

TITLE: Erasmus: key to reaching sustainability and SDGs

We're in 2025, 2/3 of the time we had available to complete the 2030 Agenda goals has already passed by, and we should keep pushing towards reaching them. The Erasmus mobility can contribute to many of the SDGs (sustainable development goals) and this essay has the purpose to prove that.

When we talk about sustainability the first goal that comes to mind is SDG13: Climate Action; the Erasmus program is promoting the Green Erasmus, giving an extra 50 euros and up to 4 days of support for students that decide to arrive to their destination with green transport (buses, trains etc.) (Document #2).

This initiative is great but it's not enough, as seen in a report from 2022, 70% c.a. of students still use plane as the main transport when reaching their destination (Document #6); there is the urgent need to amplify the concept of Green Erasmus.

Green Erasmus is not only about transportation there is much more, they should encourage traineeships, university programs and solidarity corps that work towards being more sustainable, as they promote the "digital skills" they should promote the "sustainability awareness".

Additionally Green Erasmus is also about being more responsible (SDG12: responsible consumption and production), as stated in the Green Erasmus report only 21,5% of students base their choices on sustainability (Document #6). This low percentage is crushing, young people leaving for Erasmus should be much more aware of their impact, because it's not only about transportation, is about daily habits, choices, events. Some useful tips are using a water bottle instead of plastic ones; buying food products from locals or not imported; having home-cooked meals (students could also try food from different cultures, creating an intercultural

environment); joining events with more people (they're cheaper, usually more fun and far more sustainable).

Sustainability isn't easy, you have to let go of some of the benefits of the consumerist and capitalistic society, for example if you decide to move by train you're going to move much slower than by plane; but the key is about finding balance between what to keep and what to let go, always moving towards a more sustainable lifestyle. If you live really close to your university or workplace you may choose to walk or cycle there instead of going by car; cycling is also much healthier as noted in Document #4 contributing to SDG11: sustainable cities and communities.

Lastly I believe that raising awareness about sustainable practices is key and to do so it is fundamental to reach SDG4: Quality Education, as stated in Document #7.

It's important to share what you learnt with your friends and family when you come back from your trip. It is essential to create people that are advocate for sustainability, that care about the climate change issue, that work towards mitigating the effects and that are willing to inspire others.

In conclusion the Erasmus experience is a great way to focus on sustainability but what matters the most is the people that leave for their Erasmus. Only them, with their voices, ideas and knowledge can influence the other people, that didn't have the occasion to leave.