

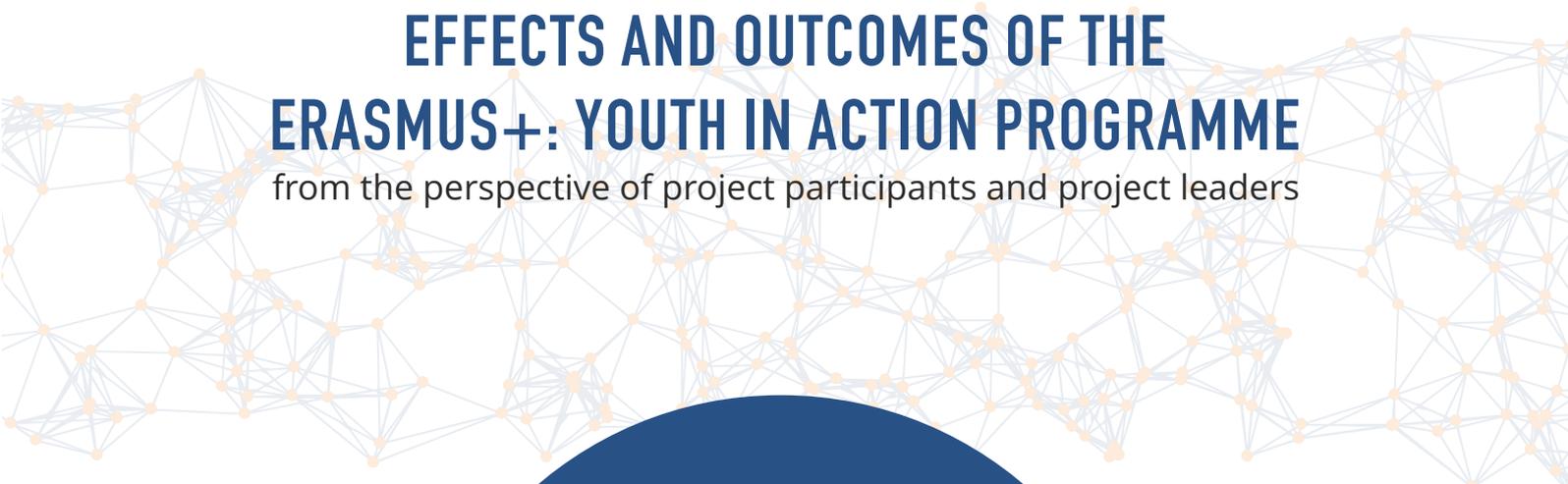


research based analysis of youth in action

# EXPLORING ERASMUS+: YOUTH IN ACTION

## EFFECTS AND OUTCOMES OF THE ERASMUS+: YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME

from the perspective of project participants and project leaders



TRANSNATIONAL  
ANALYSIS 2015/16

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Erasmus+



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This document and the full report on the main findings of the transnational analysis can be retrieved from <http://www.researchyouth.eu/results-erasmus-youth-in-action>

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*'Erasmus+: Youth in Action' is part of the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union and supporting European youth projects. The 'Research-based Analysis of Erasmus+: Youth in Action' (RAY) is conducted by the RAY Network, which includes the National Agencies of Erasmus+: Youth in Action and their research partners in 29 countries\*.*

*This Executive Summary presents an overview of the main findings of our transnational analysis of surveys with project participants and project leaders/team members involved in Erasmus+: Youth in Action projects that were conducted between October 2015 and April 2016. The study was designed and implemented by the Institute of Educational Science at the University of Innsbruck and the Generation and Educational Science*

*Institute in Austria, under the research project direction of Helmut Fennes and in cooperation with the RAY Network. It was co-funded within the Transnational Cooperation Activities (TCA) of Erasmus+: Youth in Action.*

*This report reflects the views only of its authors, and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use, which may be made of the information contained therein.*

*Where available, national research reports can be requested from the respective National Agencies and their research partners (see <http://www.researchyouth.eu/network>). Further RAY publications can be retrieved from <http://www.researchyouth.eu/results-erasmus-youth-in-action>.*

*\* In 2015/16: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom.*

# ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

## ABBREVIATIONS

- E+** European Union Programme Erasmus+ (2014-2020)
- E+/YiA** Erasmus+: Youth in Action (2014-2020)
- PL** Project leaders/members of project teams: Youth workers, youth leaders, trainers or other actors who prepared and implemented YiA projects for/with young people or youth workers/leaders, at least in an education/socio-pedagogic function, but frequently also with an organisational function; normally, in particular in the case of projects with participants from two or more different countries, these projects are prepared and implemented by project teams with two or more project leaders.
- PP** Project participants
- RAY** Research-based Analysis of Erasmus+: Youth in Action. The RAY Network consists of the Youth in Action National Agencies and their research partners involved in the RAY project.

## KEY COMPETENCES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>KC1</b> Communication in the mother tongue                                      | <b>KC6</b> Social and civic competences                |
| <b>KC2</b> Communication in foreign languages                                      | <b>KC6a</b> <i>Interpersonal and social competence</i> |
| <b>KC3</b> Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology | <b>KC6b</b> <i>Intercultural competence</i>            |
| <b>KC3a</b> <i>Mathematical competence</i>   | <b>KC6c</b> <i>Civic competence</i>                    |
| <b>KC3b</b> <i>Basic competences in science and technology</i>                     | <b>KC7</b> Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship    |
| <b>KC4</b> Digital competence  | <b>KC7a</b> <i>Sense of initiative</i>                 |
| <b>KC5</b> Learning competence (learning to learn)                                 | <b>KC7b</b> <i>Sense of entrepreneurship</i>           |
|  | <b>KC8</b> Cultural awareness and expression           |
|  | <b>ML</b> Media literacy                               |

## RAY RESEARCH PROJECTS

- RAY-CAP** A research project on **competence development and capacity building** of youth workers and youth leaders involved in training/support activities in Erasmus+: Youth in Action. 16 RAY Network members are currently involved in this project.
- RAY-LTE** A research project on the **long-term effects of Erasmus+: Youth in Action on participation and citizenship** of the actors involved, in particular on the development of participation and citizenship competences and practices. 10 RAY Network members are currently involved in this project.
- RAY-MON** **Research-based analysis and monitoring of Erasmus+: Youth in Action** aims to contribute to monitoring and developing Erasmus+: Youth in Action and the quality of projects supported by it. This activity is a joint activity of all RAY Network members.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Erasmus+ Programme pursues a number of youth-specific objectives through its Youth in Action strand. This Executive Summary presents an overview of the findings of our research-based analysis and monitoring of Erasmus+: Youth in Action project (RAY-MON) on the achievement of the programme's youth-specific objectives from the perspective of project participants as well as project leaders.

We frequently invite project participants and project leaders to assess the level of achievement through a combination of statements, questions and comments as part of our monitoring survey series. A total of 16,373 project participants and 2,951 project leaders are included in the sample of the survey wave that was conducted between October 2015 and April 2016.

This Executive Summary concentrates on four key youth-specific objectives of the programme:

- to improve the level of key competences and skills of young people
- to promote active citizenship and participation in democratic life in Europe
- to strengthen social inclusion and solidarity in Europe
- to strengthen the role of youth organisations as support structures for young people

On the following pages, we will turn to each of these objectives and summarise the main research findings in relation to the objectives' attainment. At the end of the document, we then provide a concluding overview of how project leaders assess the contribution of their projects to all objectives of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme.

## IMPROVING THE LEVEL OF KEY COMPETENCES

We asked project participants and project leaders to consider a number of skills and state how much these skills have improved through their participation in their projects and the programme. For all skills, more than half of all project participants and project leaders agree or strongly agree that their project has strengthened the skill in question. For all but one skill, more than two thirds of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their abilities have improved. The one exception is the production of media content, where agreement is at 61%.

Project leaders and project participants agreed or strongly agreed with more than 90% of all respondents that their abilities had improved for two skills in particular, namely *the ability to get along with people of different cultural backgrounds* and *the ability to communicate with people speaking another language*.

In addition, project leaders agreed or strongly agreed with more than 90% of all respondents that their abilities had improved for four additional skills, namely *the ability to negotiate joint solutions from different viewpoints*, *the ability to achieve something for the community and/or society*, *the ability to develop an idea and put it into practice*, and *the ability to say what they think with conviction in discussions*.

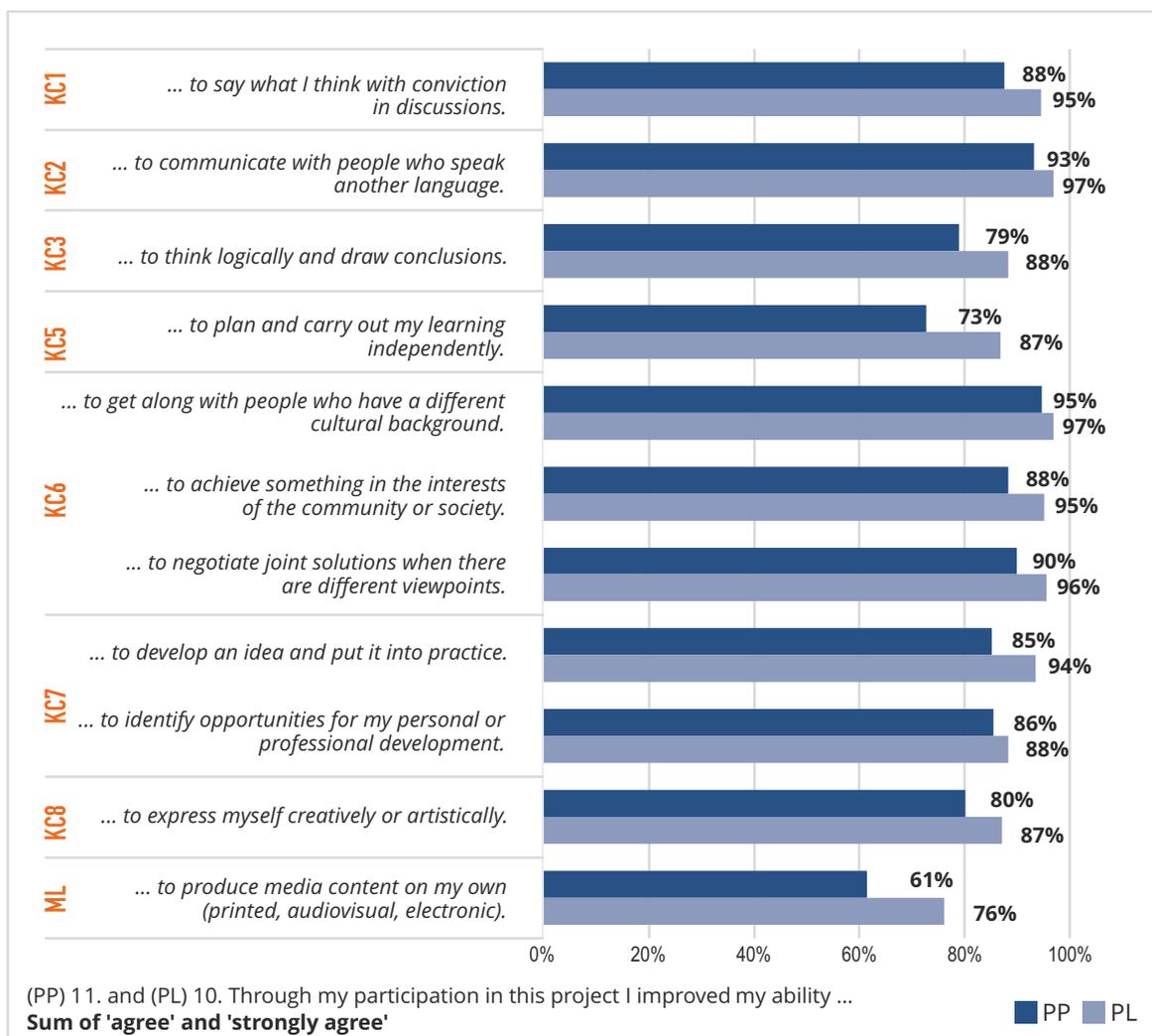
The more affirmative self-assessment of project leaders is not surprising, given that they are typically involved for longer periods of time and with more intensity in the projects.

Looking back at the project, 86% of responding project participants and 88% of responding project leaders state that they improved their *ability to identify opportunities for their personal or professional development* through their participation in the project.

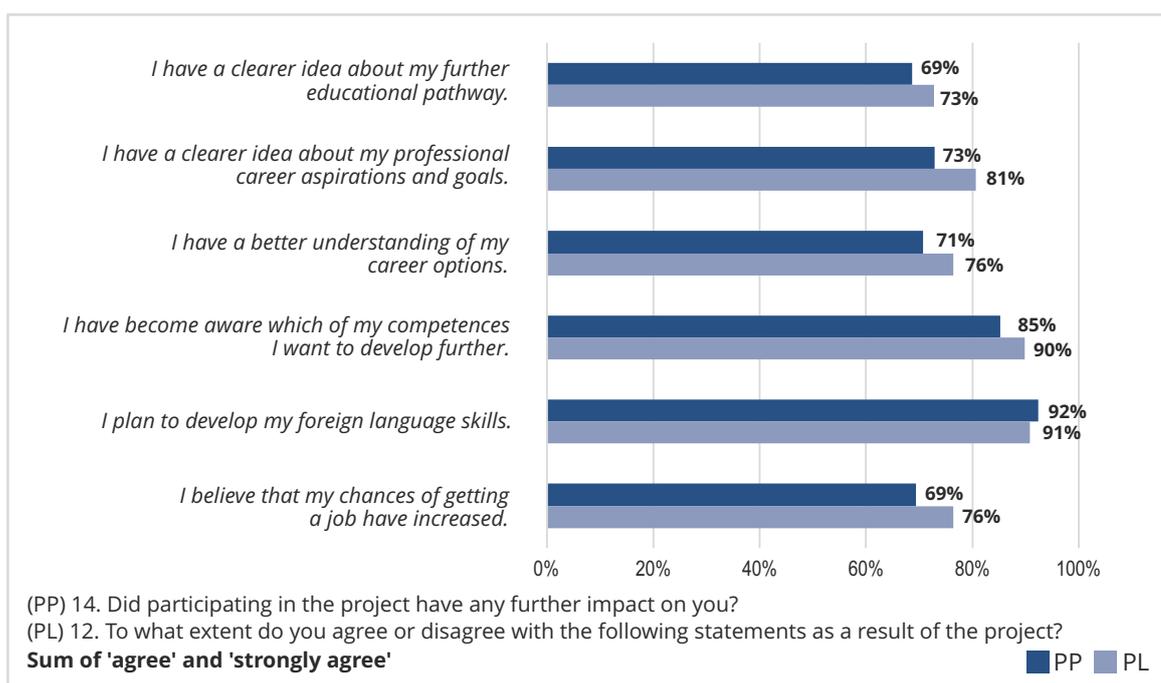
**Figure 1** below illustrates various aspects of competence development for project participants and project leaders.

**Figure 2** demonstrates the facets of effects on the development of personal and professional pathways of project participants and project leaders.

**FIGURE 1: COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT OF PROJECT PARTICIPANTS (PP) AND PROJECT LEADERS (PL)**



**FIGURE 2: EFFECTS ON PATHWAYS OF PROJECT PARTICIPANTS (PP) AND PROJECT LEADERS (PL)**



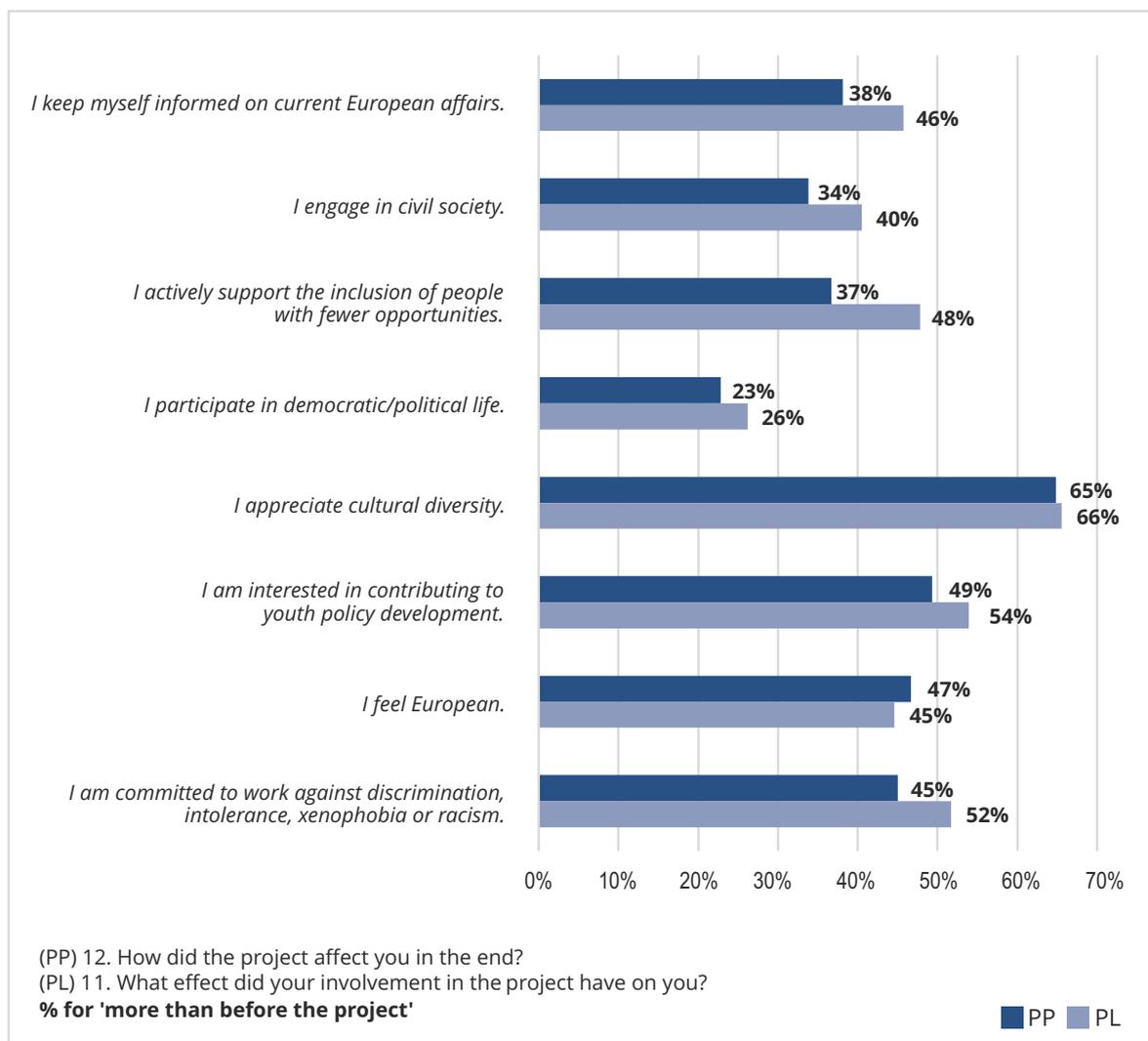
## PROMOTING ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

We asked project participants and project leaders a number of questions related to knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and practices relevant for participation and active citizenship, which could have been fostered through participating in Erasmus+ Youth in Action. We also explored to which extent project participants' interest in citizenship and participation motivated them to become involved in their respective projects, and in how far the project has motivated them to become more active citizens. Our surveys show that 95% of respondents believe that they have developed one skill relevant and helpful for participation and

active citizenship; 90% believe they have developed two skills, and 88% believe they have developed three skills strengthening citizenship and participation (see Figure 1). These skills are translated into action swiftly: 45% of respondents report that they have become more active as citizens as a result of their participation in the programme. Equally remarkable is that 86% of participants in projects for youth workers and youth leaders and 92% of project leaders state that they learned better how to foster participation of young people in the preparation and implementation of youth (work) projects.

**Figure 3** below illustrates various aspects of active citizenship and participation and shows in particular to which extent these were strengthened or emphasised through the projects and programme.

**FIGURE 3: EFFECTS ON PARTICIPATION AND CITIZENSHIP OF PARTICIPANTS (PP) AND PROJECT LEADERS (PL)**



## STRENGTHENING SOCIAL INCLUSION AND SOLIDARITY IN EUROPE

We asked project leaders a number of questions related to the involvement of *young people with fewer opportunities or with special needs* in their project and asked project participants a number of questions in relation to the obstacles they face.

47% of responding project participants report that they are faced with obstacles when asked to indicate all of the following obstacles that apply. The main obstacle project participants see in *access to work and employment* (39%), followed by *active participation in society and politics* (24%), *mobility* (22%) and *access to education* (20%).

When asked to indicate the kind of obstacle faced (again choosing all that apply), one item dominates the responses, namely *not having enough money* (50%), followed by a diverse range of aspects: *living in a remote area* (16%), *social background* (15%), *low educational attainment* (13%), *family responsibilities* and *health problems* (both 11%).

61% of responding **project leaders** stated that young people with fewer opportunities or with special needs participated in their projects. We also asked project leaders to specify which

obstacles prevented young people with fewer opportunities or with special needs who participated in their project from having access to education, mobility, work or participation in society and politics at large. They specified *not having enough money* as the most frequent obstacle (56%), followed by *social background* (41%), *belonging to a disadvantaged group* (36%), *living in a remote area* (35%), *low educational attainment* (31%) and *living in a deprived (sub-)urban area* (29%).

Despite these differences in judgment between project participants and project leaders, which should be researched further, the programme's inclusion approach works: 83% of project leaders agree that their *project contributed to supporting the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities or special needs* in the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme (42% strongly agree, 41% agree). 37% of project participants said they actively support the inclusion of people with fewer opportunities *more than before the project*, with an additional 61% saying they do so *to the same extent as before the project*.

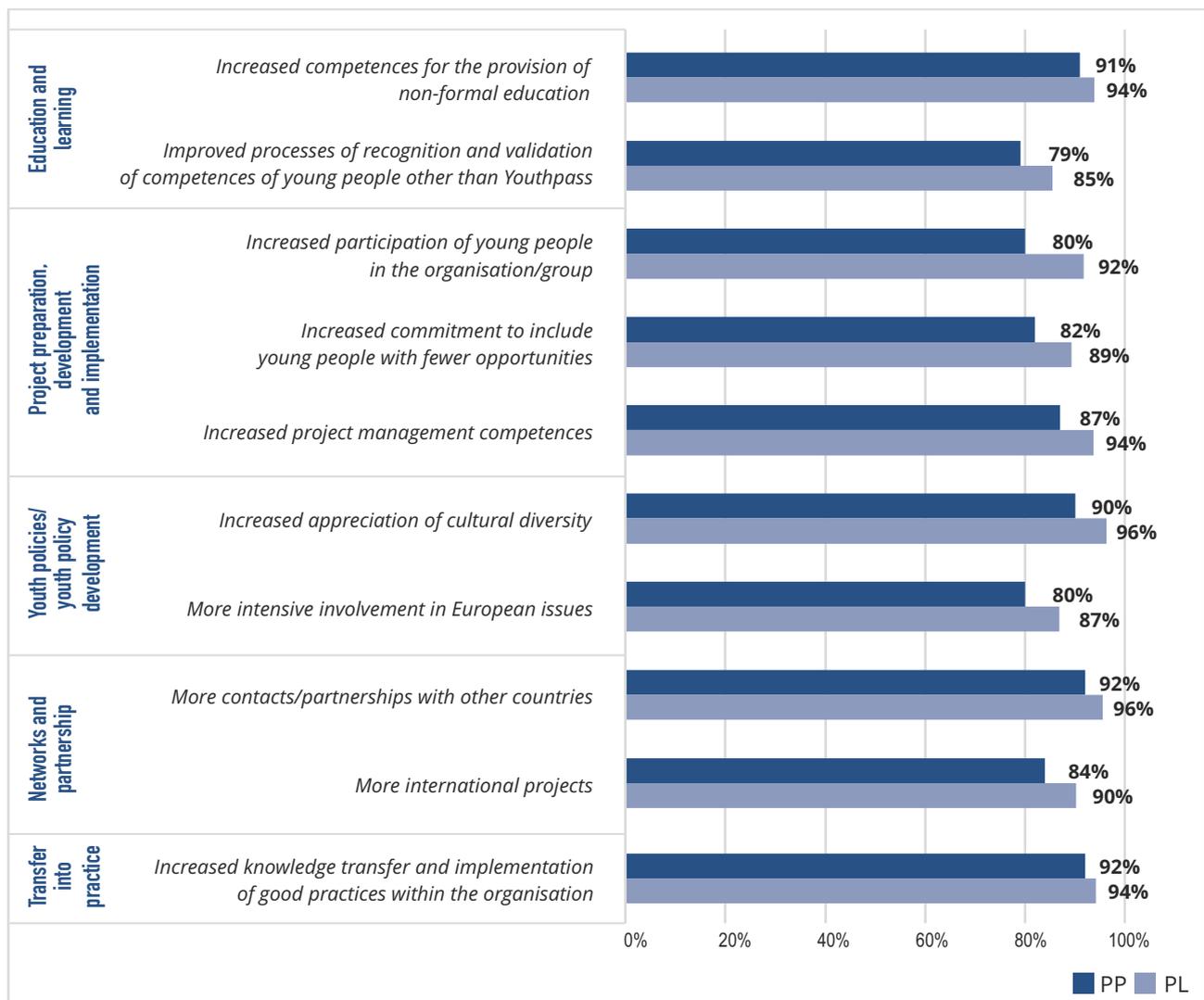
## STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

The effects of the participation in and involvement of project participants and project leaders in the programme on their organisations is multi-faceted. They include *increased competences for the provision of non-formal education, increased participation of young people in the organisation, increased appreciation of cultural diversity and a more intense involvement in European issues*. Crucially, 92% of responding participants in projects for youth workers and youth leaders and 96% of responding project leaders indicate an *increased knowledge transfer and implementation of good practices within the*

*organisation*. Looking beyond their own organisation, responding participants in projects for youth workers and youth leaders as well as responding project leaders also report some effects of their project participation on their work and involvement in the youth field more generally through the transfer of competence development. 83% of responding participants in projects for youth workers/youth leaders and 91% of responding project leaders *have already applied knowledge and skills acquired during the project in his/her work/involvement in the youth field*.

**Figure 4** below illustrates the facets of effects on the organisations of project participants as well as project leaders. Similar to the strengthening of individual competences, the organisational effects are stronger for project leaders, whose involvement in projects tends to be both longer and more intense.

**FIGURE 4: EFFECTS ON ORGANISATIONS OF PROJECT PARTICIPANTS (PP) AND PROJECT LEADERS (PL)**



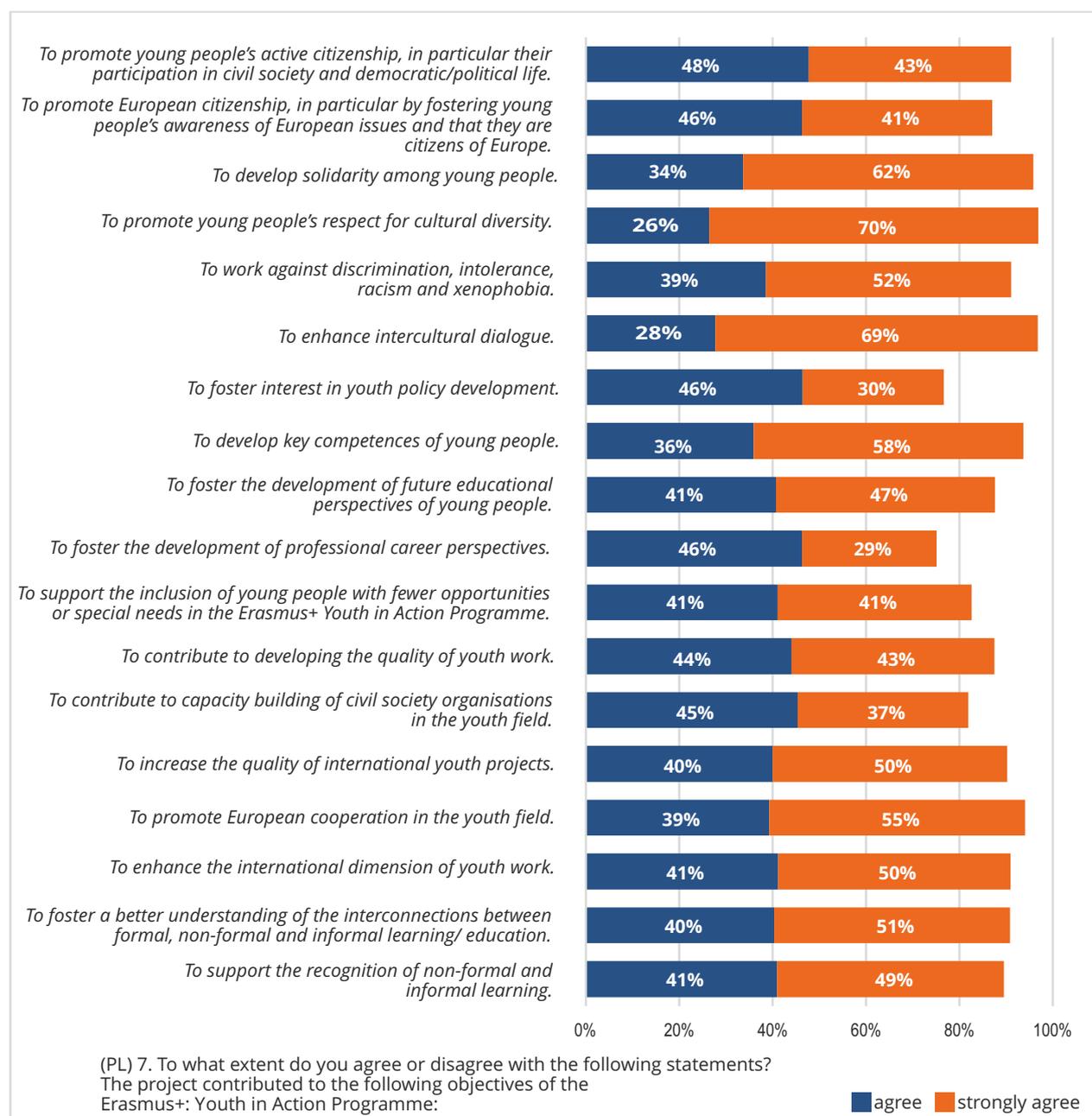
## FURTHER PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

We asked project leaders to what extent they would judge that their project contributed to the objectives of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme. Figure 5 below illustrates their responses beyond the four key objectives we have described in more detail in this Executive Summary.

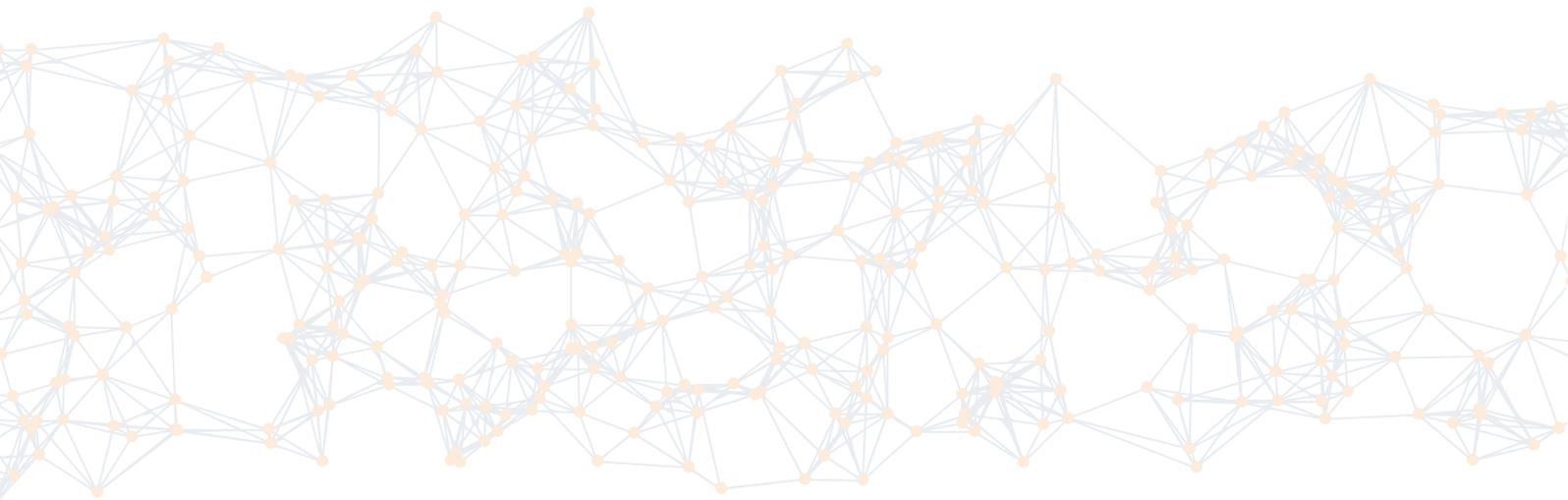
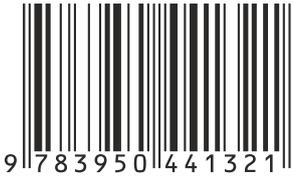
The overall picture is a very encouraging one: for all but two objectives, project leaders agree or strongly agree with over 80% that their project contributed to the objective's achievement. The two objectives that are

slightly less commonly/frequently contributed to are to foster interest in youth policy development and to foster the development of professional career perspectives. With 76% and 75% respectively, these objectives are far from underserved. However, relative to the other objectives, we suggest that it would be useful to further investigate reasons for why the projects within the context of Erasmus+: Youth in Action contribute less to their achievement.

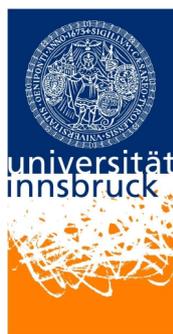
**FIGURE 5: COHERENCE OF PROJECTS WITH OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES OF THE E+/YIA PROGRAMME (PL)**



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