



EUROPEAN UNION

Insights from the RIA-AE Network: Transnational Research in E+ Adult Education

*Research-based Impact Analysis of
Erasmus+ **Adult Education** Programmes
(RIA-AE)*

A graphic of a blue map of Europe with a thick orange square border superimposed over it.

RIA

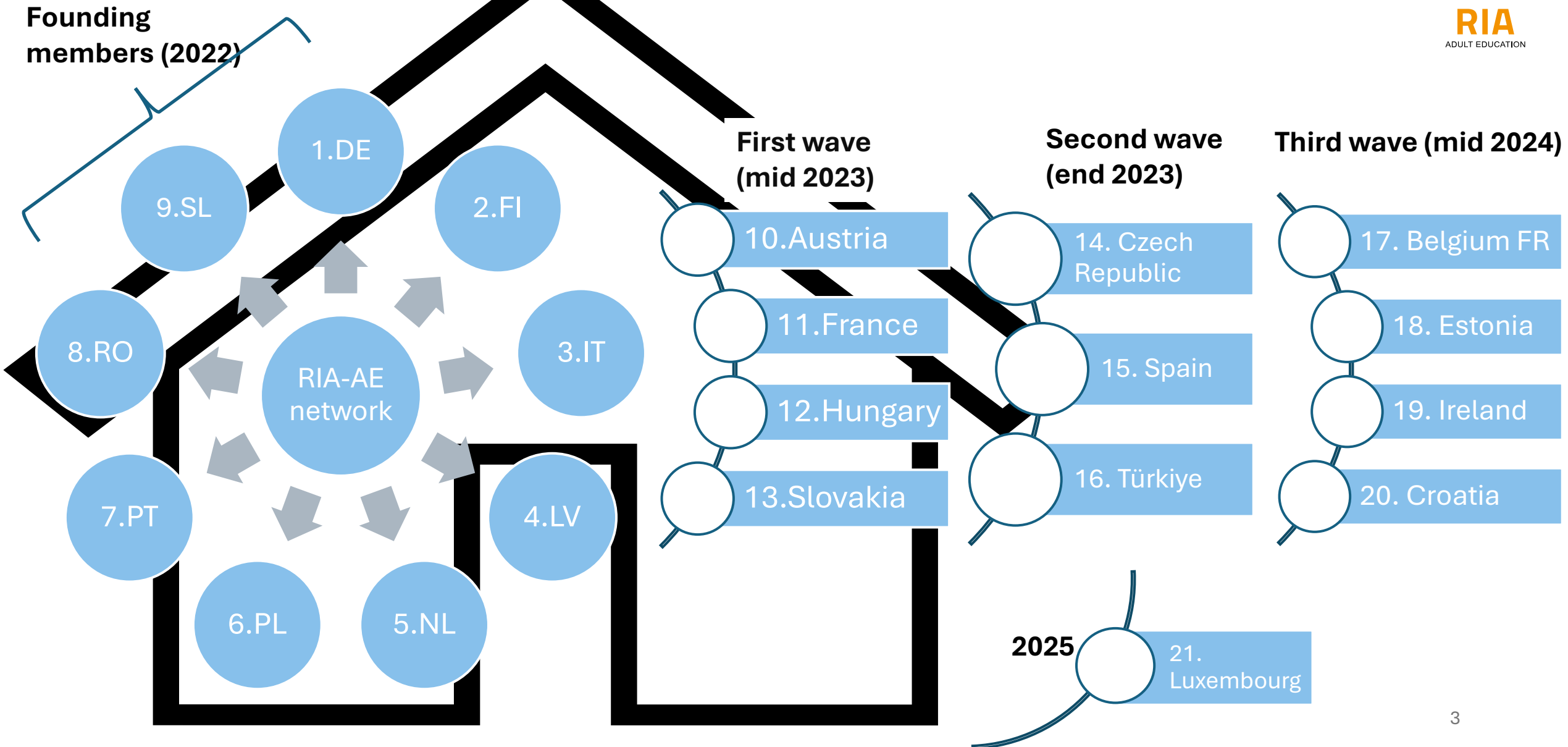
ADULT EDUCATION

The RIA-AE Network

- Long-term activity (LTA) within Erasmus+ coordinated by the National Agency Education for Europe at the German Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (NA at BIBB)
- Research network on the impact of Erasmus+ in adult education
- 21 partner countries
- Consortium for research coordination: Ockham IPS, iit – Institute for Innovation and Technology, and Artéduduc/University of Brussels



A Growing Network



Mission Statement RIA-AE Network



‘Adult
Education
Matters’



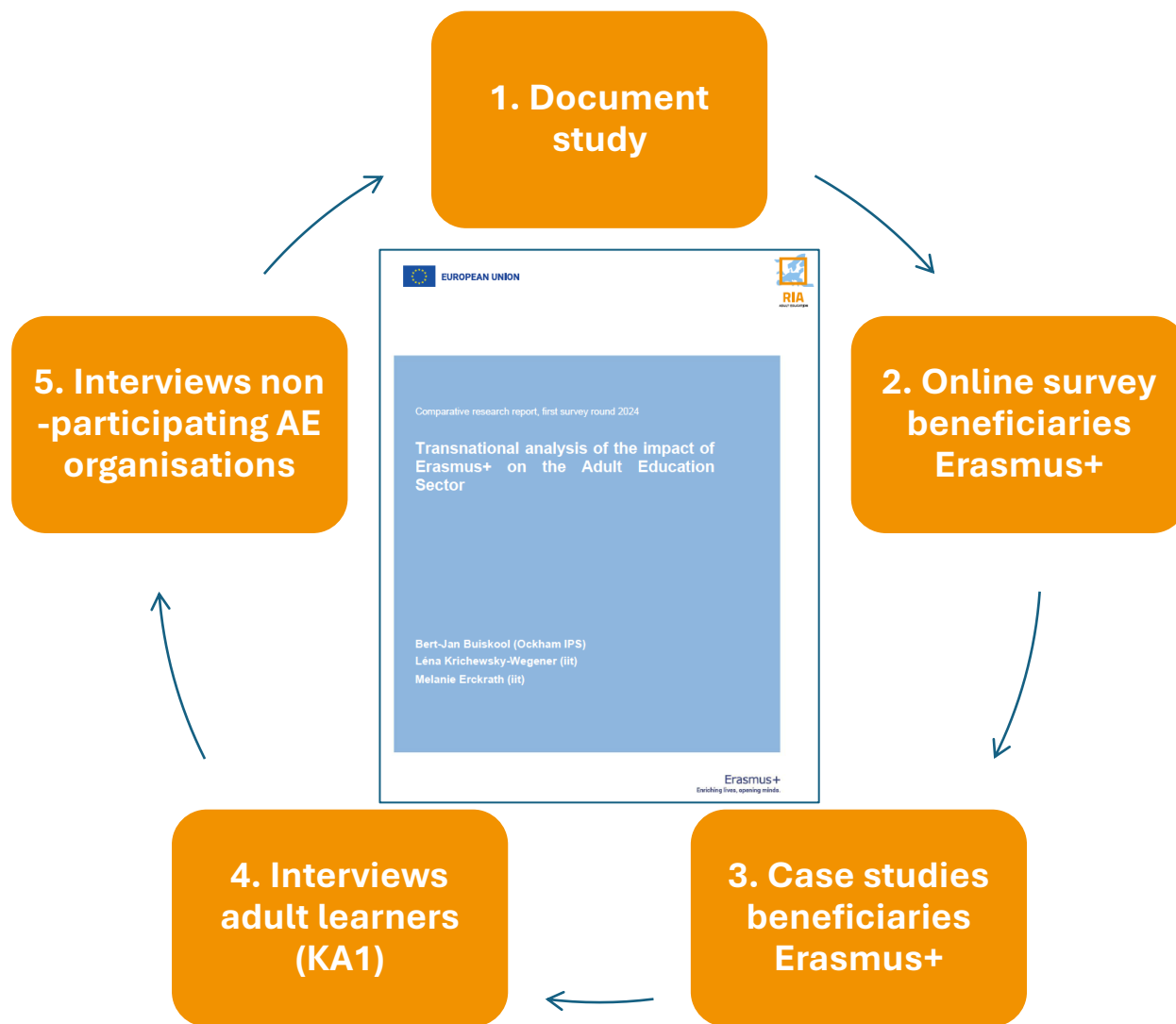
‘To explore
the
unexplored’

- To contribute to a better **understanding of the impact** of international cooperation and mobility projects in adult education within the Erasmus+ Programme
- To strengthen **cooperation and dialogue** between research, policy and practice
- To contribute to further **development and improvement** of the Erasmus+ Programme by enabling high-quality and practice-oriented evaluation and impact research
- To enlarge the **visibility of the benefits** of Adult Education in the EU and Member States and the role of Erasmus+ (advocacy)

Research Approach

- The research is conducted in three rounds
 - First survey round: 2023/2024
 - Second survey round: 2025/2026
 - Third survey round: 2027/2028
- As a first step, each survey round is conducted at national level resulting in a national report
- All national reports feed into a EU synthesis report for each survey round

Research Modules First Survey Round (23/24)



New in
2025/2026:

**A. Qualitative
module on
learners'
mobility**

**B. Quantitative
module on
learners'
mobility**

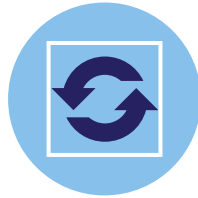


thematic focus on
democratic participation

Achievements of Erasmus+ in Adult Education



1. Erasmus+ **reaches** a high variety of AE organisations and learners



2. Beneficiary organisations **value Erasmus+ and remain loyal** to the programme



3. **Organisational embedding** of internationalisation has improved



4. Most developed outputs are **mainstreamed** in regular offer



5. Projects contribute to the **Erasmus+ horizontal priorities**



6. Erasmus+ improves **staff member's professional skills**



7. Participation in Erasmus+ improves the **skills of adult learners and their social Integration**

Challenges of Erasmus+ in Adult Education

1. Not all types of organisations are reached yet

2. Potential for increasing synergies between KA1 and KA2

3. Potential to strengthen the impact of the programme

4. A difficult start for mobility for adult learners, but a promising future

5. Limited impact at system level by lack of dialogue between programme and policy level

Position Paper 2025:

Recommendations from the RIA-AE Network in Adult Education

- Created by a working group within the RIA Network **on the basis of the report** and policy pointers
- 4-pager focusing on achievements and challenges and concrete **proposals to address the challenges**
- Purpose: Targeted message focussing on **desired programme development and adaptations** for policy level (European Commission)



Erasmus+: A motivator for Innovation and Inclusion in Adult Education

- Erasmus+ is particularly important for **learners with fewer opportunities**.
- To reach these learners, **targeted support is needed**—such as funding for outreach, preparatory measures, and tailored mobility formats.

To make KA1 mobility successful, greater flexibility in funding mechanisms is essential.

- This includes **targeted support for hosting organisations** and **dedicated funding for outreach activities** and preparatory measures

Erasmus+: Beyond Numbers – Recognising the Unique Character of Adult Education

- it is essential to **consider the structural diversity and specific needs of adult education**. [...] To unlock the full potential of Erasmus+ in adult education, **the programme must retain flexibility in its design and implementation**.

(Extract)

Expanded RIA-AE Monitoring Approach

- Identified research gaps and information needs in survey round 1 lead to an adjusted and expanded approach in 2025
 - Focus on horizontal priority **‘Participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement’**
 - Organizing additional more in depth research modules on **learners in adult education**
 - **Qualitative approach** to address research gaps on the learnings and impacts, learners report after being on a learning mobility
 - **Quantitative approach** to measure the impact of mobilities for learners in adult education with a pre- and post-test-design

Impact on Learners – qualitative approach

RQ1: What **learning effects** do participants in adult education report from Erasmus+ mobility actions under KA1?

RQ2: What **changes** do adult learners report in domains such as their **social, professional, and civic lives** as a result of mobility?

RQ3: What are the **broader impacts** of Erasmus+ mobility on adult learners' social environment and communities?

Sampling and data collection

- Countries participating: **Austria, Germany, Latvia and Slovenia**
- Make use of interviews conducted within the RIA-AE monitoring and **use an elaborated research design**
 - Grounded theoretically in transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2018)
 - Problem-centered interviews (Witzel and Reiter, 2012)
 - Qualitative content analysis (Kuckartz and Rädiker, 2023)
- 24 problem-centred interviews were conducted, transcribed and analysed with qualitative content analysis

Findings

Impact Areas related to mobilities

Intercultural learning and travelling

Social Connection

Wellbeing and independent living skills

Volunteering and civic engagement

Communicating in multilingual settings

Impact Areas related to the theme of the mobility

European Citizenship

Work and Vocational Training

Nature and Environment

Intercultural learning and travelling

Subcategories

awareness of cultural differences

knowledge about the culture of the host country

new perspectives on life and their own cultural identity

international mobility and intercultural dialogue

openness and interest in engaging with people from different cultural backgrounds

participation in new mobility projects or plans for travelling abroad

Added value

- **Raise awareness** and **provide evidence** of the programme's effectiveness
- **Provide insights** in the learners experiences



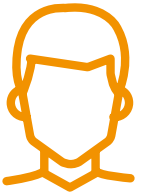
<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blos/ria-ae-network>

Next steps

- Feeding reports, factsheets and scientific papers
- Currently, data collection with learners in AE is underway in 12 countries. Items were developed on the basis of the qualitative study.



Download the EU synthesis report
and country reports here:



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Literature

- Kuckartz, U., & Rädiker, S. (2023). *Qualitative content analysis: Methods, practice and software* (2nd edition). SAGE.
- Mezirow, J. (2018). Transformative learning theory. In K. Illeris (Ed.), *Contemporary theories of learning: Learning theorists... In their own words* (Second edition, pp. 114–128). Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Witzel, A., & Reiter, H. (2012). *The problem-centred interview: Principles and practice*. SAGE.
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