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**HELLENIC REPUBLIC**  
Ministry of Education,  
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**REGIONAL DIRECTORATE  
EDUCATION OF CRETE**

# **Blended Mobilities a mobility format for fewer opportunity students and win-win**

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# Initials

- During the pandemic, we have learned that virtual mobility helped to overcome lockdowns and difficult times for studying abroad. The aim is to enable as many members of higher education institutions as possible to experience a combined mobility, “Blended Mobility.”
- Enabling increased participation in a structured mobility programme (ERASMUS+) is a reasonable goal.
- Higher education students – a very heterogeneous group
- Focus on those who have so far been under-represented on the mobility front according to student social surveys.
- **The added value** brought by teaching experience during the mobility also lies in the further development of their teaching, the option to compare, and in improving their foreign language skills.

# Theoretical issues and methodology

- Teacher education students are an underrepresented group in the Erasmus+ programme. Long-term stays are made difficult by the already strongly felt teacher shortage, as students often work contractually in schools beginning in the third semester of their training.
- Working students are among the disadvantaged groups concerning study-abroad mobility (according to National Strategy for the Social Dimension in Higher Education, BMBWF 2017).
- New Erasmus+ programme (2021-2027) the so-called “Blended Mobilities” is a new opportunity and emphasis for new ideas to bring a higher number of European students (or staff) abroad.
- Different formats of Blended Mobilities, such as short-term mobilities (5-30 days), long-term mobilities (2-12 months), or Blended Intensive Programs (BIP).
- The HIMS 2020-2030 (BMBWF 2020) emphasizes in goal one the promotion of underrepresented groups and in goal three the development and realization of innovative digital mobility formats.
- Blended Mobilities are a suitable format to meet these goals.
- **Reliable partner institutions are needed**
  - The PH Wien has started a pilot for Blended Mobilities for students with the Regional Directorate for Primary and Secondary Schools of Crete (Heraklion/GR).
  - The preparations for this began as early as the Winter term 2022/23. In September 2023 (i.e., before the start of studies), seven students went to Heraklion to two schools

# Results

- Prior to this, a virtual meeting with the partner school took place as part of a self-financed coaching course, and the key points of the three-week stay were clarified with the local mentors. The students successfully completed their teaching practice (funded via Erasmus+ SMP), which will ultimately be credited to their studies.
- The schools in Crete warmly welcomed the assisting students from Vienna, who were very helpful and supportive in German or English at the start of the school year.
- The next step for an expansion for February 2024 has already been agreed with the school management.
- Preliminary talks have also already taken place with the Regional Directorate for the Ionian Islands.



*Dr. Thomas Bauer and Dr. Manolis Kartsonakis, Director of the Regional Directorate of Education of Crete, [www.pdekritis.gr](http://www.pdekritis.gr), at the Regional Directorate Education of Crete in August, 2023*

# Discussion of results / outlook

- These completely financed short-term mobilities could be an excellent means for future cooperation with other schools in the reach of European trains. So, a “**Green Erasmus**” top-up could make this experience more sustainable. There are plans to broaden the network with other Greek, Italian, and German regions
- As soon as the war in Ukraine is over, students from Austria could easily go to schools and do their teaching practice intensively in the form of Blended Mobilities in German or English. From previous long-term stays abroad, we know that it is to the benefit of both sides. It would be a valuable contribution from Europe to a renewed Ukraine and a future member of the European Union