



Academy of Central
European Schools

Call for School Partnership Projects

GUIDELINES

2013/2014

aces is an initiative of
ERSTE Foundation



ERSTE Stiftung

coordinated by
Interkulturelles Zentrum



in cooperation with
VČELÍ DOM



and associated with the
EU Strategy for the Danube region



www.aces.or.at

ACES Academy of Central European Schools – Background and Aims

aces is an initiative of ERSTE Foundation that was established in 2006. The coordination of **aces** lies with Interkulturelles Zentrum in cooperation with V elí Dom. Moreover, the initiative is supported by the Ministries in charge of education in all participating countries.

aces and its supporting partners are convinced that education makes an essential contribution to the European integration process as well as the promotion of European citizenship. Schools and the international cooperation of schools play an important role in fostering cross-border communication processes and the development of joint perspectives on a regional and European level.

The programme aims at supporting the establishment of a Central European network of schools. It is designed to enable a sustainable dialogue and cooperation of young people and to create a continuous network of knowledge, mutual learning and innovation. In this context, international school partnerships offer a concrete opportunity for intercultural exchange and cooperation. Therefore, **aces** encourages partnership projects between schools in Central European countries through an annual project competition. The awarded schools are supported in the realisation of their partnership projects through grants, various support structures and international network meetings.

Rules of the Call for School Partnership Projects

1. Eligibility Criteria

1.1. Who can participate?

The call addresses schools (primary/secondary/vocational schools) in the eligible countries with a target group of **pupils/students aged 12 – 17 years**.

The **eligible countries** are: Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic and Slovenia.

A school partnership project is a partnership of all the schools taking part in the project. Every **aces project** is made up of **one coordinating school (=lead applicant) and one or two partner school/s** which jointly develop and implement the proposed project. In selected projects, the coordinating school takes the responsibility for overall project coordination, including the partner schools, and acts as the main contact person for the **aces** team. Further, the coordinating school is responsible for the reporting of the whole project (short narrative report and financial report). Even though these tasks are the responsibility of the coordinating school, ALL contact teachers of ALL partner schools **MUST** be able to communicate in English.

School partnerships can be:

- **Bilateral** – consisting of 2 schools from 2 different eligible countries
- **Trilateral** – consisting of 3 schools from 3 different eligible countries

Possible combinations for trilateral partnerships are:

- a) 3 schools from three different eligible countries
- b) At least 2 schools from different eligible countries and an additional partner school from a non-eligible European country (e.g. partner from a Comenius school partnership or another partner school from a non-eligible country). **Note: The participation of a partner school from a non-eligible country will not increase the amount of award money and this partner will not benefit directly from the award money!**

Special needs schools are particularly encouraged to get involved.

RESTRICTIONS for participation!!

1. **Schools that have been awarded and received grants from aces already 3 times in a row, need to take a break of one year before applying again** in order to give newcomers more chances.
2. **Every school can be a partner within ONE project application only** – either as coordinating or as partner school. (Multiple participation of the same school in several applications is not possible!). It might happen that two teachers from one school submit one application each without knowing about the other application. In this case we will accept only one application – the one which has been submitted first.

Schools without partners in the above listed eligible countries should make use of the online **aces – Partner Finder** on www.aces.or.at/partnerfinder in order to identify a partner school. Interkulturelles Zentrum can also support schools to find relevant partners. See below for contact information.

1.2. Theme of the aces Call 2013/2014

Our societies are getting more and more diverse. Unfortunately, we have the tendency to fear those who are different to us (ethnicity, religious beliefs, gender, social background, age ...). We are quick to make a distinction between “us” and “others” and those who are not members of “our group” are often seen and treated less favorably. This is both discriminating and counterproductive as diversity, when respected and promoted, fosters innovation and creativity. Therefore, it is indispensable to fight prejudices and to get to know each other better. As cross-border school projects are an ideal starting point to truly engage with other people, the overall theme of the aces call 2013 is **“I and the others: Discovering diversity around and within me”**.

Further info and background material on diversity www.aces.or.at/materials&tools → “topics”

1.3. Eligible Activities

Project idea and implementation: The content of the project proposal and its foreseen activities must reflect the general aims of aces, the annual theme “I and the others: Discovering diversity around and within me” and the chosen focus of the school partnership project.

The activities can be implemented cross-curricular or in one specific subject.

There are no restrictions regarding project activities as long as they are appropriate for the age group and useful to achieve the project aims. Also, the design and use of innovative approaches and creative methods of implementation will be considered positively in the assessment process (e.g. projects using the opportunities offered by new information and communication technologies, new media, creative international exchange settings, joint actions among students, theatre, etc). In addition, cross-border cooperation of pupils and teachers right from the beginning of the project (e.g. communication and working in international teams) is an important factor for a positive assessment.

If selected, the project idea is jointly realised by students and teachers in all the partner schools and countries. Moreover, participants are encouraged to involve and cooperate with other persons and institutions (e.g. experts, parents, local/regional institutions, companies, non-governmental organisations, media ...) to reach out into the local/regional community.

Language: The language for **overall international communication is English** (aces coordination and international workshops/events, website communication, reporting). The use of several other languages (“neighbourhood languages”) for communication between project partners is possible.

Duration: The duration of projects is maximum 7 months. Its activities have to be carried out between September 2013 and mid-March 2014. Some projects may foresee activities in the summer months before September (summer camp, meeting, etc). This is possible, but the grants cannot be transferred to participating schools before October 2013. Hence, such activities will have to be pre-financed in anticipation of the payment of the grant in October 2013.

Location: The partnership project activities take place (only) in the partner countries.

1.4. aces Grant and Eligible Use

aces awards the grant to the “project partnership”, but in terms of administration each partner school receives its share of the award money directly. **Therefore, all the partner schools (preferably their school boards or parent’s council, etc.) need to have a bank account that accepts bank transfers in Euro (!)**. Otherwise, we will be obliged to deduct the emerging costs from your grant.

The amount of the award for a partnership project is composed as follows:

- **Coordinating school: 1800 Euros** (including a coordinating bonus of 200 Euros: this bonus adds up to the grant money of the coordinating partner school of 1600 and is understood as additional allowance which shall also be used for direct project expenses in the same way as the rest of the grant. The coordinating school benefits from the bonus, e.g. by being able to take one student more to the project exchange visit or the like. Thus, the amount of the bonus and related expenses also have to be documented in the final financial project report.)
- **Partner schools from eligible countries: 1600 Euros each**

So, for a bilateral partnership the overall sum will be $1800 + 1600 = 3400$ Euros. For a trilateral partnership involving only eligible countries the overall sum will be $1800 + 1600 + 1600 = 5000$ Euros.

The awarded money has to be used for expenses arising from the realisation of the partnership project (costs incurred during the implementation period) and must be justified at the end of the project in the **financial report**. Expenditures which are considered eligible include those for:

- Partner meetings (travel, subsistence, accommodation):
Student to teacher ratio during project visits: As the mobility of students has first priority and to ensure an adequate balance, travelling groups with up to 10 students may involve a maximum of 2 teachers/accompanying people. Groups involving more than 10 students may involve up to 3 teachers/accompanying people. In case this key is not possible for you (e.g. special need students or specific country laws regarding school trips), CONTACT INTERKULTURELLES ZENTRUM IMMEDIATELY AND BEFORE THE PROJECT VISIT.
Accommodation: We advise you to accommodate students and teachers with host families. This is not only cost-efficient (as no money is required for hostels, more students might be able to travel) but allows all concerned to benefit even more from the intercultural experience.
- Entrance fees (museums, national parks ...)
- Honoraria for workshop facilitators and other guides or experts: Note that only honoraria for external experts (NGOs, universities, free lancers...) and not for school teachers can be accepted.
- Working materials (e.g. consumables such as paper, photo copies, creative materials...)
- The production of project products (books, calendars, videos, games...) and the documentation of the project (e.g. developing and printing of photos...)
- Minor ICT-equipment (e.g. for cameras, software, etc. up to a max. cost of 300 Euros). Please note that the equipment has to be purchased for THE SCHOOL and not for private or single school individual's demand. After the implementation of the project the equipment remains in the possession of the school.
- Expenditures that are considered NON-ELIGIBLE COSTS are honoraria/allowances for project teachers (for coordinating the projects, per diems or alike.)

The costs for the participation of school delegations in the two aces network meetings (Kick-Off Meeting and aces Academy, see p. 5) are covered additionally by aces and must NOT be paid from the project grant!

In case you have expenditures concerning the provision of visa during the implementation of your school partnership project (for partner visits) aces can also **reimburse de facto visa costs** (including health insurance, travel costs and others items related to visa). These costs may add up to the **maximum amount of 300 Euros per concerned school** in addition to your aces school grant. A **specific form for the reimbursement of visa costs** will be provided in October (together with the project report forms) and **can be handed in as soon as the costs have occurred** (=after the respective project visit) but the latest together with the final financial report and will be paid out as soon as possible.

Project partners can choose to increase their project budget with additional funding from other sources (for example, making use of private or public sponsorship). In general, partner schools make their own agreements concerning how to share the project costs.

2. How to apply?

2.1. Application Form

The proposal for a school partnership project must be submitted by using the online application form only. This online application form is available on www.aces.or.at/apply from February 1 to April 30, 2013. Please note that it must be completed by the **coordinating school, ONLY**. The project proposal should, nonetheless, be a joint project application. This means that the project partners should jointly discuss the content of the before making the application. Applicants are invited to consult the questions asked in the online application about the project with their partners (see the key questions in the document **“Project description”** at <http://www.aces.or.at/start.asp?ID=231710&b=858>). This will help you to exchange ideas and jointly write the application.

The application form consists of 3 parts:

- Information about the partner schools
- Project description (following the questions outlined also in the document "project description")
- Supporting documents:
 - o "Declaration for the Partnership Project": to be completed, signed and stamped by the coordinating school
 - o "Partnership Statement for the Partnership Project": to be completed, signed and stamped by all the partner school/s

The supporting documents are available at the end of the online application form on www.aces.or.at/apply. They should be downloaded, completed by all partner schools and sent to the coordinating school in due time so that the coordinating school has what it needs to finalise the online application procedure in time for the deadline. The coordinating school is responsible for filling in and submitting the complete online application form, including the uploading of supporting documents.

2.2. Deadline for Submission of Applications

The deadline for submission of project applications for this call is **30 April 2013**. After submitting the online application form, you will receive an automatic confirmation of receipt.

2.3. Further questions and information

For further details and advice regarding the application, **we strongly recommend that you carefully read all other related call documents "Instructions for Application", "Project Description" and "Criteria for Project Quality & Assessment"** available at <http://www.aces.or.at/start.asp?ID=231710&b=858>

Interkulturelles Zentrum can advise applicants on questions. However, **keep in mind that we need sufficient time to react before the deadline.**

If you have problems starting or submitting your application using the online procedure, please contact

Carmen Teubl, Interkulturelles Zentrum
E-mail: carmen.teubl@iz.or.at

Make sure to indicate "aces Call 2013" in the subject line of the e-mail.

3. Assessment of Applications

An international Selection Committee will assess the submitted project proposals according to the eligibility criteria (see the related document "**Criteria for Project Quality & Assessment**" <http://www.aces.or.at/start.asp?ID=231710&b=858>). Approximately 45 school partnership projects will be awarded a grant.

4. Notification of Award

Interkulturelles Zentrum will inform applicants about the results of awarded and non-awarded projects until mid-June 2013.

5. Further Steps for Awarded Partnership Projects

The awarded school partnerships will be invited to implement their projects. They will receive further information regarding **aces** procedures and network events, as follows:

- **30 September – 4 October 2013:** International "**aces** Kick-Off Meeting" taking place in Bucharest (Romania). This meeting is attended by delegations of 2 participants (1 student & 1 teacher) from each school involved in an awarded partnership project;
- **October 2013:** The award money will be transferred to all awarded partner schools;
- **September 2013 – mid-March 2014:** Implementation of school partnership projects through joint work and cooperation;

- **Mid-March 2014:** Deadline for submission of the final narrative and financial project report in English; (for schools concerned also latest possibility to claim the reimbursement of visa costs)
- **April 2014 (either calendar week 14 or 15):** Final international “aces Academy”, including presentations and evaluation of the outcomes of all partnership projects. The exact date of this event will be announced in time.

Note: **It is expected that delegations of all selected schools attend the aces network events.** The members of the delegations taking part in **aces** network events (i.e. the Kick-off Meeting and the Academy) **must master the English language** in order to exchange and work with the other participants. Participating delegation members are expected to attend for the entire duration of these network events.

For further information regarding this call

Contact

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Information on aces, the Call for School Partnership Projects (application form), the online Partner Finder and our partners in the Ministries of Education of all participating countries are available on **www.aces.or.at**

Information on ERSTE Foundation www.erstestiftung.org and **V ELÍ DOM** www.vcelidom.sk