the situation isn’t safe for them. The ministry has made agreements with the parties involved that make it possible to help them. If necessary in specific cases, care, education and supervision outside the home is allowed.

Regarding support for teachers, if necessary, schools can jointly support teachers through the existing regional partnerships. Teachers can find good examples and inspiration at [www.leraar.nl](http://www.leraar.nl). With public and private partners the involved organisations are looking for ways to provide teachers with specific ICT expertise where necessary.

7. How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. *state matura*), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?

At the end of primary school pupils progression to secondary education normally depends on the advice by their school and a final exam. This year, because of the pandemic, there will not be a final exam at the end of primary school. For now, progression to secondary education will just be based on the school advice that draws on the professional opinion of the primary school. This advice is based on a broad picture of the children's development in recent years and by results from standardised intermediate tests, and has always been the primary factor in the progression to secondary. The ministry follows the developments closely to see if extra measures are needed.

At the end of secondary education pupils graduation normally depends on school exams and national exams. This year, because of the pandemic, there will be no national exams and graduation depends on the results in the school exams.

For higher education and upper secondary vocational education, in order to give (prospective) students more time and space to register, the registration date is postponed by one month to 1 June.

In some special cases, upper secondary vocational education students who are in their final year of study and who are – due to the pandemic – unable to graduate in time, are allowed to enrol in higher education, while

<p>they will be given an extension to fulfil all the requirements and obtain their qualification before 1 January 2021.</p> <p>For higher education, as far as possible, institutions allow education and examinations to take place (in alternative digital forms). Furthermore, at the end of the first year, based on the number of study credits students in higher education have attained, they receive a binding recommendation (BSA) on whether they may progress to the next year of their course. Due to the measures in place to combat the coronavirus outbreak, first-year students may be unable to obtain the required number of credits. It has been agreed that universities and universities of applied science will take into account the unusual circumstances in which their students are currently studying. Anyone who cannot meet the BSA requirements because their studies have been interrupted or delayed by the coronavirus outbreak will be granted an extension. They can progress to the second year and try to meet the BSA norm in the 2020/2021 academic year.</p>
<p>8.</p> <p>What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?</p>
<p>To what extent mobility can continue depends on the location, the travel advice of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the local advice regarding traveling and education. Currently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is advising all Dutch people not to travel abroad in the coming period unless absolutely essential. Furthermore, a restriction has been imposed concerning all non-essential travel by persons from third countries to Europe (i.e. all EU member states, all Schengen countries and the United Kingdom). This is in line with the decision of the EU member states to place severe restrictions on travel to the EU Schengen area.</p> <p>The National Agency for Erasmus+ is providing specific information on mobility related to Erasmus+, in line with the communications from the European Commission, the travel advice and Q&amp;As of the central government. They have published FAQ on their website. The schools and universities are in contact with students and staff who are still abroad.</p> <p>The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Dutch Association of Insurers, the Dutch Association of Travel Agents and Tour Operators (ANVR) and a range of other partners in the travel sector have joined forces to help Dutch travellers, including students and teachers, abroad who are unable to arrange their return to the Netherlands because of the COVID-19 crisis. In response to this problem, the organisations have adopted a concerted approach called Special Assistance Abroad. The approach is a scheme to assist Dutch travellers stranded abroad who will not be helped by a tour operator or airline. The website where travellers can register, started 23 March, is <a href="http://bijzonderebijstandbuitenland.nl">bijzonderebijstandbuitenland.nl</a>. Once registered, emergency support centres will coordinate and organise the necessary transport for their return home. In principle, travellers themselves will contribute €300 for their return from other parts of Europe (and from adjacent countries) and €900 from countries outside Europe.</p>
<p>9.</p> <p>In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?</p>
<p>Distributing good examples of digital resources for distance learning and teaching.</p>
<p>10.</p> <p>What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?</p>
<p>We would like to request the European Commission to create maximum flexibility in Erasmus+, concerning both the beneficiaries and the National Agencies, in order to be able to deal with the exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 crisis.</p>

## POLAND

Last update: 9/4/2020

1.

Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?

All education institutions are closed with the exception of:

- counselling and guidance centres;
- special education-and-care centres;
- youth educational centres, youth social therapy centres, special educational centres, revalidation and educational centres;
- kindergartens and schools in health care and social welfare entities.

In the case of special education-and-care centres, revalidation and educational centres, counselling and guidance centres parents decide whether their children participate. Attendance is not an obligation but a right.

On March 11 the government has decided that all educational institutions, including schools and higher education institutions will be closed till March 25. This state has been extended till April 10 when the Easter break starts. On April 9 the decision was made to prolong the closure till April 26.

Decision on tuition fees (in private education institutions) is in the competence of the given school running body. However it should respect an individual agreement between that body and parents, which sets out the obligations, rights and payment for the child's education in that school. For example one of the private schools in Warsaw has proposed solutions for reducing the tuition fee which include e.g. cutting down the fees charged for additional classes in March, no additional fees in the event of further suspension of these classes in April and a partial refund of the amount (e.g. 15-20%) for each suspended day of classes from March 16 when the schools were completely closed.

In the field of private higher education institutions (HEI), decisions on exemption from tuition fees are taken autonomously by the academic authorities.

2.

In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?

No. On March 8, the so-called special act on specific solutions related to the prevention and combating COVID and other infectious diseases and crises they caused has come into force. It provides that, in the event of the closing of the nurseries, kindergartens or schools, a parent of a pupil up to 8 years old is entitled to receive additional care-allowance, for a period not longer than 14 days. On March 18, the government announced the legislative package a so-called "Anti-crisis shield". The right to the social allowance for parents of small children until the age of 8 is prolonged for the whole period of the closure of the nurseries, kindergartens and schools. The care-allowance is paid monthly and amounts to 80% of the base of allowance assessment (usually, the employees' average remuneration for the last 12 months).

3.

In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?

There is no obligation for teachers and staff to be present at workplace. The functioning of education system units is limited by limiting the obligation for employees of these units to work in their area, except when it is necessary to carry out the tasks of units using distance learning methods and techniques/other ways or when it is necessary to ensure ongoing functioning of these units. At the same time new regulations on distance

<p>education for schools have been introduced. Teachers are expected to conduct distance learning. Distance learning applies also to pre-school education.</p> <p>The same applies to academic employees (both academic and non-academic staff) who are not required to work at the university, except when necessary to ensure continuity functioning of the HEI.</p>
<p>4.</p> <p>Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?</p>
<p><u>General education</u></p> <p>Boarding schools as well as dormitories have been limited in providing their services. New regulations of the Ministry of National Education regarding the risk of coronavirus infection apply also to boarding schools and dormitories. Pupils, who were living in them, have returned to their homes.</p> <p><u>Higher education</u></p> <p>In connection with the decision to suspend the teaching activity of universities, the Chief Sanitary Inspector recommends that students and doctoral students leave their student housing if they have the option of other accommodation.</p> <p>The stay of other students and doctoral students in student housing should be organized in a way that allows maximum limitation of contact between persons, preferably in separate rooms with a separate sanitary facility. Universities must provide accommodation for students (including foreigners) who cannot (for various reasons) leave the dormitory.</p> <p>In the case of doctoral students who, due to the cancellation of classes, do not use the dormitory, it is advisable to exempt them from accommodation fees for that period. HEI must provide accommodation for PhD students who cannot, for various reasons, leave the dormitory. This applies, for example, to foreigners and doctoral students for whom accommodation is the only way to live.</p>
<p>5.</p> <p>How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.</p>
<p><u>Education</u></p> <p>We have introduced new regulations which enable to conduct distance education in the period of temporary limitation of the functioning of schools and educational institutions due to the coronavirus. We have defined the principles of distance education and created the possibility to assess and classify pupils/students. The new rules will apply from March 25 to April 26, 2020.</p> <p>School headmasters are responsible for organizing distance education. They are obliged to inform parents about the way in which education will be organized. Teachers have the opportunity to verify the curriculum used so far to adapt it to the chosen distance learning method.</p> <p>headmasters must also agree with the teachers the weekly scope of material for individual classes, taking into account, among others: even pupil/student load of classes on a given day, differentiation of these classes or psychophysical abilities of a pupil/student. Headmasters are also to specify the forms of contact or consultation of the teacher with parents and pupils/students.</p> <p>When organizing distance education for pupils/students, headmasters must remember to take into account the principle of safe use of electronic communications devices by pupils/students. This means that the selection of tools for this form of education should take into account current medical recommendations regarding the time of using devices (computer, TV, telephone) and their availability at home, the age and stage of development of pupils/students, as well as the family situation of pupils/students.</p> <p>Distance education can be carried out using materials made available by a teacher, in particular those recommended by the Ministry of National Education (especially the Integrated Educational Platform <a href="http://www.epodreczniki.pl">www.epodreczniki.pl</a>), the Central and Regional Examination Board, as well as broadcast in the educational programs of Public Television and Polish Radio.</p>

For kindergartens and pupils at levels I-III of primary school, teachers are obliged to inform parents about the available materials, as well as the possible ways and forms of their implementation by a child at home. Headmaster are required to agree in consultation with teachers how the pupil's/student's knowledge and progress in learning will be monitored and checked.

The new web-site has been launched

<https://www.gov.pl/web/zdalnelekcje>

which includes topics for each day and for each subject, as well as proposals of materials which can be used to remotely conduct classes for primary and secondary school pupils.

The most important platform for on-line learning is

<https://epodreczniki.pl/>

It is a free educational tool created and administered by the Ministry of National Education, which offers teachers and pupils/students ready didactic materials. The Platform is a repository of digital materials from all subjects - both for general and vocational education. The condition for using the platform is a device (computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone) with Internet access. The teacher has the possibility to create a virtual classroom and make ready-made or self-created e-materials available to students and check their progress. The platform also enables the creation, co-creation of new content and sharing it with pupils/students and creation of testing. It also gives the opportunity to monitor pupil/student progress and even individualize work with pupils/students. Recommendations for teachers and headmasters regarding remote education, including websites and platforms recommended for use were gathered at the website: <https://www.gov.pl/web/edukacja/nauka-zdalna>. They include also inspirational tools offered by eTwinning: <https://etwinning.pl/inspiracje-2/inspiracje/>

Other interesting materials:

<http://www.scholaris.pl/>

<http://www.kopernik.org.pl/kopernikwdomu/>

<https://lektury.gov.pl/>

<http://wlpaczpolske.pl/>

<http://www.muzykotekaszkolna.pl/>

<http://www.bc.ore.edu.pl/dlibra>

<https://ninateka.pl/edu>

<https://przystanekhistoria.pl/>

<https://www.cke.gov.pl/>

## VET

Vocational education is this sector of education in which not everything can be done remotely due to the wide component of practice and workplace learning. That is why we have introduced specific provisions that allow the vocational curriculum to be modified in such a way that the practical part could be implemented in subsequent years of education. To give even more flexibility to vocational schools, we allow them to implement remotely in this school year some of the activities more of the academic nature planned for subsequent school years. Practical aspects of VET education should be supplemented by pupils after revoking epidemic restrictions, as the case may be, by the end of the current school year or in subsequent years.

The school headmasters are responsible for the organization of distance education. They determine, in cooperation with teachers, how to monitor pupils' progress and how to verify pupils' knowledge and skills, including informing pupils or parents about pupils' progress and grades they obtain.

## Higher education

In connection with the need to switch to universities for remote forms of education for students and doctoral students, in order to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2 virus, the Ministry recommends:

1. The use of university resources that have infrastructure and competences by using the existing tools at these universities for on-line transfer of knowledge, teaching materials and specialists.
2. Use of online communication platforms available at universities (webinars, video conferences, virtual meeting rooms, etc.) to replace classes traditionally held in the form of a lecture or seminar.
3. Involving existing support structures at universities in creating educational e-resources to provide help and consultation to units that do not have much experience in this field.
4. Analysis of e-resources owned by universities and open access to selected online courses and e-materials that can show good practices in creating remote educational materials.

5. In the case of sharing courses and open e-resources, it is preferable to indicate licenses in a simple way (e.g. <https://creativecommons.pl/wybierz-licencje/>), which will allow other materials to be used in accordance with the principles of copyright.

6. Use of the platform [www.navoica.pl](http://www.navoica.pl), which is owned by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. This tool allows you to create and post online courses and teaching materials. Detailed information and help can be obtained by sending a message to [navoica@opi.org.pl](mailto:navoica@opi.org.pl).

In order to support the university in the field of distance education, a help center was launched at [e-learning@opi.org.pl](mailto:e-learning@opi.org.pl).

The help center is open 8-20 on all days of the week. On the website, the Ministry published examples of Open Educational Resources for universities.

Free platforms and online applications and tools for remote studying and learning:

<https://navoica.pl/>

<https://enauzanie.pg.edu.pl/lab/>

Support for other universities:

WIKAMP platform of the Lodz University of Technology and the Lodz Webinar platform. The platform is organized on the basis of moodle software and allows sharing materials and conducting classes in a remote form in the e-learning convention. Contact for universities interested in placing courses and conducting webinars: [bok@edu.p.lodz.pl](mailto:bok@edu.p.lodz.pl)

Ministry ask Rectors to support, as far as possible, the Regional School Superintendents in their area in preparing online courses for compulsory education.

On March 26, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education issued special Recommendations regarding education conducted using distance learning methods and techniques, containing information on: organization of distance education; rights and obligations of students and academic teachers, accounting for didactic burden for academic teachers; recognition of learning outcomes in distance learning mode etc.

<https://www.gov.pl/web/nauka/ksztalcenie-zdalne-na-uczelnich>

6.

Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

The education online might be not available for all pupils. Thus the Minister of National Education calls on and encourages all regional and local educational authorities as well school headmasters and teachers to look for different ways of distance teaching by taking into account available resources and local needs. They are some infrastructural issues as well.

Ministry of National Education in cooperation with Ministry of Digitalisation have launched the project “Remote School - support of the National Education Network in the distance learning system” in which since April 1 the local authorities can receive financial support for ICT equipment for pupils who do not have the necessary tools to enable them to carry out remote lessons. The project is financed under Operational Programme Digital Poland for 2014-2020 with budget 186 mln Polish zloty (approximately 44 mln euro). Financing can be used to purchase equipment necessary for distance learning. In the first place these are: computers, laptops or tablets. With the funds received, local governments can also buy: necessary software, mobile internet access or other accessories needed for remote teaching.

Another project financed under Operational Programme Digital Poland for 2014-2020 and launched by Ministry of National Education in cooperation with Ministry of Digitalisation is „Lekcja: Enter” (Lesson: Enter). Its aim is to develop teachers' digital competences, To support teachers in the implementation of distance education, the project operator provided them with the opportunity to participate in online training.

Generally all stakeholders show understanding of the need to work in new difficult circumstances. In particular, the parents play a key role in supporting their children in new ways of learning - very often they volunteer to assist teachers in setting up group communication on-line calls with the use of various communicators and platforms (e.g. Microsoft Teams – often used by schools, Zoom – also very popular in Poland, Clickmeeting, Skype for business, WhatsApp etc.). The school running bodies, school headmasters and the teaching staff

undertake a lot of intensified efforts to cooperate and share experience with other teachers in order to better support every pupil.

At the time of the epidemic, the Polish eTwinning Support Service launched a series of online webinars aimed at raising teachers' competence in the field of distance education. National eTwinning seminars have been also launched in the formula via the Internet, the purpose of which is to find a partner and implement educational projects with a partner from another school taking into account the core curriculum. The number of groups and places for eTwinning online courses conducted on the Moodle platform has been increased to allow training for as many teachers as possible.

7.

How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. *state matura*), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?

For now there is no need to change the school year calendar. This means that at the moment pupils are not threatened to change/ extend the school year. However the so-called special act regarding specific solutions in combat with the novel coronavirus gives the right to the Minister of National Education to reorganize the school year, including exams dates.

On April 9 it was announce that exams (the exam in the eighth grade of primary schools, the state matura for secondary schools, vocational exams) are moved to June at the earliest. Information about exact date will be provided at least three weeks before the individual exams.

When it comes to the continuity of education the new regulations on distance education enables to conduct education in various forms, including the assessment and classification of pupils/students.

In higher education, HEI can carry out exams and credits using information technology. The Ministry of Science and Higher Education wants the education process in the summer semester of the 2019/2020 academic year to be completed by the end of this semester - by 30/09/2020. As the situation progresses, the Ministry will recommend that the rectors change the organization of the academic year.

8.

What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?

The Polish National Agency responsible for mobility in all sectors of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programmes provides information from the European Commission on an ongoing basis. Some mobilities outside of Poland for pupils, students and teachers has been postponed or cancelled and some are being continued remotely.

The National Agency staff was in ongoing contact with groups of Polish Erasmus+ participants (among others with school teachers, pupils and youth) remaining abroad. All problems related to the return of the abovementioned groups to Poland have been solved in close cooperation with the Ministry of National Education. Some of the aforementioned return trips took place as part of the government's "Lot do domu" ("Flight Home") assistance programme, which started on March 15. Currently, there are no Polish groups of Erasmus+ participants (in the School Education, Vocational Education and Training, Youth and Adult Education sectors) remaining abroad under the projects financed by the Polish National Agency. Only a small number of people now remain abroad as part of the European Solidarity Corps' projects and stay in safe conditions, remaining in ongoing contact with the sending organisations.

Foreign volunteers staying currently in Poland also remain in safe conditions provided by their hosting organisations. The NA remain in contact with hosting organisations and volunteers. Soon there will be online trainings provided for the volunteers – mid-term evaluations that were cancelled due to Covid-19 situation.

On March 24, the state of epidemics was introduced in Poland and therefore the borders for arrivals of foreigners were closed. Practically, mobility has been suspended. For Erasmus+ students who have volunteered to return to their countries, diplomatic missions have organized special aircraft (e.g. to Italy, France). Polish Erasmus+ students have been notified that the possibility of returning exists through a special "Lot do domu" ("Flight Home") program.

For the effectiveness of actions, the Minister of Science and Higher Education appointed a Team for the coordination of activities in the system of higher education and science in connection with the threat of COVID-19. The team was composed of representatives of the rectors' conferences, Student Parliament, the National Agency for Academic Exchange and the National Agency Erasmus +. After meeting of ministerial Team coordinating the activities of the system of higher education and science concerning the threat of COVID-19, 4 March 2020 Minister of Science and Higher Education issued special Recommendation: "...It is recommended to suspend the trips of Polish students, PhD students, academic teachers and researchers to areas threatened by SARS-Cov-2 coronavirus, as well as to stop the arrival of students, PhD students, academic teachers and researchers from these areas. According to the information of the Chief Sanitary Inspectorate (provided on an ongoing basis), the regions currently at risk are: China, Hong Kong and South Korea, Italy, Iran and Japan. It is recommended to consider limiting academic exchange and business trips to other countries. Depending on the further development of the situation, it is recommended to consider the possibility of postponing the international exchange to the next semester or enabling work and remote learning using modern technologies, e.g. those supported by telework tools and remote learning processes."

9.

In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?

The European Commission could make proposals for a virtual mobility initiative.

National Agencies are waiting for the unequivocal decision if for the period of learning via ICT tools while a student stays at home the Erasmus+ grant can be paid. ESU and ESN – the students voice – are expecting such decision to be taken.

The tendency of swapping originally planned mobilities (national, transnational) to virtual forms has already been observed by some National Agencies also in other sectors. Questions regarding eligible costs for online activities were already addressed to the Commission by the Co-group of National Agencies operating Erasmus+ Youth and Solidarity Corps Programmes.

The European Commission should soon provide National Agencies and beneficiaries with very clear information about additional costs that occurred due to pandemic situation. In many cases, especially for NGO, cancelling projects, withdrawal of volunteers will significantly influence on their financial situation.

It is recommended that the Commission approves the new idea of use the eTwinning (TwinSpace) by schools, proposed by the eTwinning National Support Services. Currently, projects can be set up between two different schools, it would be good if, at the time of the epidemic, projects could even be started by teachers from the same school. This involves the possibility of using the TwinSpace design platform to communicate/work with students within the classroom, i.e., for conducting lessons online, doing homework, exchanging materials, etc.

10.

What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?

The possibility of additional funds, e.g. under the ESF, would be beneficial, e.g. for the development of IT infrastructure, creating electronic resources for online learning, etc. Recognition at European level would also be needed as a funding priority for any action to counter the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It would be worth considering to enable financing the development of the Integrated Educational Platform (*Zintegrowana Platforma Edukacyjna* – [www.epodreczniki.pl](http://www.epodreczniki.pl)) under Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development (OP KED 2014-2020), in the form of a non-contest project. Above mentioned additional funds from OP KED 2014-2020 would ensure proper implementation of new regulation which came into force in Poland on March 25 and enable to implement the core curriculum using distance education in the

period of temporary limitation of the functioning of schools and educational institutions due to the coronavirus. At the same time, due to the growing importance of distance and remote education at the 21<sup>st</sup> school education system, stable functioning of the Integrated Educational Platform should be ensured under the future operational programme co-financed under the Multiannual Financial Framework for the years 2021-2027. Currently, the platform is financed from the state budget. Since 2017, until now, more than 4 million euros has been allocated for its development.

A desirable solution for volunteer projects of the European Solidarity Corps would be, when speaking of the Commission, to create an open catalogue of additional costs that organizations will have to bear due to the effects of the coronavirus situation. This applies, for example, to the cost of living for volunteers in case activity is already finished who cannot return to their home country due to travel restrictions (additional renting of an apartment, food, hygiene products etc.). Pursuant to the current Commission guidelines on force majeure, National Agencies should consider expenditure incurred by beneficiary organizations after their occurrence before the final report is received. In many cases waiting for the Final Report is risky for many organizations. They are already asking questions to the Polish National Agency with the request to determine the possible costs to be paid before they are incurred (e.g. renting an apartment – very often subject to a notice of termination with a period of at least 1 month) because the National Agencies disagreement with the settlement of these expenses at the final reporting stage will be high financial burden for the organizations.

The National Agency has already started to provide an online trainings for Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps volunteers who currently stay in Poland. There will be midterm and on-arrival trainings implemented online soon. If lockdown situation continues the Polish National Agency will also provide more webinars on actions of the European Solidarity Corps Programme.

Students organization and bigger HEIs are expecting systemic solution taken at the Commission's level to recognise all grants awarded to students as spent in line with the financial rules without necessity to apply "force majeure" procedures.

## PORTUGAL

9/4/2020

1.

Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?

The Portuguese government decided on the March 12<sup>th</sup> evening, that, as of the 16<sup>th</sup> of March, all learning and non-learning activities in education and training settings (kindergartens, schools, and universities) will be suspended, until 13<sup>th</sup> of April, in an effort to limit the spread of the novel coronavirus/ Covid-19.

However, we have to note that the Higher education institutions are not closed. They only have their face-to-face activities suspended. But they continue to function thanks to a set of services provided by the National Scientific Computing Unit of the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT -FCCN) and by the institutions' own platforms, which allow students to follow classes and keep their activities active so that no student is harmed in their academic performance. For example, last week the main distance learning platform (COLIBRI) had an average of 10,074 daily meetings, with 221,972 users per day.

The Minister of Science, Technology and Higher Education defined as essential services several entities, structures, scientific infrastructures and networks of the national science and technology system that carry out research, especially those that develop scientific research or analyses in the microbiological, infectious and epidemiological areas, which require permanent activities of maintenance, security and operation of physical, technological, medical, veterinary and biological infrastructures, or which require permanent activities related to security, which allows the continuity of the development of research activities in several areas.

All higher education institutions have been strongly mobilized, including allocating additional resources, to maintain the completeness of the teaching schedules established at the beginning of the second semester. Thus,

fees will continue to be paid, as the substitution of face-to-face classes with non-face-to-face classes, taught by videoconference or other digital means, does not relieve the payment of fees due.

In pre-schooling, basic, secondary and vocational education, schools are open to accomplish basic social and administrative functions, as well as to support distance education practices, but all classes and remaining education face-to-face activities were suspended from March 16<sup>th</sup> to April 13<sup>th</sup>.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of April, the Portuguese government defined the procedures for pre-schooling, basic and secondary education. So, the 3<sup>rd</sup> period will start, as planned, on April 14<sup>th</sup> and will be extended until June 26<sup>th</sup>. Students and teachers shall work through distance learning methodologies. Pre-schooling and basic education (primary and lower secondary education) students will not return to face-to-face classes in the current school year. The situation will be continuously assessed to define if there are safe conditions to allow upper secondary students to have some presential classes, to be prepared for national exams. Public schools are free of charges. Private schools have autonomy to (re)define tuition fees.

2.

In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?

In pre-schooling, basic, secondary and vocational education, each school cluster has a school open to provide:

- daily meals for students from poor conditions (supported by the School Social Action programme)
- support to pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities that are integrated into the Learning Support Centers and whose therapies conducted by specialized technicians in schools are considered indispensable
- day care to children up to 12 whose parents work in the health sector and emergency services.

It should be noted that within the Portuguese outermost regions, the situation can assume different approaches, for example in Madeira, there is no other type of support for working parents with younger children.

3.

In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?

It is mandatory by law the adoption the teleworking regime whenever the functions concerned allow it.

There is no obligation for teachers to be present at the workplace and all the distance learning tasks can be developed from home. There is also no obligation for administrative staff to be at the workplace if their work can be developed by tele-work.

The Minister of Science, Technology and Higher Education defined as essential services several entities, structures, scientific infrastructures and networks of the national science and technology system that carry out research, especially those that develop scientific research or analyses in the microbiological, infectious and epidemiological areas, which require permanent activities of maintenance, security and operation of physical, technological, medical, veterinary and biological infrastructures, or which require permanent activities related to security. In those cases, an obligation to be in the workplaces can be determined by the HE and R&D institutions.

In pre-schooling, basic, secondary and vocational education, teachers and the remaining staff shall work from their homes. The obligation of presence is only for the staff necessary to accomplish the presence activities referred in the previous answer (see 2. above).

Within professional training, the trainers have no obligation to be present at the workplace. However, we are working on the development of a distance-training platform to assure the continuation of the vocational training courses.

<p>The new legislation published on April 9<sup>th</sup> defined a set of tasks that shall be ensured by teachers in pre-schooling, basic and secondary education, including to guide their students in distance learning, in a regular basis, to register all learning activities developed and to evaluate their students.</p> <p>It should be noted that within the Portuguese outermost regions, the situation can assume different approaches, for example in Madeira, there is no possibility for emergency care.</p>
<p>4.        Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?</p>
<p>Despite the suspension of all classroom activities at higher education institutions, it was determined that activities that meals (canteens) and guarantee accommodation, namely residences and dormitories where displaced students are housed, who are unable to return to their homes, remain in operation.</p> <p>In the case of student residences, all services to students must be guaranteed, as well as their functioning within the framework of the prevention measures now disclosed. Although residences are running, the majority of students have left and only part of the total residents are accommodated at the moment.</p> <p>It should be stressed that the students who are in the residences were advised to leave them only if they can do so in the best conditions of safety and public health, namely with regard to the “health situation” of their return destination. In case of infected areas with COVID-19, the students from residences were put in voluntary prophylactic quarantine.</p>
<p>5.        How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.</p>
<p>At higher education level, the largest service is provided by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), through the National Scientific Computing Unit (FCCN), that guarantees at central level the main services to the academic and scientific community and that ensures distance learning and teleworking.</p> <p>The tools provided by these services allow the operation of distance classes, group meetings, information sharing and teleworking, providing an important aid for the maintenance of teaching and research activities under the exceptional circumstances that the country is going through.</p> <p>The main instrument is COLIBRI - Multimedia Collaborative Environment (<a href="https://www.fccn.pt/colaboracao/colibri/">https://www.fccn.pt/colaboracao/colibri/</a>). COLIBRI is a platform that allows classes / meetings for up to 300 participants. However, and anticipating a greater demand for the service, FCCN-FCT increased the platform's capacity from 450 to 600 simultaneous meetings, and as Universities and Polytechnics started to migrate classes to the platform as a measure of the Internal Contingency Plans that aim to prevent the transmission of the new coronavirus (COVID-19), FCCN-FCT has again increased the capacity to 2,600. Last week COLIBRI had an average of 10,074 daily meetings, with 221,972 users per day.</p> <p>FCCN-FCT has other services to support teleworking and distance learning, such as VideoCast (for streaming events or classes), Educast (for recording and viewing classes) and Nau – Always Learning (for hosting MOOCs) - massive online courses), to support distance learning.</p> <p>Some HEIs also use their own platforms or services like moodle.</p> <p>The main difficulties are related with the lower preparation of teachers to the new type of classes; the difficulties of access by students with more economic needs, due to the lack of adequate material; the fact that distance learning cannot replace internships, clinical or laboratory practices; access to libraries and share of books in digital version; and questions are being risen about the system suitability to evaluations and examinations. Several higher education institutions have been creating programs for the acquisition of laptop computers to lend to the most economically deprived students.</p> <p>In pre-schooling, basic, secondary and vocational education, insofar, the approach was mainly decentralized, in line with the ongoing curriculum autonomy policy. Still, the Directorate-General on Education created a</p>

website (<https://apoioescolas.dge.mec.pt>) to support teachers, with orientations and resources, to adapt their pedagogic strategies, to distance education. More recently, the Ministry of Education launched: a survey to all schools to monitorize how they are adapting to these new circumstances; and brief guide to each school create its own plan for distance education. New measures are under development.

Within professional training, we are still working on the development of a distance-training platform to assure the continuation of its training courses.

From April 20<sup>th</sup> to the end of the school year (June 26<sup>th</sup>), the Portuguese government ensured the daily broadcast in one of the free public TV channels of a large set of pedagogical contents, on the different basic education cycles and subjects (from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> grade), in order to ensure the universal right to education. The guidelines from the Ministry of Education stresses that teachers shall continue to guide and to assess their students' learning activities, using the digital resouces and now these TV contents.

6.

Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

At the higher education level, the residences and canteens are running specially to give support to this type of students. The residents that are accommodated at the moment are there mainly to have better support and to access to the internet services provided by the universities. The normal functioning of scholarship payments is guaranteed, and low-income students can be supported to buy digital equipment to access online classes.

The Ministry of Education is truly concerned with all those who are in a vulnerable situation and is putting a lot of effort in trying to find feasible solutions to reduce the social gap.

In addition to the support of online platforms, the telephone support line centralized in the Ministry of Education and the daily telephone contact with families and students by teachers, schools are oriented to provide a “brigade” of educational professionals, a task-force team to support schools to overcome some difficulties regarding students’ access to school contents or teachers’ difficulties with digital tools. This support to work at home has also been articulated with post offices and security forces, in order to enable contacts and paper documents transportation when digital communication is not effective.

In case of those in need of psychological counselling, the Ministry of Education is already in contact with the president of the Order of Portuguese Psychologists to launch some guidelines at national level. The plan is to call the school psychologists to intervene, since they are already references for students and teachers. Mental health support for these psychologists will be safeguarded as well.

According to recent laws, schools continue to provide support to the pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities that are integrated into the Learning Support Centers and whose therapies conducted by specialized technicians in schools are considered indispensable. Moreover, schools are providing meals support to beneficiary students.

As regard to students in vulnerable/ disvantaged situations, the Ministry of Education is very committed to finding solutions for those who do not have access to IT equipment. For basic and lower secondary education, the TV and broader support from education community is ensured. For upper secondary education, other ongoing strategies are being taken, with priority being given to the acquisition of computers/tablets and access to internet. In order to make this process fair and more accurate, the Ministry’s services designed a strategy to identify the needs (the schools with the students with most difficulties) and are negotiating the best purchase possibilities with national operators. Simultaneously, considering the establishment of several initiatives from civil society for collecting and donating used/old equipment to schools, the Ministry created a structure that supports the distribution of these equipments at national level. This link among society, schools, and local and national authorities brings credibility and promptness to the process.

The Ministry of Education has worked with the High Commissioner for Migration in order to identify students from minority backgrounds (the immigrant, refugee, Roma and people from vulnerable contexts).

In partnership with national associations of these groups, there is an ongoing plan of activities to improve the Portuguese platform for families speaking other languages and services of translation.

Proposals for monitoring the delivery of Portuguese sign language is also considered. Within professional training, while developing the distance-training platform, we also worked on an agreement with Microsoft to ensure free educational licenses for Trainers. Via a previous agreement, Trainees already have free access to Office 365. We are also considering the availability of equipment and Internet access for trainees in distance learning actions. It is also planned for starting in April a large-scale online training for teachers to improve their skills on distance learning methodologies, through an agreement between the Ministry of Education and Universidade Aberta (the Portuguese *Open University*).

It should be noted that within the Portuguese outermost regions, the situation can assume different approaches, for example in Madeira some additional support is being organized (e.g. courses to enhance digital skills, digital equipment) and some distance psychological counselling for teachers and students, and internet access are provided. Social services are providing some support for specific situations for students with special educational needs and disabilities, disadvantaged backgrounds and minority backgrounds.

7.

How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. *state matura*), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?

A new legislation approved on the April 9<sup>th</sup> defines that:

- Basic and secondary school teachers shall continue to assess the distance learning activities developed by their students, adapting their assessment methodologies, and shall produce their final evaluation in the end of the school year, accordingly to the regular terms.
- In Basic Education, national tests (2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades) and exams (9<sup>th</sup> grade) were canceled
- In Upper Secondary education, national exams were postponed (1<sup>st</sup> call: from June to July; 2<sup>nd</sup> call: from July to September), since they are a key element on the national access process to Higher Education.

8.

What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?

The universities that have suspended classrooms activities are advising their Students to: (i) stay at their homes and (ii) who do not need to attend face-to-face activities at the respective Schools, are being advised to return to their usual residences. In order to protect the University community, work or study trips are canceled. Self-isolation is being observed by all those who are suspected cases, including those who return from risk areas.

The National Erasmus + Agency is following the European Commission orientations on: i) the application of the force majeure clause; ii) the possibility of extending the duration of mobility projects; and, iii) the coverage of additional costs of an extraordinary nature.

All the students that are in outgoing Erasmus mobility are being contacted by national authorities to be questioned about their situation and the willing to stay in the country of mobility (if they have not returned yet). There are not relevant problems regarding the return of Erasmus students and they are mostly related with the scheduling of flights.

9.

In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?

Portugal considers that there is a need of European coordination of tasks forces:

- a) to promote risk perception and the development of actions towards the promotion of scientific culture and social engagement towards resilient societies;
- b) to foster the exchange of schemes, methodologies and practices.

We believe the main role to enhance the Commission's support to Member States in the challenges that Education and Training sector faces in this crisis is to share the best solutions and best practices each member state adopted, an effort this questionnaire is part of but that should be intensified by the construction digital platforms accessible to all the educational communities (teachers, families and students) with examples and testimonials of those solutions and practices.

Furthermore, and at the same time, digital contents and platforms should be adopted by the Commission and made available to all Member States. Also an urgent portable digital equipment initiative (Wi-Fi and laptop) should be put in place, promoted by the EC in close coordination with the Member States that can profit better of the scale economy, and focused on students in vulnerable backgrounds, in order to assure the universal right to education throughout Europe.

10.

What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?

EU Funds should support more widely the transition to online and distance learning, supporting (i) distance learning initiatives even in non convergence regions, (ii) research and innovation on distance learning, especially on the adaptation of evaluation methods, (iii) the training of higher education teachers to be fully adapted to this new type of delivery.

Erasmus funding should be adapted to this immobility times, either in reinforcing the community sharing between students forced to re-enter their home countries and also to foster a quick return to students mobility as soon as possible and safe, allowing pupils and students to resume their mobility afterwards in addition to the regular quota of mobility funding and students' number planned for future years.

Additionally, new lines of EU funding should be addressed to:

- teachers training on remote teaching;
- school leaders training on using each school as an immaterial and material educational portal;
- a portable digital equipment initiative (Wi-Fi and laptop)

Within professional training, the Portuguese Government is encouraging the conversion of training to e-learning / distance learning and at the same time redirecting financial support from the ESF to those systems.

We welcome the European Commission flexibility rules allowing for payment to trainers and trainees when the training –supported by the ESF - has been suspended. However, in relation to this specific support, we expect the Commission to show flexibility allowing that the financing of this measure is not limited to the priorities identified in the 9.4 classification.

## ROMANIA

**Last update: 8/4/2020**

1.

Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?

In response to the evolutions concerning Covid-19, on 16 March 2020 the state of emergency has been declared for 30 days. During this time, all schools and universities will remain closed.

Taking into account the evolution of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, the working scenario taken into account on April 7, 2020 provides for the resumption of face to face classes both in pre-university and higher education after the cessation of the state of emergency, which will be extended until May 15. This will be decided based on the evolution of the coronavirus pandemic and the decision of the national Emergency Committee. There are no specific regulations at national concerning tuition fees, as the educational process continues to be ensured via online tools. Provisions specific to each contract concluded with pre-university and higher education institutions will be applied.

2.

In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?

During the state of emergency period all day nurseries, kindergartens, schools and universities, state and private, will remain closed.

The Government assures granting of free days to the parents for the supervision of children up to 12 years old. The free days are granted if the type of professional activity does not allow carrying out the activity from home, and it is offered at the request of one of the parents, who will supervise the child/ children. The request of the parent who will supervise the child/ children will be accompanied by a statement on the other parent's own responsibility, stating that he / she has not requested free days at his / her place of work. The number of days off will be determined by Government decision.

These provisions for granting of free days are also valid for the legal representatives who have in care and supervision children with disabilities, aged up to 18 years and who are enrolled in a school.

The Government offers compensation to employees who stay at home during this period, which are set at 75% of the basic salary corresponding to the job occupied and are supported by the unemployment insurance budget, but not more than 75% of the gross average wage stipulated by the Law.

UNICEF Romania and non-governmental organizations also provide material support, assistance, recommendations and online advices.

3.

In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?

During the spring break, which takes place between April 4-21, 2020, all staff in pre-university education are on leave. Exceptions are those categories of personnel that must ensure the daily running of educational establishments and payment of the personnel (directors, accountants and secretaries).

According to the recommendations issued by the Ministry of Education and Research, during schools closure, the daily work schedule of teachers (who and for how long they should come to school) is decided at school level by the school principals, while complying with the measures taken by the National Committee for Special Emergency Situations.

Regarding the salary rights, the teaching staff from the state and private pre-university accredited educational units will not be affected by the measures regarding the schools' closure.

Given the fundamental right of children to education, as well as the negative consequences of interrupting courses for a long period, in this context generated by the increased risk of contamination with COVID-19 virus in school communities, the Ministry of Education and Research recommends the provision of support classes assisted by technology as a solution to ensure the continuity of the educational process. It should be mentioned that in the current legislative context, these approaches cannot be a substitute to the face to face classes delivered in pre-university education units on a daily basis.

4. Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?

The decision regarding the suspension of face to face classes and the functioning of the student accommodation units belongs to the management of the higher education institutions according to their autonomy. In most cases, accredited state and private higher education institutions remain open, but the didactic face to face activities are being temporarily suspended and moved on online platforms. For the didactic activities where it is not possible to conduct exclusively online teaching and learning, they will be postponed /rescheduled or rethought in a form that allows the students to go through the contents provided in the compulsory curriculum. Therefore, due to the university autonomy, the decision on keeping the accommodation units open is uneven among HEIs. Most higher education institutions have made the decision to keep student dormitories open, some of them even providing accommodation units specially intended for those in self-isolation. In some of these cases, although the decision was made to close the dormitories, certain categories were given the right to stay: students who provide proof of work, doctoral students, students with families, Erasmus students and international students, as well as those from children homes and placement centres. Where the student dormitories remained open, visitor access restrictions were imposed.

5. How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.

In *primary and secondary education* school continues through alternative solutions: online support classes and lessons prepared with school teachers and broadcasted at national level by the public television station of Romanian Television (TVR) – Teleschool (Telescoala, <http://www.tvr.ro/telescoala.html>). These broadcasts are mainly lessons for eighth and twelfth grade students (in the morning for the VIII-th grade and in the afternoon for the class XII-th grade, in order to prepare the national assessment of the eighth grade and the baccalaureate examination of the 12th grade.

The decision on how to organize the teaching-learning process belongs to schools' boards, these being the ones that decide the legal way of recovering the educational process affected by classes' suspension.

On April 7, 2020, the Ministry of Education and Research announced that the specialized structures are working to develop the legal framework to cover the support activities taking place either online or through other means of communication as a mean to support students and teachers.

The Ministry (MER) has centralized the methodological support for the operationalization of online classes, as follows:

- On March 9, 2020 was announced the national support for all teachers, who will have online training for the transition to online teaching-learning, and free access to licenses of educational platforms from Google and Microsoft: G Suite for Education and Office 365 A1 (<https://www.clasaviitorului.ro/>).

- the teachers benefited, from March 19 to March 25, of online training sessions for development of digital skills. The training was broadcasted LIVE, and it is on Youtube Educured and on the CRED project Facebook page ([https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjSOWpUXcxc21JiwwY3\\_Pcg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjSOWpUXcxc21JiwwY3_Pcg)).

- the teachers will be permanently assisted in their efforts by local e-learning experts of the county teaching staff bodies (CCD-charged with continuous training for teachers) and of the municipality of Bucharest, within the CRED project.

- MER makes available to all stakeholders (county school inspectorates and the Bucharest Municipality inspectorate, Bodies of the teaching staff, schools, teachers) information on all online learning resources and

digital teaching, on the website <https://www.edupedu.ro/>: applications, online platforms, software solutions, tele-school, webinars, tutorials, counseling programs.

- teachers are supported with a dialogue platform for sharing digital educational resources at [www.digital.educared.ro](http://www.digital.educared.ro), as well as for supporting workshops to develop online collaborative modules (Teams / Office 365, Google Meet, Zoom and Livresq, Webex, Google Classroom)

- Decentralized, the county bodies for the teaching staff, institutions for continuous training of teachers, recommend different online learning tools, with the possibility of accessing them also by mobile phone (for example, the SMART online class - <http://www.ccdcluj.ro/>, E-learning Moodle - <https://elearning.ccd-timis.ro/moodle/>).

Also, a number of private initiatives support the educational environment through which access to free education validated materials, accessible through Digitaliada online learning and testing platform [www.digitaliada.ro](http://www.digitaliada.ro) - a hub of digital education resources for low secondary schools from villages.

### *Higher education*

Each university has established a framework for coordinating online educational activities, to provide technical support to teachers and students in the process of transition to online communication and teaching (eg assisting students in the preparation of materials, referred to, in specific activities by documentation, consultation of digital libraries, shared work on online platforms, tele- and video conferences, use of personal or institutional blogs, requesting the support of project partners from other states etc.), free access to blended-learning platforms, educational materials and resources in digital format, practical and interactive, on different topics, online courses in Romanian, international modules with digital certification.

For activities such as those with an applicative character (eg laboratories, etc.) or other types of didactic activities that cannot be replaced in whole or in part by the use of new technologies, each university, based on their autonomy, will establish an intensive module-based catch up plan of these practical activities as foreseen.

6.

Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

In order to support children who are doing online lessons during this period, the government decided to continue the Euro 200 program, which provides financial assistance of 200 euros for the purchase of computers, to pupils and students up to 26 years old with disadvantaged backgrounds. The efforts are also supported by some NGOs that offer children from disadvantaged groups tablets and free Internet access.

The Ministry of Education and Research, in partnership with an NGO (Proacta EDU Association), launched the first line of psychological counselling on Covid-19, free of charge, for teachers, parents and students, under the name of "AMBASSADOR for COMMUNITY". In addition to the solutions proposed by the Ministry to continue learning at home, through this project, teachers, students and parents are supported by personalized advice, online or by telephone. Support is provided to the teaching staff for communicating with families and to identify special or risk situations in which parents or students may be. Depending on the requests, families can receive social, medical and legal assistance. Special telephone lines and an e-mail contact address are available.

7.

How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. *state matura*), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?

A decision regarding the organization of the national final examination for the 8<sup>th</sup>-graders and the national baccalaureate examination for the twelfth-grade students has not been adopted so far, but a number of possible scenarios are being considered, and preparatory measures are being taking.

On 7 April 2020, the Ministry of Education and Research announced a series of measures that are required in order to resume the face-to-face activities and to allow for the completion of the 2019/2020 school and university year after the ending of the emergency state:

- Depending on the date on which the classes will be resumed, the written tests of the National Exam and the National Baccalaureate exam could be organized in July.
- The examination curricula for the National Exam and the Baccalaureate will not cover the curriculum foreseen for this second semester.
- The assessments for the II, IV, and VI grades, Olympics and school competitions, as well as the simulations for the national exams will be cancelled.
- The calendars for enrolment in the preparatory year, kindergarten and mobility programme of the teaching staff will be postponed and announced as soon as the date for resuming of the school year is set.

Admission to higher education will be organized after the National Baccalaureate examination takes place, and the admission to the master's or doctoral degree will be organized only after dissertation or final BA examination.

All these measures were approved by the Ministry of Education and Research through an open dialogue with educational partners (representatives of students, students, parents, teachers and those of the National Council of Rectors).

8.

What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?

The Ministry of Education and Research manages closely the situation of Erasmus mobilities, through permanent dialogue with universities, with Erasmus National Agency and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Regarding the Outgoing mobilities, the students who have expressed their intention to return home are offered the necessary support by the Ministry of Education and Research, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassies, the National Agency and the universities of origin.

The foreign Erasmus+ students, who have opted to stay in Romania, are offered the possibility of continuing their studies via online courses and the students' dormitories are open for them.

<p>9. In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?</p>
<p>Online platforms for education and virtual mobility can be of very much help. These platforms (such as SchoolEducationGateway) could provide a list of educational applications, platforms and resources aimed to help parents, teachers, schools and school administrators facilitate student learning and provide social care and interaction during periods of school closure. Of good help would be if this kind of distance learning databases would be available in multiple languages (or, if possible, in all Member States' languages), in order to increase the access to information of all interested categories.</p> <p>In the same time, we are interested in any digital education solution provided or shared by the European Commission and in other Member States' experiences in successfully ensuring the educational process for socio-economic disadvantaged students or for students from areas with limited access to the Internet, where alternative solutions have been identified.</p>
<p>10. What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?</p>
<p>Measures to assure flexibility and continuity in relation to EU funds and programmes are welcomed in the present context.</p> <p>For the Erasmus+ Programme, some measures are already in place: extension of several application deadlines; the possibility to invoke the force majeure clauses; the recognition of the online courses as parts of the mobility.</p> <p>For the flexibility of the rules of project implementation financed by EU funds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- extension of the implementation period with a period equal to the postponement period, even in the case of a project with a maximum implementation period provided by the Call Guide;</li> <li>- more flexible conditions for implementing activities with pupils/students/teachers and the possibility to replace the activities face-to-face with the online ones;</li> <li>- equipping schools with equipment for organizing learning environments in the online environment.</li> </ul> <p>In the short and very short term, it would be very useful to renounce to the disengagement of the savings from the procurement-contracts or the execution of the procurement contracts, to be able to purchase equipment for conducting the online courses (tablets or laptops offered on a loan contract to learners who do not have) and for the acquisition of online teaching systems (licenses).</p> <p>Proposals of ESF funded measures</p> <p>Digital skills training activities for teachers, using online platforms, developing digital educational content and innovative teaching methods: the concept of "flipped classroom", online, mixed, collaborative learning, through discovery; the use of virtual reality; learning through online projects; tools for virtual and distance learning; courses-planning Apps and websites; classroom management Apps.</p>

## SLOVAKIA

**Last update: 8/4/2020**

1.

Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?

In Slovakia, all education and training institutions are closed until further notice. However, diagnostic centres, re-education centres and medical-educational sanatoriums remain open.

Education provided by public education and training institutions at all levels is free of charge.

Tuition fees at private schools are a matter of a contractual relationship with the school concerned. Tuition fees at private universities are governed by the internal regulations of the institutions.

2.

In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?

Currently, only diagnostic centres, re-education centres and medical-educational sanatoriums remain open. Kindergartens are closed.

The authorities have simplified the procedures for the application for social benefits, if they are necessary due to the Corona virus outbreak. The simplification lies in the possibility to apply for the benefits via telephone call or online. Consequently, there is no need to personally attend the competent institution.

The amendment to the Social Insurance Act brings an extension of the payment of the nursing allowance for the entire period of the closure of schools and child-care facilities (extension from 10 to 14 days and further depending on the situation). It concerns parents of children under 11 years of age or up to 18 years of age for parents of children with severe disabilities. There will be no need for a medical certificate in this age range. However, the nursing allowance will also be paid to the parents of children up to 16 years of age. The allowance will be paid throughout the entire period of the school closure, not just 10 days, as has been the case so far. The amount will be at the rate of 55% of the gross wage, which is about 70% of the net wage.

The parents are also entitled to sickness benefits paid by the Social Insurance Agency from the first day of the sick leave amounting to 55% of the daily assessment base. Until now, it was the employer paying for the 10 days. As of now, the Social Insurance Agency will reimburse the allowance as a whole.

3.

In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?

According to the Labour Code, as the current situation constitutes an obstacle on the side of the employer, the employees in the education sector are not obliged to work from home, unless stipulated in the employment contract, employer's rules of procedure or any other written agreement at the workplace. The school principal may not arbitrarily order "home office" without previous consent of the employees. The home office regime therefore depends on the mutual agreement between a school and a teacher. Once agreed, the principal then sets the conditions under which the 'home office' will be carried out.

If an employee works on home office, he or she must keep track of the 'work activity' as well as the 'work time' each day. The weekly working time is also valid for the "home office". It was recommended that the employers and employees agree on a modified working time (e.g. 5 hours per day) and subsequently an allowance to which they are entitled if they work more than 4 hours.

Thus, particular arrangements depend on the agreement between the school principal and the teachers.

<p>When it comes to presence at the workplace, the closure of schools as such does not prevent the presence at the workplace. However, the employer shall bear in mind whether presence of staff is necessary and in line with the horizontal measures adopted by the Security Council.</p>
<p>4. Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?</p>
<p>Based on the decision of the university rectors several universities switched to distance learning several days before the official horizontal closure of all education institutions on 12/3. At the same time, the rectors ordered that all Slovak students leave the dormitories and return to their hometowns. Exemptions apply to international students and students who showed that they have no other option than to stay at the dormitory. University crisis management groups for Covid-19 were intensively preparing preventive measures and quarantine plans in case of confirmed cases of the virus at the student dormitories. Strict hygienic and preventive measures and ban on any visits to student dormitories were put in place. The rectors decided that students will be partially reimbursed for the accommodation fees that they paid for the month of March and fully reimbursed for the fees paid for the month of April.</p>
<p>5. How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.</p>
<p>As of the horizontal closure of schools announced on 12 March, the school principals were called on to organise the continuation of schooling by distance learning using digital platforms, other online communication with pupils and students and home-study. Concrete formats of distance learning during the suspension of physical classes are decided by the school principals. The delivery of schooling is thus characterised by mixed approach. Currently, the Ministry is working on centralised “tele-school” which will be launched after Easter holidays. It will provide simulated online classes for primary and lower-secondary education pupils for at least 4-hours per day. The classes will be broadcasted via YouTube channel. A virtual school for Hungarian minority is also under preparation.</p> <p>NUCEM (National Institute of Certified Measurement of Education) made available a range of online practice tests <a href="#">E-Test</a> for 7th, 8th and 9<sup>th</sup> grade pupils in lower secondary education and upper secondary education students. The tests and interactive educational games are aimed at practising and assessing a wide range of competences including science, reading, languages (Slovak, English, and German), finance and statistics.</p> <p>On 24 March, The Ministry of Education also introduced a new complex online platform for distance learning <a href="http://www.ucimenadialku.sk">www.ucimenadialku.sk</a>. The platform includes distance learning resources and tools as well as information on the organisation of the school year, recommendations, guidance, counselling and support for teachers, professional staff, learners and parents. Specific guidance on educating disadvantaged children and teaching in minority languages is also provided.</p> <p>On 17 March the Ministry of Education published recommendations for schools and teachers on available online platforms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On 1 February 2020, the Ministry of Education in support of interactive education in kindergartens, primary, secondary and high schools put into operation the Central repository of digital educational content called "Viki" <a href="https://viki.iedu.sk/resources/browser/public">https://viki.iedu.sk/resources/browser/public</a>. The portal is free and open to public.</li> <li>- The educational portal Planet of Knowledge <a href="http://planetavedomosti.iedu.sk">http://planetavedomosti.iedu.sk</a> is a comprehensive tool for schools and their teachers to prepare teaching materials, to work with pupils during lessons and subsequently to check the homework. It currently contains more than 30,000 educational materials on Sciences. In addition to Science courses, there are also materials for facilitate learning English language and the languages of national minorities (Hungarian, Ruthenian and Roma).</li> <li>- The content and educational tools created as part of the national project IT Academy - Education for the 21st Century (<a href="http://www.itakademia.sk">www.itakademia.sk</a>) will be open and freely available to public of 18 March 2020. It includes</li> </ul>

innovative methodologies from informatics, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, geography and selected ICT subjects for all primary, secondary and high schools in Slovakia.

- Teachers can also use the system of online testing E-test <http://www.etest.sk/>. This platform enables the teachers to compose tests using assignments from the pool, or to create own assignments and tests according to their needs.
- Schools can also use the “complex smart online education system” called Smartbooks <http://www.smartbooks.sk/> that offers modules for pupils, teachers and parents.
- Students preparing for their school leaving exams were recommended to practice online tests from previous years on the website of the National Institute of Certified Measurements of Education. Testing 9: <https://www.nucem.sk/sk/merania/narodne-merania/testovanie-9/roky/2018-2019>. Preparation for school leaving exams – Maturita: <https://www.nucem.sk/sk/merania/narodnemerania/maturita/roky/2018-2019>

IT sector decided to help schools and other institutions to facilitate work in digital space. Numerous digital solutions and software was made freely available to help overcome the current situation. Overview of participating companies: <https://www.slovensko.sk/sk/it-firmy-pomozte-slovensku>.

In order to facilitate distance learning, major Slovak course book publisher **TAKTIK** released free online versions of multiple activity books for primary and secondary schools. The Ministry is in negotiations with more publishers to make digital course books freely available for everyone.

The public TV channel (RTVS) initiated a daily educational programme called School Club for Pupils (primary and secondary level) and as of this week broadcasts filmed works of Slovak literature that are part of compulsory reading for the school leaving exams. The teaching programs broadcasted by the public TV channel were later extended from 45 minutes to 100 minutes, with an emphasis on pupils with special educational needs. Informal Facebook groups were created among teachers and parents to share experiences and ideas on how to facilitate learning at home.

Universities launched distance learning and home self-studying. Teachers and students communicate through online platforms (Moodle, Microsoft Teams) and e-mails. Lectures are widely given in form of webinars. Many universities published concrete recommendations and manuals on using other available e-learning platforms (GoogleClassroom, Edmodo) and interactive tools (Slido, VoxVote, Kahoot, Quizizz, Quizlet, Socrative, GoogleForms, Microsoft Forms) that could be used to facilitate distant studying.

6.

Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

The platform developed in cooperation with NGOs [www.ucimenadialku.sk](http://www.ucimenadialku.sk) provides information on available support, guidelines on teaching in minority languages, disadvantaged children, etc.

On 27 March, the Ministry launched a helpline and online (e-mail) support for parents and teachers on any issues relevant to education in times of the coronavirus crisis.

Online and telephone support to kindergartens, primary and secondary schools was launched by the State Pedagogical Institute (SPU) with the to contribute to ensuring continuity in the implementation of state educational programs in connection with school interruptions due to measures against the spread of coronavirus. The Research Institute of Child Psychology and Pathopsychology has launched a free telephone line for parents and children in crisis that require an advice of a social mediator or psychological and special educational intervention. Separate e-mail and telephone support was launched for parents who urgently need psychological support. The Institute also provides e-mail support for pedagogical staff on mental health management in stressful situations. Counselling is also offered when it comes to working with children with special and educational needs or health disadvantages in home environment. The Centre for inclusive education also offers support and counselling on inclusive education.

The Institute also provides guidance to school counselling centres on how to arrange distance meetings with clients and how to identify clients at-risk who need support to maintain their mental health. The Institute released a series of various guidelines and materials providing parents with tips to teach children at home while looking at the child's personality, the number and age of siblings, and the family regime. They published

recommendations for teachers and parents on the principles of teacher-parent-pupil communication in home education in an emergency. Special recommendations were directed towards teachers and parents of the first grade pupils.

Recommendations also focus on mapping the child's development prior to enrolment in primary school, as this year the enrolment to primary school shall be carried out without physical presence of the child. Thus, the Institute published an application that enable online child screening and created a mailbox where parents can consult the results directly with a psychologist. Then, they will receive advice, suggestions and support on how to proceed in the future.

The biggest challenge remains ensuring effective education among children from marginalized Roma communities who often have no internet access, nor the possibility to print worksheets. The Institute is working on establishing cooperation with field social workers and community centres, provides online support to professional staff (e.g. webinar on communication with Roma parents, ensuring the provision on education, etc). The public TV channel (RTVS) initiated a daily educational programme called School Club for Pupils (primary and secondary level) that have been extended from 45 minutes to 100 minutes, with an emphasis on pupils with special educational needs and pupils with inadequate access to internet. According to latest research carried out by the Centre of Scientific and Technical Information, published in 2020, on the use of the Internet in home environment, up to 96.6% of pupils have access to the Internet in their homes and 93.6% of pupils have a mobile phone with the Internet.

7.

How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. *state matura*), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?

Regarding the national exams, the written part of the school-leaving examination „Maturita“ has been cancelled and will not take place this school year, the internal (oral) part of the examination should take place no later than two weeks after the resumption of teaching, preferably no later than 30 June 2020.

Examination “Test-9”, written by the 15 year-olds has been cancelled for this academic year.

Other final examinations, the final post-secondary examinations and the graduate examinations shall take place not earlier than two weeks after the school re-opening.

Deadlines for applications for secondary schools have been extended, they can be submitted until 15 May. Admission interviews for secondary schools will take place during one calendar week, and not earlier than two weeks after the after the school re-opening.

The deadlines for enrolment in primary schools have been also postponed. These should take place in the second half of April, from 15 to 30 April, but without the personal presence of children.

Applications for kindergartens will run from 30 April to 31 May 2020.

Enrolments to pre-primary and primary education shall be carried out without physical presence of the child. Any communication shall be done electronically if possible. An attestation from a doctor that normally accompanies the application will not be required.

When it comes to university students, the Minister of Education will coordinate the approach with the Slovak Rector's Conference. Most of the universities simplified and fully digitalised the application procedure. The majority also extended the deadlines for applications, except some of the deadlines that had already passed.

On 6 April the Ministry issued guidelines on end-of-year assessment for schools to ensure that this academic year, nobody shall fail nor repeat the school year. The goal of the end-of-year assessment will be to give learners constructive feedback, motivate them and suggest next steps for improvement. Schools shall decide whether pupils in primary education receive oral assessment, written pass grade or a combination of both. First grade pupils will receive only oral feedback.

Further measures to ensure efficient ending of the school/academic year will be announced later on depending on the situation.

<p>8.          What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?</p>
<p>The Erasmus+ National Agency keeps all the stakeholders, beneficiaries and participants duly informed in line with the measures and guidelines adopted by the authorities (National Security Council, Public Health Authority), as well as the guidance from the Commission. So far, we are not aware of any major problems in this regard.</p> <p>The NA has been mostly approached with two kinds of questions: 1) return of participants (repatriation and obligatory quarantine) and 2) grant management (amendments to contracts, prolongation of projects up to 36 months, recognition of learning mobility abroad, assistance in developing internal guidelines/manuals for HE institutions, etc.).</p> <p>The repatriation of students was carried out in close cooperation with the Erasmus+ coordinators who provided students with instructions on how to proceed with repatriation requests.</p>
<p>9.          In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?</p>
<p>We appreciate the information and guidelines distributed by the Commission to the Erasmus+ National Agencies. The current situation that for the moment prevents physical mobility shows us that flexible mobility formats should be further elaborated also in the light of the preparation of the next generation of EU programmes.</p> <p>The Commission could also develop a platform on distance learning including best practices from all member states, including online learning platforms at national level, relevant Europe-wide digital tools, including digital materials on the EU, its history, values, functioning, etc. in a comprehensible and user-friendly manner and in all official EU languages.</p> <p>We would welcome that the lessons learnt from the current crisis are reflected in the upcoming Commission proposals for the updated Skills Agenda and Digital Education Action Plan.</p>
<p>10.          What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?</p>
<p>We would welcome additional support from the EU resources in order to boost the digitalisation of education as such. The current situation shows us the need to focus on strengthening the possibilities for distance learning, developing comprehensible digital learning infrastructure, tools and methodologies as well as advancing teachers' and students' digital competences.</p>

## SLOVENIA

**Last update: 3/4/2020**

1.

Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?

As of 16 March 2020, all educational institutions in Slovenia are closed until further notice. The universities are also closed and have suspended in person pedagogical activities and have replaced them with online and individual work already before the official closure of all institutions.

In addition, any organized childcare is abolished, as the spread of the COVID-19 virus is most intense through the youngest, and all staff is directly threatened. Municipalities and local communities have been asked to help by mobilising volunteers to provide for childcare on an individual basis.

The Ministry has also extended application deadlines in higher education and VET until 9 April 2020.

The responsible authorities (National Institute of Public Health, Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport) continue to monitor the situation.

There are no tuition fees in public education in Slovenia, however, those private institutions that have tuition fees and higher education institutions that collect it for part-time study, will decide on their own about any compensation.

2.

In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?

Any organized childcare has been abolished and municipalities and local communities were asked to help with volunteers in providing for childcare on an individual basis. However, as there are some challenges in those institutions that work with children and young people with behavioural and emotional difficulties as they themselves lack appropriate environment for care and safety, they – the only ones – remain open.

*Types of support for employers:*

Government has adopted emergency law to co-finance (€51 m):

- subsidies to supplement wages in real economy for employees waiting at home (to avoid lay-offs) – 40% covered by state, 60% by employer,
- in case of quarantine, state covers 80% of wages for all sectors,
- release of the currently stringent rules on telecommuting to contain spreading of coronavirus,
- for persons confirmed to have COVID-19, the Health Insurance Institute covers 90% of pay from the first day of absence from work, meaning that employers do not have to pay them wages.

In addition, the status of workers who are unable to work due to force majeure, caring for children and their inability to come to work and other epidemic-related reasons will be equal to that of temporarily laid-off workers. Households and individuals will also not be required to pay for public services that are not being provided, meaning that they will therefore not receive bills for these services.

On 29 March 2020, the Government of Slovenia adopted the text of the Act on the intervention measures to mitigate the consequences of the communicable disease COVID-19 (the Corona Intervention Act) for citizens and the economy and submitted it to the National Assembly for consideration and adoption under an emergency procedure. National Assembly approved the measures on 2 April 2020. The so-called coronavirus umbrella act brings financial assistance for companies and workers affected by the epidemic as well as for the self-employed, pensioners, students, large families and welfare recipients.

For example, for large families with three children, the measures provide for an allowance in the amount of EUR 100, and for families with four or more children an allowance in the amount of EUR 200, in addition to the allowance they already receive.

<p>3.</p> <p>In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?</p>
<p>There is no obligation for teachers to be present at the workplace.</p> <p>During full school closure, municipalities have been instructed to help by mobilising volunteers for care of children whose parents have to go to work. As the elderly remain one of the critical groups, it is our opinion that school children should not be left in care with their grandparents (a common practice when schools are out of session).</p> <p>As part of Corona Intervention Act employees of educational institutions that cannot provide public services will receive salaries from the state budget; the same applies in private kindergartens (85 % per child). In addition, parents do not need to pay to organizations for services such as childcare in kindergartens, school activities, sports-related activities etc. during the pandemic.</p>
<p>4. Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?</p>
<p>Foreign students in Slovenia are allowed to stay in dormitories despite the current law. Authorities are in contact with all Slovenian universities on a daily basis to solve problems like repatriation, access to medical care, food arrangements (including Erasmus+ students).</p> <p>Those pupils and students who have left their dormitories during the pandemic do not need to pay any fees.</p>
<p>5. How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.</p>
<p>The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport is in regular contact with the National Institute of Public Health and Ministry of Health and provides written information and guidance for all educational, research, sport and youth institutions. The guidance is regularly updated. Schools have been instructed to establish regular contact with all relevant stakeholders (i.e. pedagogical staff, parents' councils, teachers' unions, school councils). In order to calm the media situation, schools have been given instructions to address all media questions directly to the PR service of the Ministry.</p> <p>Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, together with the National Institute for Education, has recommended to use SIO website (Slovenian Education Network) as a single-entry point to support principals and teachers in delivering distance learning. The content is constantly updated and supplemented and recommendations on how to organise long distances learning have been sent to the schools.</p> <p>Since the closing of schools, measures to have distance learning in place at all levels of education have been taken and after the first week, we are pleased to see that things are going well. After initial problems on the first day due to overburdening the system, the distance education was more fluid and platforms and distance education services were more stable.</p> <p>Most commonly used tools were emails, online classrooms, websites and social networks. On SIO, schools have opened online classrooms for their students, and experts from the Institute of Education of Slovenia have also been supporting teachers. In addition, online seminars are available for teachers with no prior experience as well as those who are more adept at using distance education tools channels. Online classrooms are most active in the mornings and evenings. All in all, almost all primary and secondary schools have enrolled in distance learning.</p> <p>VET schools also use video streaming. Nevertheless, work-based learning is currently not performed in any form of VET education, including apprenticeships. Measures will be therefore required for the final year students to recognize this missing part of WBL, because for them it would not be possible to replace missing hours.</p>

In addition to all above, in agreement with National TV channel educational content for first six levels of primary education is being transmitted on TV and intensive work is ongoing daily to provide suitable lessons. Schools were instructed to agree on a method and scope of activity for each student at school and in doing so special attention should be given to the daily and weekly workload of the student with obligations in individual subjects at school. Furthermore, teachers should start with courses where they have already prepared teaching materials and are adept at these forms of work.

### *Challenges*

It has been noted as a first challenge in implementing distance learning that inequalities between pupils are increasing due to different access to internet, computers, tablets etc., especially for those pupils with weaker economic background. It is therefore essential to develop stimulating learning environment for all and to overcome this, the Ministry has made it possible that teachers do individual work with pupils as well as that other expert staff in the school is in contact and working with pupils, such as psychologist for example. In addition, Ministry has also included students from faculties of education to help in developing a safe and stimulating learning environment for all. We can say, based on first experience, that school as a physical place remains a primary environment to reduce the inequalities.

On the ground, civil protection and Post of Slovenia are helping by distributing to pupils necessary IT equipment (computers, tablets etc.) provided by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, National Institute for Education and donors (private companies).

Second biggest challenge concerns teachers who might have wanted to much in regards to following the course curriculum, however, it seems that for following the exact curriculum at least 2-3 times more is needed if implemented via distance learning. Ministry is therefore, together with National Institute of Education, preparing recommendations for schools what to focus on when implementing distance learning and how to monitor and evaluate the work done, also with a view to final exams.

### *Resources*

For a smooth transition to distance learning, it was recommended to use the following tools:

- i-textbooks (for 41 different subjects from 4th grade of elementary school to 3rd year of high school):

<https://eucbeniki.sio.si/>,

- Jason - High School Distance Learning Materials and Instructions: <https://jazon.splet.arnes.si/>;

- guidelines for the use of ICT in individual subjects with a list of useful, verified e-materials:

<https://www.zrssi.si/professional-results/digital-bar>;

- online teacher communities for individual subjects or fields:

<https://skupnost.sio.si/>.

University of Maribor has developed a common educational support on [www.razlagamo.si](http://www.razlagamo.si) which aims for mutual assistance in distance learning. Platform provides support to the communication and the collection of materials to facilitate learning in all subjects in elementary and secondary schools.

University of Ljubljana and its faculties are also contributing heavily during the crisis from research activities of its members, offering help those in need via platform "Help in your palm": <https://pomocnadlani.4pdih.com>, advising companies on the manufacturing of protective equipment, helping in the implementation of nationwide campaign #vadiidoma ("Train at home") and preparing different physical videos accessible online at <https://www.rtvsllo.si/isikalnik?q=%23vadiidoma> to offering counselling for those who need help.

University of Primorska has printed first protective masks in a team with anaesthetists from Izola General Hospital and Ljubljana Technology Park. University has already delivered first prototypes to hospitals that are being tested in a real-world setting. These masks are printed by a 3D printer that works 24/7 and was purchased by InnoRenew Centre of Excellence, also funded by European Structural Funds.

Lastly, International Research Centre on Artificial Intelligence under the auspices of Unesco (IRCAI) has been just recently established in Slovenia, but has already established an online tool for following spread of coronavirus around the world. It follows numerous media and as such gives a framework of data and information about the coronavirus in all the countries. You can even choose your own country and follow the information and data in relation to numbers of infected, number of deaths etc. Link: <http://coronaviruswatch.ircai.org/>.

6.

Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

Ministry is trying to organize virtual access to students with weak economic background (computers, tablets, etc).

On SIO, schools have opened online classrooms for their students, and experts from the Institute of Education of Slovenia have also been supporting teachers. In addition, online seminars are available for teachers with no prior experience as well as those who are more adept at using distance education tools channels.

There are also some challenges in those institutions that work with children and young people with behavioural and emotional difficulties as they themselves lack appropriate environment for care and therefore institutions remain, the only ones, open.

7.

How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. *state matura*), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?

The main objective of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport is to guarantee the right to education even in emergency situations. Therefore, measures that address distance learning and end of school year are also part of the Corona Intervention Act:

- at all levels of education, including adult education, distance learning and all other remote work replaces normal delivery of schooling and thus becomes equal to face-to-face education;
- where necessary, the Ministry will provide for and adapt knowledge assessment and evaluation; work-based learning will be recognized as completed if other theoretical subjects are positive; and in higher education the institutions can change what is included in the compulsory part of the study program,
- employees of educational institutions that cannot provide public services will receive salaries from the state budget; the same applies in private kindergartens (85 % per child),
- parents during the crisis do not need to pay to organizations for services such as childcare in kindergartens, school activities, sports-related activities etc.

For the time being, if distance learning continues at current pace and as set by the Corona Intervention Act, the school year will end within the deadlines set in the school calendar. Ministry is, however, together with National Institute of Education, preparing recommendations for schools on what to focus when implementing distance learning and how to monitor and evaluate the work done, also with a view to final exams.

There are still three possible scenarios for return of pupils to classrooms, if possible due to pandemic, firstly on 1 May, secondly on 1 June or not entirely (followed only by delivery of final certificates).

Matura exam (school-leaving exam for the completion of secondary education in Slovenia), scheduled for 5 May 2020, will be postponed to end of May, and the Ministry is examining ways how to implement it accordingly.

Higher education students, including higher VET, who due to the emergence of exceptional circumstances in 2020 will not be able to complete their study obligations on a regular basis and within the deadline will be granted the right to extend their student status in the next academic year. All full-time students residing in the Republic of Slovenia will be paid a crisis allowance of EUR 150 by 30 April 2020.

Self-employed persons in the field of education, science and sports, who will declare themselves affected by the crisis using a special electronic application will receive EUR 350 for March if they prove that their income has declined by at least 25% compared to February 2020, and will receive EUR 700 for April and May 2020 if

they prove that their income has declined by at least 50% compared to February 2020. At the same time, the state will also cover all related social security contributions.

The Ministry has also already before the Corona Intervention Act postponed the application deadlines in higher education and VET until 9 April 2020.

8. What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?

For EU mobility, the guidance of the Ministry sent to all education institutions has been to monitor the situation, establish contacts with the foreseen host institutions and act accordingly. All unurgent educational activities which can be postponed should be postponed, including mobility. Possibilities for virtual mobility are also in place.

Ministry of Education and Sport works on daily basis with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Erasmus+ National Agency to set up reliable information about possible solutions for the repatriation of students; e.g. together with the French Embassy in Slovenia special flight had been arranged for 20 students studying in Maribor.

The Ministry has also already before the Corona Intervention Act postponed the application deadlines in higher education and VET until 9 April 2020.

9. In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?

European Commission could organize some EU-wide webinars for pupils and students on topics of mutual interest to all pupils across Europe. This would bring a sense of solidarity among the youngest in our society. It would thus facilitate virtual mobility by bringing together pupils around Europe.

10. What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?

In order not to increase inequality due to lack of access to internet and IT tools for digital and distance learning, it is important to use EU funds to such extent to provide appropriate tools, like computers, tablets, other support ICT infrastructure and availability of e-contents and other e-services. The activities should be implemented with two special aims: for direct impact on current situation because of the Covid-19 and for enabling the stability and empowerment of resources and contents, which could help in case of continuation and new similar situations in the future. Furthermore, the eligibility of costs should be broadened and the flexibility to refund the costs that incurred due to Covid-19, which the beneficiaries could not refund from other sources, should be implemented. Also, there should be an automatism in prolonging the duration of projects, co-financed from ERDF and ESF and a flexibility of planned goals and performance framework should be enabled.

## SPAIN

**Last update: 3/4/2020**

1.

Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?

Spain's government declared a state of alert across the country, limiting the movement of citizens on Saturday March 14<sup>th</sup>. As a result, all schools and universities are closed until, at least, the 12<sup>th</sup> of April. However, the Government is considering extending the state of alert for two more weeks. The majority of students (92,8%) attend public or charter schools (publicly funded private schools) where tuition fees are free. No measures will be taken in relation to the tuition fees of the universities.

2.

In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?

The Government has instructed people to stay at home during the state of alert, which implies the closure of businesses and institutions. Younger children are to stay at home but extraordinary measures have been taken in case parents or caretakers fall ill.

The Ministry for Inclusion, Social Security and Migration has announced the creation of a Social Security benefit for parents who cannot attend work as they are forced to take care of children because of class suspension.

Besides, educational authorities have implemented systems to provide students with less resources with meals.

3.

In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?

Since the closure of schools happened gradually, educational institutions remained opened at first and teachers and staff still attended their workplaces, unless they were exempted to take care of children or elderly relatives. Once the state of alert was declared, all schools closed and teachers are working from home.

With regards to the universities, all of them are closed and all the workers are working online from home.

4.

Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?

Universities – autonomously, but coordinated with health authorities - have taken varied decisions about the closure of their student dormitories. In many cases, student dormitories have been closed except for those students who live with people at health risk or those who, due to force majeure, cannot return to their homes. When student dormitories are kept open, the necessary hygienic preventive measures have being taken, the minimum services are maintained and the confinement decreed by the alert state is respected.

5.

How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.

The majority of Spanish schools have online platforms. All regional Departments of Education have their own web sites with educational resources.

The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training has created a webpage <https://aprendoencasa.educacion.es/> to channel quality educational resources, tools and applications available to teachers, families and the students. The page is also linked to materials prepared and launched by the regional governments, private entities and other stakeholders.

Online resources, are displayed by educational level (primary, secondary, VET). Resources in the webpage include [Procomún](#) (Open Educational Resources Network with more than 94,000 resources), [EDIA Project](#) (organized by curricular topics), [rubrics database](#) to help evaluation process, [History resources database](#), [EDAD Project](#) resources (aimed at distance learning in Secondary education) and [VET Simulators](#).

Moreover, the web page of the Centro para la Innovación y Desarrollo de la Educación a Distancia, the unit in charge of distance education at the Ministry, offers educational contents and materials for autonomous learning aimed at secondary students, language learners, and open training: <https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/educacion/mc/cidead/portada.html>

As for Vocational Education and Training, digital resources available include 104 qualifications: <http://www.todofp.es/inicio.html>

Besides, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training and the Spanish public television (TVE) have reached an agreement to offer audiovisual learning materials through [La2](#) and [channel Clan TV](#), from Monday to Friday for students aged 6 to 16. Apart from curricular contents, the programming will also include emotional competences.

And, as mentioned before, educational authorities have implemented systems to provide students with less resources with meals.

With regards to universities, all of them have a virtual campus - for all the subjects of all their degrees - where part of the academic activity is carried out (didactic material, videos,...) but, until now, we hadn't still essayed the possibility that all the Face-to-face teaching becomes virtual and if the information technology available in each institution could support demand. In any case, all the universities are working to meet this new and great challenge. On the other hand, online universities carry out their activity but with some changes due to the mobility restrictions.

Regarding the e-tools used by the different universities, most of them have virtual campuses created by and for them. However, they also use other e-tools such as, mainly, Blackboard, Moodle, Sakai or Google classroom. Besides the latter, the Ministry of Universities and CRUE Spanish Universities (the Conference of Spanish University Rectors) have launched the portal "*Conectad@s: la universidad en casa*" ('Connected, the university at home'): [https://www.uned.es/universidad/inicio/uned\\_uoc\\_solidaria.html](https://www.uned.es/universidad/inicio/uned_uoc_solidaria.html). This portal has been created with the main aim of supporting teachers, students and society in general in terms of online education. It is an initiative aimed at providing advice and making available resources for all the universities in Spain in order to face, in the most effective way, the current closure of universities due to the coronavirus outbreak.

All the resources within this platform are free of use and are focused both on the Spanish university community and on educational institutions. The specific objectives of this portal are:

- To offer a wide range of guidance and training resources for teachers on online training methodology, which could be useful for the design and development of online classes.
- To facilitate researchers, teachers and students a complete repertoire of digital materials and open content from different areas of knowledge.
- To collect a series of conferences, tips, outreach materials and personalised attention for the psychological care of those who require it.

6.

Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?

Open online training on “resources for online learning” is offered for teachers to learn about the use of the virtual classroom, communication instruments, content publications and evaluation process. <https://intef.es/recursos-educativos/recursos-para-el-aprendizaje-en-linea/formacion-y-apoyo/>

The majority of teachers are using their own Internet facilities.

Besides, to facilitate continuity for those with difficulties to continue their training online, the Ministry has signed an agreement with three companies to provide students with 20,000 cards to access Internet, as well as Webex licenses for videoconferences and support for teachers. Each card has 40 Gbs of monthly data to allow the connection of students and teachers through mobile devices. Other companies have donated 10,000 cards more through Red Cross, and non-profit organizations and business are cooperating to provide equipment to those students with less access to computers.

As regards universities, to solve possible problems or doubts both for students and professors and administrative staff, they have tutorials or, in some cases, web pages created ad-hoc for this occasion as support for remote work and teaching. In addition, universities have reinforced their ‘user service centers’ to solve all the possible doubts.

7.

How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. *state matura*), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?

The Ministries of Education and Vocational Training and of Universities, together with the regional governments, have agreed to delay the official examinations to access university, which will be held, tentatively, between June 22nd and July 10th. Also, contents and number of items have been modified so that students are not punished for not having worked in class any block or blocks of contents of any of the subjects. Besides, diagnostic tests for primary and secondary students (3rd and 6th years in primary and 4th in secondary) have been cancelled.

As for Vocational Education and Training, the school calendar has been extended and flexibility has been allowed regarding practices in the workplace, limiting the hours to 220.

Videoconferences with the regional governments are being held regularly on some issues relevant to the daily functioning of the educational system to share and coordinate decisions.

In this sense, some regional governments have communicated that there will not have more in-classroom teaching this course and they are updating non-classroom teaching modalities, both in the teaching activities that will still be carried out in this course and in the final evaluation of the course. Each University - depending on its characteristics - will consider different modalities, as well as the dates of their application according to the evolution of the pandemic. The Universities are consulting and informing their students, professors and workers of the measures adopted – and to adopt - so that they can prepare with sufficient time to carry out the final evaluation or examination with due guarantees. The conditions of each student must be taken into account to adapt to the teaching and evaluation modalities that are decided.

8.

What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?

Mobility is restricted to a minimum and rail and air transportation has been reduced by half, and land borders have been closed.

For those students who are abroad this year, the Ministry of Education will establish specific systems to validate their studies. In any case, the majority of them are following online lessons.

The Erasmus+ National Agency for education and training, SEPIE, provides the latest news about the current situation on a daily basis and in coordination with the European Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EU and Cooperation, the Ministry of Health and Crue Spanish Universities. The guidelines and instructions received so far from the European Commission have been explained and shared with the Spanish beneficiaries (e.g. when the concept of “force majeure” applies and the postponement of mobilities in the short term). The National Agency also remains available through its usual channels of communication, by which constant communication is being developed with Erasmus+ beneficiary institutions, participants on mobilities and their families.

Furthermore, SEPIE has also developed the following coordinated actions and measures to address the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on learning mobility, thus:

- Creation and launch of a microsite focused on providing useful information to the whole Erasmus+ community in Spain about the impact of this outbreak in the Erasmus+ programme and the specific measures carried out:

<http://sepie.es/coronavirus.html>

Since the launch of this microsite on 11th March, over 17.500 unique visitors have entered this microsite.

- Publication of specific communication materials like: reports, press releases, guidelines, infographics, etc. Some of those press releases, with over 10.000 downloads, are updated and published on a daily basis, which provide information on the different measures taken on the Erasmus+ programme countries due to the outbreak.

- Publication of a special edition on Covid-19 of the online SEPIE Newsletter, which gathers all the most relevant and up-to-date information about the impact and measures taken so far in the Erasmus+ programme:

[http://www.sepie.es/doc/newsletter/2020/especial/sepie\\_covid-19.html](http://www.sepie.es/doc/newsletter/2020/especial/sepie_covid-19.html)

- Creation of an online questionnaire addressed to Erasmus+ participants on mobility at this moment, with the main aim of assisting them and helping those ones who would like to return to Spain. This is done in constant cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EU and Cooperation and with Crue Spanish Universities, with whom SEPIE will share the results.

- Collaboration with international students' associations, like: ESN Spain (Erasmus Student Network) and ESU (European Students' Union).

- Provision of constant information to the different media nation-wide.

- Dissemination of the various online resources and tools for learners, teachers and educators facilitated by the European Commission, the Ministry of Universities and the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training.

- Active use and monitoring of SEPIE social media accounts.

9.

In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?

This initiative to share and update information carried out by the Croatian presidency is turning out really useful to figure out what other Member states are doing.

Education will never be the same, particularly in what regards the use of technology and learners' autonomy. Also about the citizens wellbeing and sense of security. The next European strategy on education will have to take that into account.

10. What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?
Digitalization is key for our education and training systems and one of the competences our teachers need most. The Spanish Ministry of Education was already working on a “Plan to digitalise the Education system”, which has proved to be more necessary than ever.

<b>SWEDEN</b> <b>Last update: 15/4/2020</b>
1. Are all education and training institutions in your countries closed and until when? In case institutions are temporarily closed, will tuition fees, where relevant, be compensated (for both private and public institutions)?
17 March the Government announced that the following educational institutions are recommended to switch to distance education from 18 March (after recommendations from the Public Health Agency): upper secondary school, municipal adult education, vocational higher education, higher education (no deadline is set). Schools and preschools are still open. The Government’s ambition that the effects on the students’ possibilities to complete their studies should be as minimal as possible. Through distance education, students can continue to receive teaching and thus also their student finance. Furthermore, to ensure that students can be provided with support in the form of student finance, there is a proposal that the Government should be able to decide that students can, in extraordinary events during peacetime, retain their study finance for the period which they have already been granted. In Sweden the responsibility for the school lies with the education provider (municipalities or independent education provider). Education providers can decide to close schools based on assessments from the Public Health Agency and the infection control doctor or due to for example shortage of staff. The Government has previously (13 March) decided on a temporary regulatory framework that makes it possible for schools to handle school closure in a swift and good way, if needed. For example, it makes it possible for exceptions to regulations concerning the design, scope and location of the education. The new regulation applies from 16 March 2020 until 30 June 2021.
2. In case the regular work has been suspended, are some institutions still open to provide day care for younger children? What kind of activities are foreseen in this case? Are there any other types of support for working parents with younger children?
Not applicable to the Swedish situation (regular work is not suspended but many work from home, schools and preschools are open).

<p>3.</p> <p>In case education and training institutions are closed, is there an obligation for teachers/other staff to be present at the workplace, for example, to conduct distance learning or perform other tasks? If this is the case, are there any exemptions for teachers with younger children? If they cannot work from home, does the possibility for emergency day care, if there is one, apply in case of their younger children?</p>
<p>The Government is preparing for a situation where preschools and compulsory schools may need to be closed in order to reduce the spread of infection in society. 19 March, parliament passed a law on temporary closure of activities in the school area in extraordinary events. It gives the Government the opportunity to temporarily close preschools and schools, <u>and to ensure the care of children to parents/custodians working in vital sectors.</u> (Please note: schools and preschools are still open, but the new legislation gives Government the possibility to close schools etc.) Twelve “vital sectors” have been identified, based on the work of the The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency. Children who are in need of care for psychological, physical or other special reasons, for example social reasons, should also be able to attend preschool and leisure-time centres.</p>
<p>4.</p> <p>Have any decisions been taken concerning pupil/student dormitories (e.g. additional preventive measures, general or partial closures, etc.)?</p>
<p>5.</p> <p>How is distance learning organized in cases of different levels of education (centralized delivery, decentralized delivery, or mixed approach through channels such as websites, special educational distance learning platforms, TV/radio, e-mails, etc.)? Have you so far encountered any difficulties? In case you would be willing to share some of the resources, please provide a link.</p>
<p>6.</p> <p>Is there any kind of additional support offered to teachers, pupils/students and parents in order to support distance learning? For example, in case they do not have adequate digital skills or available infrastructure (e.g. additional courses to enhance digital skills, free Internet, digital equipment), are in need of psychological counselling, etc.? Is there any specific support for pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities (e.g. personal assistants at home), disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. providing meals), minority backgrounds (e.g. translation of materials)?</p>
<p>The Government has made it possible for students in upper secondary school to carry out certain practical exercises in their education – such as perform a welding or write a test – at their school even if the school is closed otherwise. But only for a smaller proportion of students and if the situation (considering the spread of infection) allows for it. The teaching should, naturally, be conducted a way that minimizes the risk of the spread of infection.</p> <p>The Government has also made it possible for some students in need of special support to return to the school premises, in order to get special support at their school – individually or in smaller groups – so that they are given the possibility to meet the knowledge requirements. It could also be an issue of the need of support from the student health care.</p> <p>The Public Health Agency and the National Agency for Education is providing advice to schools and preschools on how to act in order to minimize the risk of the spreading of infection. The advice is based on WHO:s guidelines. It contains advice on among other things hygiene, the cleaning of schools, social contacts (for example the importance of keeping distance, avoid activities and gatherings in large groups, look into possibilities to eat lunch at different times, having classes outside etc.) and information to the pupils.</p>

<p>7.</p> <p>How do you plan to ensure the continuity of assessment and grading? In case exams need to be cancelled, how do you plan to replace them (e.g. predicted grades/continuous assessment mark, etc.)? In case you have national school exit exams (e.g. <i>state matura</i>), what are your plans for their implementation this year? How is the current situation affecting deadlines for applications and requirements for enrolment at higher educational levels (e.g. secondary education, higher education)? What measures do you foresee in order to ensure an efficient ending of the school/academic year (e.g. prolonging the school year, shortening vacations, extending the school day duration, weekend classes, etc.)?</p>
<p>The Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test, SweSAT (högskoleprovet), that was scheduled for 4 April has been cancelled. For admittance to HEIs, the SweSAT is one of the selection instruments used. The Government has analysed the issue of admittance in connection to the cancelled SweSAT, and has come to the conclusion that it is, in this situation, not appropriate to make major changes to the admission rules to the universities because of the cancellation. Doing so will inevitably create new injustices for other groups.</p> <p>23 March the National Agency for Education announced the cancellation of the semester's remaining national tests in compulsory school and upper-secondary school.</p> <p><i>The Government has previously (13 March) decided on a temporary regulatory framework that makes it possible for schools and upper secondary schools to handle school closure in a swift and good way, if needed. For example, it makes it possible for exceptions to regulations concerning the design, scope and location of the education (i.e. for example extending the school year). The new regulation applies from 16 March 2020 until 30 June 2021.</i></p>
<p>8.</p> <p>What actions have you taken in addressing the impact on learning mobility? Are you experiencing any problems regarding the return of Erasmus students or other mobility-related issues and how are you dealing with them? Do you foresee any changes in terms of university requirements for potential students from other countries?</p>
<p>9.</p> <p>In what ways could the Commission provide additional support (e.g. in facilitating virtual mobility, facilitating the sharing of digital resources, etc.)?</p>
<p>10.</p> <p>What kind of flexibility and additional possibilities for coronavirus-related expenditure would you find beneficial in relation to the use of EU funds, programmes and initiatives, to cater for education and training sector needs? Do you already plan to use these resources for some activities, for example to support online learning and delivery, and if yes, which?</p>

## Implications of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) for Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps projects:

### Notes by the European Commission

**Note: E+/NA/DIR/2020/005**

**Subject: Coronavirus – implications for Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps projects**

31/1/2020

In the context of the outbreak of the Coronavirus in China, National Agencies are requested to inform the participating organisations concerned and instruct them to contact the individual participants who already are in, or are planning to leave to or from the affected areas within the coming weeks. Participants should also be reminded of the assistance that can be provided by embassies, consulates and honorary consulates in the country of their stay.

It is for the participating organisations and individuals to decide on the course of action to take in the light of national travel advice and repatriation schemes, as for example cancelling or postponing all non-essential travels to China. The National Agencies should however monitor closely, in cooperation with the participating organisation, if the area can be considered safe by the time of travel for the entire duration of the mobility or project activity.

Please be reminded that National Agencies may apply the *force majeure* clause to activities taking place in China or other affected areas as well as to incoming mobility from these areas, as foreseen in the template of the grant agreement between National Agencies and the beneficiaries and as defined in the programme guide and other contractual documents. National Agencies may thereby cancel, postpone or move activities planned in such regions in the most flexible way, notwithstanding the respect of the general legal framework applying to Erasmus+ and the Corps. Given the exceptional circumstances, the same principles can be applied also to any incoming mobility from the affected regions.

Justified repatriation costs will be accepted as exceptional costs, whereas normal reporting requirements apply. For further information or clarifications, please do not hesitate to contact the Commission via your NA desk officer or by sending an email to [EAC-NA-COORDINATION@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EAC-NA-COORDINATION@ec.europa.eu).

**Note: E+/NA/DIR/2020/012**

**Subject: Coronavirus – exceptional measures with regard to Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps projects**

25/2/2020

In the context of the measures taken by the Italian Government to contain the spread of the Coronavirus infection in Northern Italy, I would like to inform you that the measures announced in our note of 31 January 2020 (ref. Ares (2020)619972) shall be considered fully applicable to any mobility in affected areas of programme and partner countries where the virus is detected and which are considered at risk.

In line with the abovementioned note, National Agencies are requested to inform the participating organisations concerned and instruct them to contact the individual participants who already are in, or are planning to leave for the affected areas within the coming days or weeks. Participants should also be reminded of the assistance that can be provided by embassies, consulates and honorary consulates in the country of their stay.

It is for the participating organisations and individuals to decide on the course of action to take in the light of national travel advice and repatriation schemes. The National Agencies should however monitor closely, in cooperation with the participating organisation, if the area of the planned mobility can be considered safe by the time of travel for the entire duration of the mobility or project activity.

Please be reminded that National Agencies may apply the *force majeure* clause to activities taking place in any affected area as well as to incoming mobility from these areas, as foreseen in the template of the grant agreement between National Agencies and the beneficiaries and as defined in the programme guide and other contractual documents. National Agencies may thereby cancel, postpone or move activities planned in such regions in the most flexible way, notwithstanding the respect of the general legal framework applying to Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps. Given the exceptional circumstances, the same principles can be applied also to any incoming mobility from affected regions. However, when assessing additional costs linked to a case of *force majeure*, the National Agencies should apply the provisions established in section 3.16 of the Guide for National Agencies.

Justified repatriation costs will be accepted as exceptional costs, whereas normal reporting requirements apply. For further information or clarifications, please do not hesitate to contact the Commission via your NA desk officer or by sending an email to [EAC-NACCOORDINATION@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EAC-NACCOORDINATION@ec.europa.eu).

**Note: E+/NA/DIR/2020/014**

**Subject: Coronavirus – specific guidance in cases of force majeure**

10/3/2020

Following the sending of notes 005 (31/01/2020) and 012 (25/02/2020) on the impact of the coronavirus COVID-19 on the implementation of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes, we have been receiving a high number of questions from National Agencies on the practicalities regarding the application of the *force majeure* clause.

Most of the questions are on to the possibility of extending the duration of Grant Agreements with beneficiaries, the application of the definition of *force majeure* and the practicalities of covering additional costs, the reason why this note focuses on these aspects. Any questions not replied to by this note will be dealt with bilaterally, via e-mail or NACO, or additional notes, where needed.

As regards the application of *force majeure*

The template for Grant Agreements defines in Article II.1 (Definitions) a situation of *force majeure* as follows: *Force majeure: any unforeseeable, exceptional situation or event beyond the control of the parties that prevents either of them from fulfilling any of their obligations under the Agreement, which is not attributable to error or negligence on their part or on the part of the subcontractors affiliated entities or third parties in receipt of financial support and which proves to be inevitable despite their exercising due diligence. The following cannot be invoked as force majeure: labour disputes, strikes, financial difficulties or any default of a service, defect in equipment or materials or delays in making them available, unless they stem directly from a relevant case of force majeure.*

National Agencies are invited to use their judgement as to the situations in which the beneficiary is in the incapacity to fulfil its obligations under the grant agreement. The provision can thus be invoked beyond the applicable formal recommendations from the competent authorities<sup>1</sup>, in situations in which obligatory parts to the agreement between the beneficiary and its partners/participants cannot be fulfilled.

As regards costs incurred, including possible additional costs:

In line with the Guide for National Agencies (article 3.16§2), there cannot be an increase of the total grant amount awarded.

Within this limit, National Agencies may accept additional costs of an extraordinary nature not foreseen in the initial budget, where duly justified (e.g. the cost could not be recovered under an insurance scheme, the generating event could not be rescheduled, etc.) on a real cost basis. Beneficiaries need to provide a signed declaration stating that the costs could not be recovered by other means. For reporting purposes, the beneficiaries should be advised to use the procedure for *force majeure* described in the IT documentation: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/wikis/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=194407954>.

Any additional costs above the maximum grant amount will have to be financed from other sources.

If the National Agency decides to cancel a planned activity following the application of *force majeure*, the costs incurred can be considered eligible within the project at final report stage.

As regards the project duration:

Where relevant, the National Agencies may decide to authorise beneficiaries to extend the duration of their projects to allow postponement of activities with up to 12 months per project. While taking this decision, the National Agencies should take into account i.a. the following elements:

- the maximum duration of the Delegation Agreements between the Commission and the National Agency for the implementation of the entrusted tasks is still respected
- the additional administrative workload for the National Agency
- the equal treatment of beneficiaries facing the same situations

The normal rules on amendments set out in Article II.13 of the Grant Agreement apply.

In cases where the National Agency decides to grant the prolongation of projects, the final project duration may not in any case exceed 36 months<sup>2</sup> in total, in any Key Action<sup>3</sup>. Whereby such prolongation cannot be granted on the basis of the existing rules of the action, as set out in the Programme Guides of the Erasmus+ and European

Solidarity Corps programmes, National Agencies need to sign an exception report in line with article 2.5.4 of the Guide for National Agencies.

For further information or clarifications, please do not hesitate to contact the Commission via your desk officer or by sending an email to [EAC-NA-COORDINATION@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EAC-NA-COORDINATION@ec.europa.eu).

We would like to inform all National Agencies that notes from the Commission to National Agencies are not to be disseminated or published. The functional mailbox [EAC-NA-COORDINATION@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EAC-NA-COORDINATION@ec.europa.eu) is only to be used by National Agencies, not by project beneficiaries.

<sup>1</sup> In the context of this note, “competent authorities” are defined as the authorities in charge at national, regional or local level of issuing health recommendations and/or travel restrictions for public interest.

<sup>2</sup> This implies e.g. that projects of 12 months can be extended up to 24 months and 24 months projects may be extended up to 36 months. This also means that KA2 projects of already the maximum duration of 36 months cannot be extended.

<sup>3</sup> In line with the e-mail of 26 February 2020 providing specific guidance for ICM projects, the new end date of the extended ICM 2018-projects will be 31/07/2021.

**Note: E+/NA/DIR/2020/016**

**Subject: Extension of Erasmus+ deadlines for submission of applications**

16/3/2020

Please be informed of the new submission deadlines below as a result of difficulties experienced by applicants due to the coronavirus outbreak.

The deadline for submission of applications has been extended until 23 April 2020 (12h00 Brussels time) for the following actions:

- Strategic Partnerships for School Education (KA201),
- Strategic Partnerships for Vocational Education and Training (KA202),
- Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education (KA203),
- Strategic Partnerships for Adult Education (KA204),
- School Exchange Partnerships (KA229).

We are revising the calendar for use of funds to take the extension into account and will publish it on NAconnect as soon as possible.

The deadline for submission of applications (to the Education Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency) for the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education will be extended until 26 May 2020.

**Note: E+/NA/DIR/2020/017**

**Subject: Coronavirus – Extension of additional deadlines**

17/3/2020

Within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme and European Solidarity Corps, the following deadlines for submission of applications will also be extended, besides those already announced in the Note 016 of 16 March 2020:

	<b>Official deadline</b>	<b>New proposed deadline</b>
<b>ERASMUS+</b>		
<b>Key Action 1</b>		
Mobility of individuals in the field of youth	30 April 2020	7 May 2020
<b>Key Action 2</b>		
Strategic partnerships in the field of youth	30 April 2020	7 May 2020
<b>Key Action 3</b>		
Youth Dialogue projects	30 April 2020	7 May 2020
<b>Sport</b>		

Collaborative partnerships	2 April 2020	21 April 2020
Small collaborative partnerships	2 April 2020	21 April 2020
Not-for-profit European sport events	2 April 2020	21 April 2020
<b>EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS</b>		
Volunteering projects	30 April 2020	7 May 2020
Traineeships and jobs	30 April 2020	7 May 2020

The websites of the European Commission and of the EACEA are being updated to inform the general public about these extensions.

**Note: E+/NA/DIR/2020/018**

**Subject: Coronavirus – further specific guidance**

18/3/2020

The outbreak of Coronavirus in the EU and in the world has big implications for the Erasmus+ programme and European Solidarity Corps. The closure of education, training, youth and sport institutions and organisations - as well as the broader measures undertaken in many EU countries to restrict mobility of citizens and increase social distancing - hamper the regular implementation of most of the ongoing or planned Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps activities.

The Commission is acutely aware of the difficulties faced by National Agencies and project beneficiaries in this respect. Our foremost concern, that we know you share, is the safety and protection of all programme participants.

Further to Note 014 sent to you on 10/03/2020, this note aims to provide additional clarifications concerning the scope and application of the *force majeure* principle as well as to provide additional guidelines and general recommendations in order to support National Agencies in managing the exceptional circumstances.

#### Application of *force majeure*

The World Health Organisation officially declared, on Wednesday 11 March, the Coronavirus as a global pandemic. Therefore, it is justifiable for National Agencies to apply the principle of *force majeure*. Considering the principle of prudence, which underlines and inspires all of our activities, it would be difficult to do otherwise given the current circumstances, under which a large and important number of activities – planned or currently undertaken in the framework of already selected projects - have already been cancelled or will be postponed. However, in this particular situation, and taking in consideration each national framework, it will be a duty of National Agencies - following a case-by-case assessment - to consider the scope to which the *force majeure* principle is applied in their context.

The modalities of application of *force majeure* are those indicated in the Note 014 of 10/03/2020. In this context, it is worth clarifying that the guidance as regards additional costs is applicable to all types of decentralised actions, while the guidance as regards project duration currently covers all actions except TCA and NET activities, for which specific guidance will be issued. For the prolongation of projects under the School Exchange Partnerships, specific guidelines will be issued to help National Agencies steering the process in a coordinated manner, thus reducing the administrative workload.

The IT documentation setting out detailed guidance linked to cases of *force majeure* in Mobility Tool is currently being updated to address the most frequently asked questions. A Q&A document will also be posted on NAconnect in order to reply to specific detailed questions raised by National Agencies in the last days.

#### Deadline for applications

Several deadlines for submissions relating to actions implemented - both at decentralised and centralised level - under the Erasmus+ programme and European Solidarity Corps have been extended. National Agencies have been informed of these prolongations through Note 016 of 16 March and Note 017 of 17 March. Please note that for the European Solidarity Corps Actions, the extension of the deadline to 7 May 2020 is valid for all four actions:

ESC11 – Volunteering projects

ESC21 – Traineeships and jobs

ESC13 – Volunteering partnerships - Annual grant requests

ESC31 – Solidarity projects

Furthermore, it will be possible to submit application forms without annexing the mandates requiring signatures of co-beneficiaries. However, only for selected projects, these documents will have to be sent to the National Agency before the signature of the grant agreement.

The websites of the European Commission and of the EACEA are being updated to inform the general public about these extensions.

Administrative deadlines

The Commission acknowledges the fact that the daily routine of staff in National Agencies and of people working for beneficiary organisations is severely impacted by practices introduced or recommended in many countries in order to contain the spread of the pandemic. Many people are asked to carry out distance-work or suspend their work; this implies the slowdown or suspension of non-critical activities. This will have an impact on the capacity of National Agencies to respect all the administrative deadlines for grant-lifecycle-management, as set in the Guide for National Agencies. In this context, it is the Commission's intention to update the Calendar on the use of funds annexed to the Guide for NAs, following a general principle of flexibility for National Agencies and beneficiaries.

This being said, and with due respect of specific situations in each country, the Commission:

- a) calls on every National Agency to adopt an approach of maximum responsibility and ensure to the greatest extent the execution of grant-management tasks, primarily to safeguard beneficiaries and participants.
- b) recommends National Agencies to identify as crucial any task that diminishes the risk for a beneficiary or for participants in selected projects to find themselves in difficult financial conditions (e.g. these tasks could be the payment of a due instalment which would allow a beneficiary to have sufficient cash-flow to cover costs of participants abroad, or the signature of a grant agreement which is a condition for a beneficiary to receive a loan, etc.).

Communication with stakeholders and participants

This unprecedented situation is having a huge impact on most stakeholders and participants. Erasmus+ mobility participants, especially students, who are experiencing a varying degree of disruption during their mobility, or had either to cancel or postpone their planned mobility period. We ask all NAs to strongly encourage their beneficiaries to be as flexible and pragmatic as possible to minimise any negative impact on their participants and, as regards students, to help facilitating the achievements of the learning outcomes indicated in their learning agreements. This can be done through alternative means such as digital tools for example, in particular for those students who already started their mobility period abroad.

Many host institutions are enabling mobile students to continue their studies remotely by either offering them to follow courses online or by doing assignments. In some cases, students have returned to their home countries but continue to follow courses at the host institutions through various solutions. Given these exceptional circumstances, please note that the Commission will consider any such remote studying arrangements as eligible, provided they contribute to achieving the learning outcomes of the learning agreements. We also hope all sending institutions will be as flexible as possible in order to allow students to have all the ECTS obtained through such remote studying arrangements fully recognised.

We are aware that many institutions, organisations and international relations offices are now closed or are working with a very limited capacity. We encourage all NAs to make sure that Erasmus+ participants in mobility, especially young people and students, are well informed about where they can access information about the situation in each country and where they can turn to for support if they are temporarily not able to reach the international relations office of their sending or receiving organisations and institutions due to the closings.

National Agencies are strongly invited to keep active communication channels open with local antennas of Erasmus alumni, former participants, Europeers, students' associations, former volunteers etc. to detect any major problem faced by mobility participants abroad, whenever these networks are still active. In this regard, we invite you to contact the local Erasmus Student Network (ESN) sections and student unions in your country to see how you can best cooperate with them to disseminate information quickly to mobile students and provide peer to peer support to those who are anxious or facing language barriers which make their situation more difficult.

In the most serious situations, e.g. where repatriation is needed, National Agencies are invited, whenever possible, to facilitate contacts with embassies and authorities of the home country.

#### Operational consequences for the European Commission

The Coronavirus has already had an impact on the working of the European Commission services. In recent weeks, we have cancelled all nonessentials trips, external meetings and conferences; reduced the number of internal meetings and increased the use of teleworking and videoconferencing.

As of Monday 16 March, we entered into a new phase, whereby the majority of staff members of the European Commission are obliged to telework.

We have prepared for this eventuality to the extent possible, however we ask for your understanding in this exceptional situation.

For further information or clarifications, please do not hesitate to continue to contact the Commission via your desk officer, putting in copy [EAC-NA-COORDINATION@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EAC-NA-COORDINATION@ec.europa.eu).

We would like to inform all National Agencies that notes from the Commission to National Agencies are not to be disseminated or published. The functional mailbox [EAC-NA-COORDINATION@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EAC-NA-COORDINATION@ec.europa.eu) is only to be used by National Agencies, not by project beneficiaries. Please be informed that notes related to the Corona virus will always be sent for information to programme committee members, national authorities and the Croatian Presidency.

**Note: E+/NA/DIR/2020/021**

**Subject: Coronavirus – Guidance to the NAs on the application of section 3.16 (force majeure) of the Guide for National Agencies and ‘Questions and Answers’ (batch 1)**

27/3/2020

Further to the Notes already issued, including the latest Note n° 018 sent on 18/03/2020, in relation to the coronavirus outbreak and as announced during the webinar held on Monday 23/03/2020, please find in annex two documents with further specific guidance to support National Agencies in managing these exceptional circumstances.

You will find the same information uploaded on NAconnECT, where it is available for all staff to consult.

To keep our stakeholders informed also directly, a summarised version of the most relevant information provided in these documents will be published on DG EAC’s website for beneficiaries and participants to consult. Nonetheless, you are kindly invited to disseminate promptly and widely the information to beneficiaries and programme stakeholders in your country. Beneficiary institutions and organisations should also be strongly recommended to keep an open channel of communication with participants in their projects, even if their premises are closed. For financial matters (refunds, eligibility of costs, conditions for grants, etc.) individual participants could preferably be invited to contact their home institution or organisation at a later stage, once the situation is back to normal.

#### **1. Questions and Answers (Q&A)**

We are receiving a high number of questions via different channels, including via the NACO platform, e-mails, social media, stakeholders, our webinars with you etc., which we need to consolidate and ensure that we provide you with coordinated and consistent answers, also in line with corporate guidelines and internal procedures.

Please find attached a Q&A document (Annex 1) related to the first batch of specific implementation questions raised by you. These will also be available as of Monday 30/03/2020 on NAconnECT: FAQ: COVID-19 page.

The next batch to reply to further questions already received is in preparation and will be released in the course of next week. You will be notified with a note to NA Directors when it has been finalised and it will be uploaded on the dedicated space on NAconnECT.

We endeavour to reply to all questions of principle via this channel; please kindly request your staff to follow the space on NAconnECT and verify at any time if a question has already been replied to in the Q&A section, to avoid duplication and allow for obsolete questions to be withdrawn / closed e.g. in NACO.

#### **2. Guidance for National Agencies on the application of *force majeure* to the “costs entailed by activities that have not taken place or additional costs that were caused by the exceptional circumstances “**

Understandably, many questions and concerns revolve around the eligibility of costs under various scenarios (prolongation, suspension, termination, cancellation before start) and the funding model to be applied to costs for cancelled activities and additional costs in these circumstances.

To be able to reply to the high volume of detailed questions raised, please find attached a guidance note that sets out the practice for the National Agencies for applying the *force majeure* principle caused by the coronavirus outbreak in the framework of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps decentralised action (Annex 2).

I hope that this will provide you with the needed clarity to inform beneficiaries and participants how their cases will be handled so that they can take an informed decision as to whether or not they wish to terminate or continue the funded activities, as well as the frames within which costs can be considered eligible by the National Agencies.

For further information or clarifications, please do not hesitate to continue to contact the Commission via [EAC-NA-COORDINATION@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EAC-NA-COORDINATION@ec.europa.eu), putting your desk officer in copy.

*\*Both annexes were distributed to delegations, together with the note, by the Secretariat on 30/3/2020.*

**Note: E+/NA/DIR/2020/023**

**Subject: COVID -19 outbreak – ‘Questions and Answers’ (batch 2)**

14/4/2020

Following the note 021 of 27 March 2020 to National Agencies’ Directors, providing specific guidance on the application of the *force majeure* principle in the programme implementation and a first set of answers to questions submitted, we wish to make available the second batch of questions and answers (Q&A) to support National Agencies in managing the exceptional circumstances in relation to the COVID -19 outbreak.

This second batch of Q&A (in Annex) contains 21 questions that are essentially linked to the extension, postponement or substitution of performance, including the questions on extension of KA2 projects and TCA/NET/TEC activities. You will shortly find the same information uploaded on NAconnect, where it is available for all staff to consult here: FAQ: COVID-19 page.

We continue analysing and treating the remainder of the high volume of questions received to provide you with replies to questions of principle. These include among others exploring the possibility for National Agencies to make use of unused funds under open Delegation Agreements and the margins of simplification to alleviate the high workload you are currently facing in managing Grant Agreements with beneficiaries. However, as these questions relate to fundamental corporate financial rules, they require consultation with the Commission’s budget department and central legal service.

For further information or clarifications, please do not hesitate to continue to contact the Commission via [EAC-NA-COORDINATION@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EAC-NA-COORDINATION@ec.europa.eu), putting your desk officer in copy.

*\*The Annex was distributed to delegations, together with the note, by the Secretariat on 14/4/2020.*