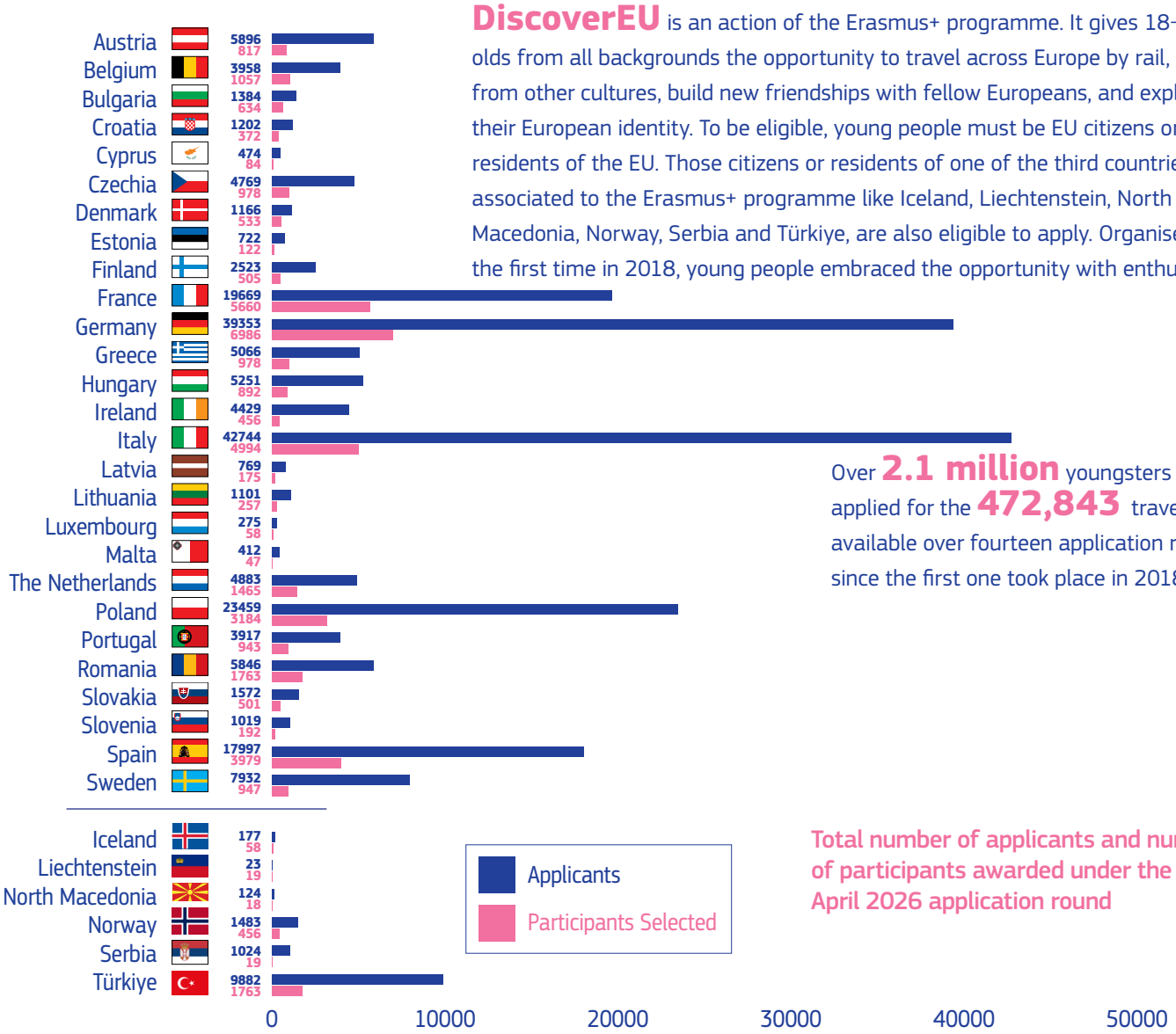
European Commission

Youth

WHAT IS DISCOVEREU?

DiscoverEU is an action of the Erasmus+ programme. It gives 18-year-olds from all backgrounds the opportunity to travel across Europe by rail, learn from other cultures, build new friendships with fellow Europeans, and explore their European identity. To be eligible, young people must be EU citizens or legal residents of the EU. Those citizens or residents of one of the third countries associated to the Erasmus+ programme like Iceland, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Türkiye, are also eligible to apply. Organised for the first time in 2018, young people embraced the opportunity with enthusiasm.

Over **2.1 million** youngsters have applied for the **472,843** travel passes available over fourteen application rounds since the first one took place in 2018.

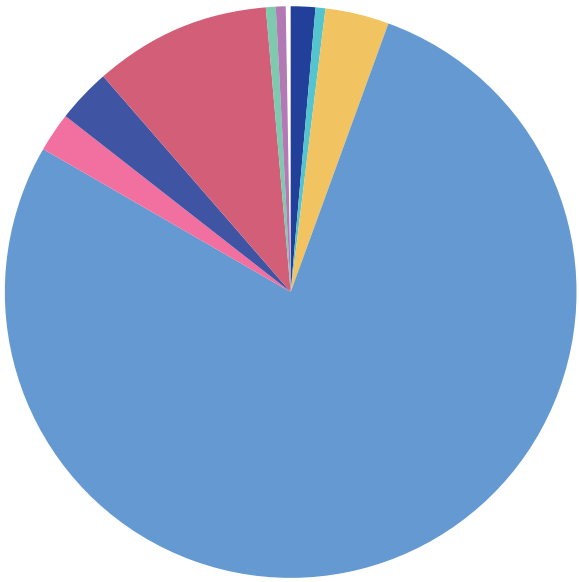


Total number of applicants and number of participants awarded under the April 2026 application round

May 2026

APPLICANTS:

0.78%	Employed
0.49%	Unemployed
10.12%	Higher education – bachelor degree
2.79%	Higher education – short study
2.27%	On a gap year
77.93%	School
3.68%	Vocational training
0.54%	Volunteering
1.41%	Other



TOTAL:
220,942 applications
40,912 selected participants

The learning dimension of DiscoverEU is further enhanced through the Erasmus+ National Agencies, which hold pre-departure and post-travel information meetings as well as Meet-ups for all participants across Europe. In addition, the National Agencies are responsible for the DiscoverEU Inclusion Action, an action which aims to reach young people with fewer opportunities by supporting specialised organisations in the field. DiscoverEU applicants also benefit from a free European Youth Card, giving them access to more than 23,000 discounts on accommodation, culture, transport, food and much more in over 30 countries. The next round of DiscoverEU applications will take place from 1 to 15 October 2026.

"What I loved the most about my journey was all the people I met along. Sharing stories with other travellers in the common room of a hostel in Budapest, chatting till 3am with Erasmus+ students from the Canary Islands in a dorm in Vienna, and having local DiscoverEU travellers show us around Munich are truly some of my favourite memories ever."

Ana from Bulgaria
travelled to Austria, Germany, The Netherlands and Hungary

"I was very surprised by the beauty of the trains and the care with which they are taken of, as well as of course the architecture and landscapes of all the cities visited. A pleasant surprise was the city of Antwerp, which I didn't know at all and which turned out to be very charming. I learned that it is very important to speak foreign languages, especially English, to communicate with people around Europe and the world. I hope that this experience can be lived also by other new eighteen-year-olds because it is really fantastic!"

Francesco from Italy
travelled to Belgium, France, Germany and The Netherlands

"From the start, I was eager to participate in the DiscoverEU initiative, and I was extremely happy to be among the selected ones. The European Commission showed an open attitude and was determined to find solutions for my situation. The experience has been very enriching for me and also for society. On the one hand, society was surprised to see me, a boy with great disability helped by a team of assistants to enjoy life abroad. On the other hand, my severe limitations created very positive feelings of empathy and help among people, and ultimately integration."

Javier from Spain
travelled to The Netherlands

"DiscoverEU gives the opportunity to get to know locals and their way of life. We wanted to experience places as locals, so we bought food at local grocery shops, tried typical cuisine and attempted to learn at least some foreign words. I was positively surprised how kind everybody was. People gladly stopped and spared some of their time to help or talk to us. I think people don't know how easy it is to travel around Europe. The European Union is doing an amazing job on trying to connect young people from different countries, by allowing them to travel with small expenses. We are the next generation that's going to lead our governments and countries and we must step together and work towards similar aims. We can do that if we know where we come from, and where other come from and this project is allowing us to do so."

Maja from Slovenia
travelled to Austria, the Czech Republic and Poland

Following its success during the pilot phase as a European Parliamentary Preparatory Action, DiscoverEU was integrated into the Erasmus+ Programme in 2021. This will allow more young people to benefit from travelling with DiscoverEU during the seven years of the programme. The European Commission organises two rounds each year (spring and autumn).
The budget for 2026 is EUR 47 million.

EXPAND YOUR COMFORT ZONE

#DiscoverEU