REDUCING THE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF ERASMUS MOBILITIES THROUGH INCENTIVES AND CARBON OFFSETTING

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DE PATER Mara, GABRIELCZAK Piotr, KOKKO Sirpa, OMAR Maryam, SAARELA Henri, *Measures to Reduce the Transport-related Carbon Footprint of the Erasmus Programme*, August 2022.

In order to reduce the carbon footprint of students and staff going on mobility abroad, incentives for carbon reduction and options for carbon offsetting should be put at their fingertips so they can engage in the relevant behaviours to lower the transport CO2 footprint of their mobility.

For IO3, we carried out under the leadership of Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR) the necessary research to determine and design the incentives for carbon reduction and options for carbon offsetting to encourage both higher education students and staff to lower their carbon footprint associated with their mobility abroad. These incentives and options also inform the handbook, guidelines and policy recommendations in IO4.

The objective was first to determine what incentives work best for influencing the choices of higher education students and staff taking part in the Erasmus+ programme regarding the means of transport they use to go on mobility. Several types of incentives were

investigated, including the impact of offering free transportation, financial top-ups for using cleaner transport, certificates of green behaviour, etc. We also looked into solutions already implemented by some universities outside our consortium. Focus groups with higher education students and staff were set up to complement the desk research and determine what kinds of incentives could best influence their choices.

We also investigated options for carbon offsetting that could be paired with the incentives identified in the previous task to encourage students and staff to offset their transport CO2 footprint before, during or after their mobility abroad. In particular, the potential impact of the following options were investigated: planting trees, solar energy, hydropower energy, thermal energy, ecological stoves, water cleaning, public procurement procedures, food waste reduction/management. An inventory of existing measures in HEIs has been compiled. The impact of those solutions has been assessed through focus groups research. Recommendations for carbon offsetting are given on an individual level (student), institutional level (higher education institution) and on the national/European level (DG EAC, Erasmus+ National Agencies, and the Erasmus programme itself).