

Survey of schools not participating in Erasmus+

Survey report

May–July 2022

Sectors: School Education, Vocational Education and Training

Implemented by STEM/MARK exclusively for the Czech National Agency for International Education and Research (DZS)



Survey of schools not participating in Erasmus+

Nursery, primary and secondary schools



Goals:

- Map the perception of Erasmus+
- Identify barriers and potential motivators to participate in the programme
- Identify schools' opportunities and needs in the field of international cooperation

Qualitative part: Focus groups

May 2022

A total of 16 persons from selected self-governing regions of the Czech Republic participated

FG1: Directors of nursery schools (NS) and primary schools (PS)

FG2: Directors of secondary technical schools (STS), secondary vocational schools (SVS) and tertiary technical schools (TTS)

FG3: PS and STS/SVS teachers who are in charge of extra activities at their schools

Topics:

- Events and activities that schools organise or participate in
- The use of information and communication channels
- Experience with **subsidy schemes**
- **Internationalisation** and other priorities
- Awareness of and attitudes to Erasmus+
- **Reasons for not participating in Erasmus+**
- Potential **opportunities for involvement**
- Potential **motivations and benefits** when participating in the programme

Quantitative part: Questionnaire

June and July 2022

199 directors from all self-governing regions of the Czech Republic (except for Prague) participated

A total of 62 NS, 85 PS and 52 SS

Note: Both parts of the survey were conducted in cooperation with the STEM/MARK agency

Main findings I

- Directors are often overwhelmed with emails => **they pay attention to messages from senders (organisations) they know**
- General emails are most often handled by the school management, or by an assistant or secretary
- Current priorities: **adaptation of children (from Ukraine), HR issues, IT education, revision of the School Educational Programmes (SEP) and the Framework Educational Programme (FEP).**
- 8 out of 10 schools in the survey perceive **internationalisation in education** to be important (new approaches in teaching, contacts for cooperation, sharing examples from practice, etc.)

- **All schools in the survey engage in a variety of activities beyond their classroom and regular duties**
 - NS and PS: interest-based clubs, tutoring, project days
 - STS/SVS: charity events, cooperation with organisations in the village, cross-border cooperation
 - All types of schools: open days, events on important days, etc.
 - According to the directors, these activities are beneficial, but they are hindered by the availability of teachers

- **3/4 of schools indicate they participate in events (e.g. trade fairs, seminars) in the region**
- **One fifth of the schools also participate in events outside the region (trade fairs, exhibitions, educational seminars, etc.)**

- All schools in the survey have **at least some experience with subsidy programmes** – most often the Templates of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS)
- **Almost half (46%) have been involved in international cooperation in the past**
 - A third of them found it difficult to find a partner (a well-organised list of potential partners would be helpful)

Main findings II

- Erasmus+ associations: international cooperation, pupil/student exchanges, gaining new experience
- 7 out of 10 schools have never been approached with a **specific offer to participate** in Era+ or the ESC
- Main reasons for non-participation so far: concerns about **high administrative burden, lack of staff capacity**
- **A third of schools** are interested in **participating in Erasmus+** in the future; more than half of SS are interested
- Preferred sources of information: transfer of experience from a successful school, webinars, seminars, information on the web, consultations
- **Less than half of schools (48%) are aware of the Czech National Agency for International Education and Research**

- In the SE sector, there are sometimes **“prejudices” resulting from ignorance** (e.g. the programme is only for students, only for SS and HEI, only for large schools)
- Other barriers: **language barrier** for students and teachers (for NS and PS), **administrative burden, lack of interest of pupils or students in certain regions or types of schools** (e.g. where there is a higher concentration of students from disadvantaged backgrounds), **dealing with other problemmes** (the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, etc.)

- Motivations to participate: **Increased awareness** of opportunities (good practice examples, comprehensive information support), the possibility to try **forms of activities that are administratively simpler** (e.g. short mobilities), **mobilities less oriented towards teaching** for pupils with disabilities (e.g. a stay in nature or sports activities), gaining **practical experience for students of STS/SVS and TTS**

- **International online educational activities** are perceived as a supplement to physical trips => they do not provide enough opportunities for building relationships with partner schools/organizations.

Differences between school types – a brief summary



	NS	PS	SS
Experience – international cooperation	19%	48%	73%
Participation in regional events	68%	69%	88%
Participation in events outside the region	10%	15%	37%
The importance of internationalisation to the school	72%	81%	86%
They know a school participating in Era+	18%	51%	63%
They have never been approached to join Era+ or the ESC	87%	78%	46%
They have already searched for information on Era+ by themselves	13%	45%	56%
Interested in participating in the future	8%	38%	54%
They know what DZS does	10%	27%	50%

Current top priorities*

NS: Ecology (24%), adaptation of children including Ukrainian children (16%), education of children with special educational needs (16%), good relationships (15%)

PS: IT education (25%), adaptation of children, including Ukrainian children (21%), revision of the SEP and FEP (19%), HR issues (18%)

SS: Revision of the SEP and FEP (17%), modernisation, school equipment (15%)

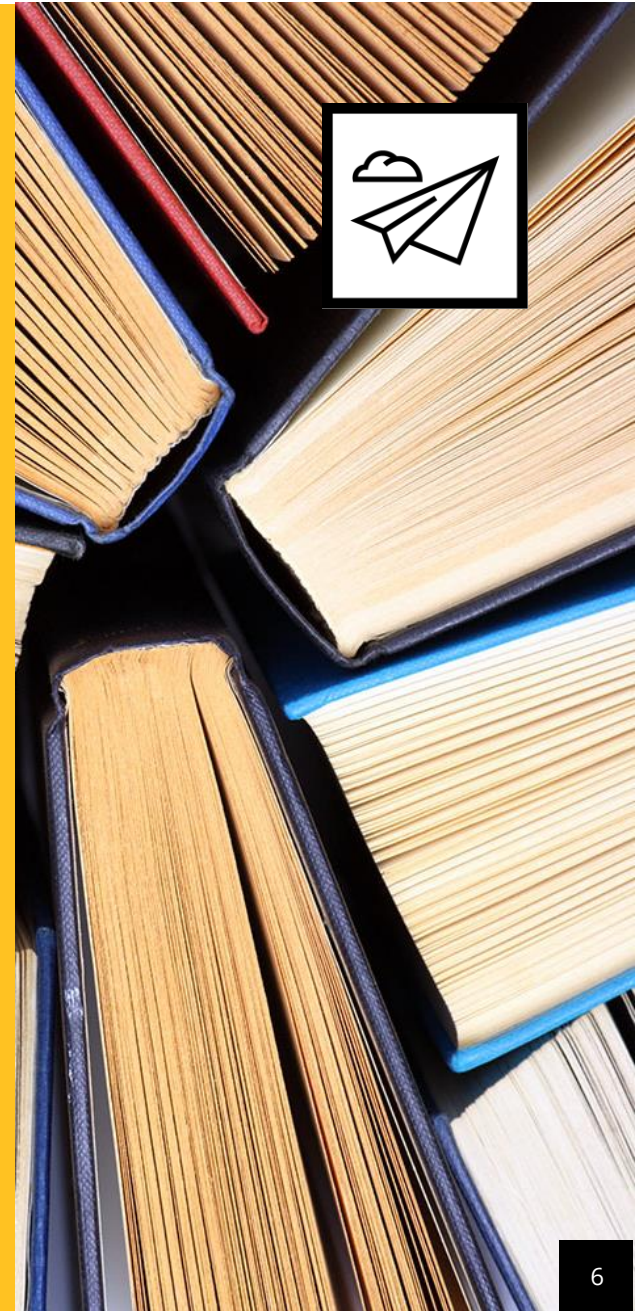
** For each type of school, priorities are included that were mentioned by at least 15% of respondents in an open-ended question*

Information channels

Information sources

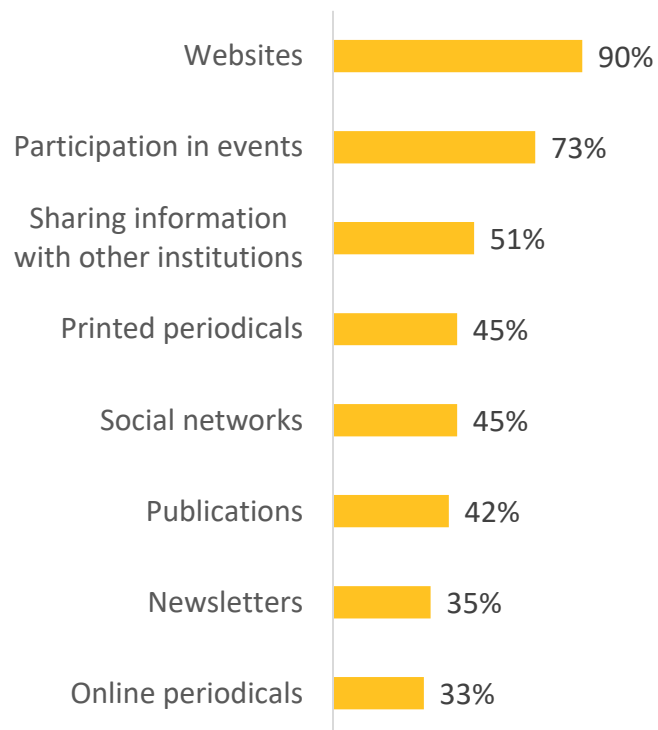
Handling emails

Awareness of DZS



Preferred sources of information

General Sources



Specific sources

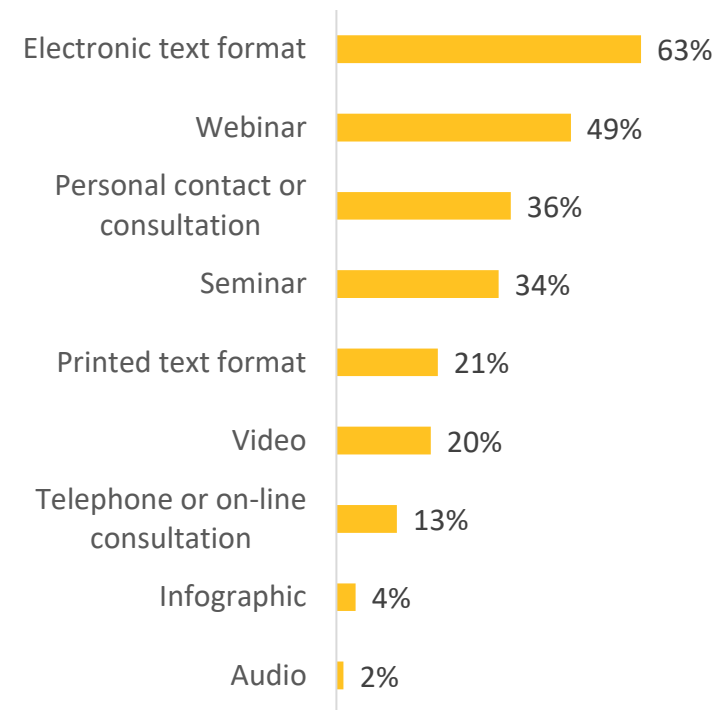


NS are more likely to obtain information from the Czech School Inspectorate (13%) and the Informatorium (15%).

PS are more likely to indicate Edu.cz (25%).

The **Czech National Agency for International Education and Research** ranked 16th (2%), and was most frequently mentioned by **SS** (8%).

Preferred formats



"NS directors have a platform on Facebook, and while this may be advertising or recommendation, it is also a source of quality recommendations." (NS director)

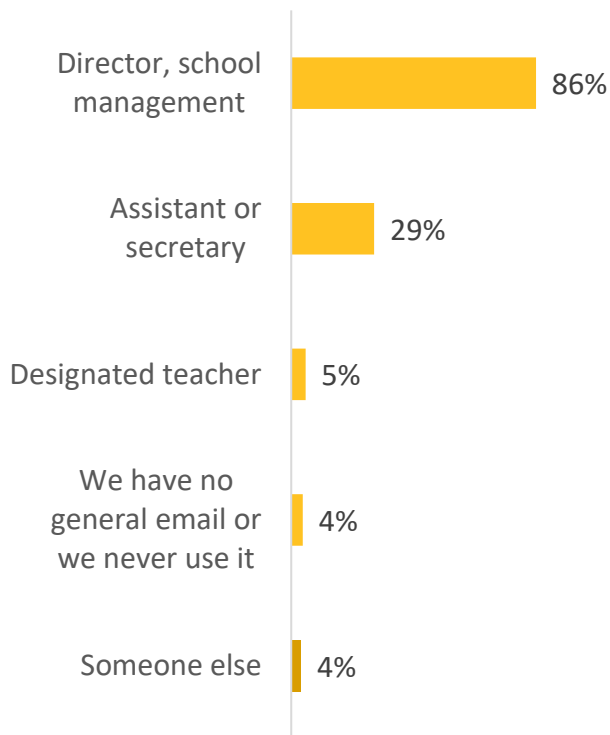
"In my town, Příbram, the employment office organises a school fair, in which we participate. And that benefits us a lot." (SVS director)

"Thanks to the Coronavirus, a lot of webinars have been created, and it's like a fantasy that we can participate even in remote ones, like those organised e.g. by Prague." (NS director)

Handling emails – general school email

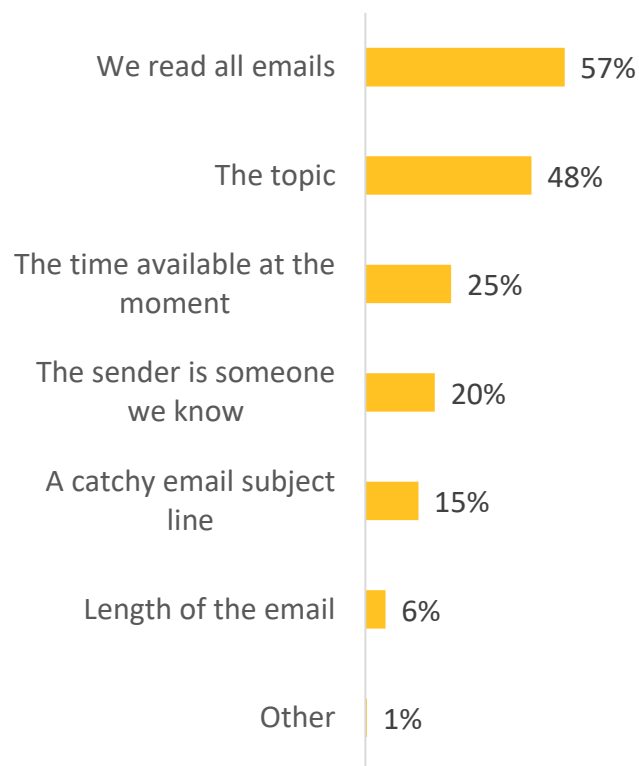


Who handles emails



SS are more likely to indicate an assistant or secretary as the person who handles general emails (58%).

What determines further work with e-mail



NS are more likely to indicate the time available at the moment (37%).

PS are more likely to rely on the subject line (57%) and the sender of the email (27%).

"I respond to those that include a specific offer, where we don't need to search for other websites and what is being offered." (NS director)

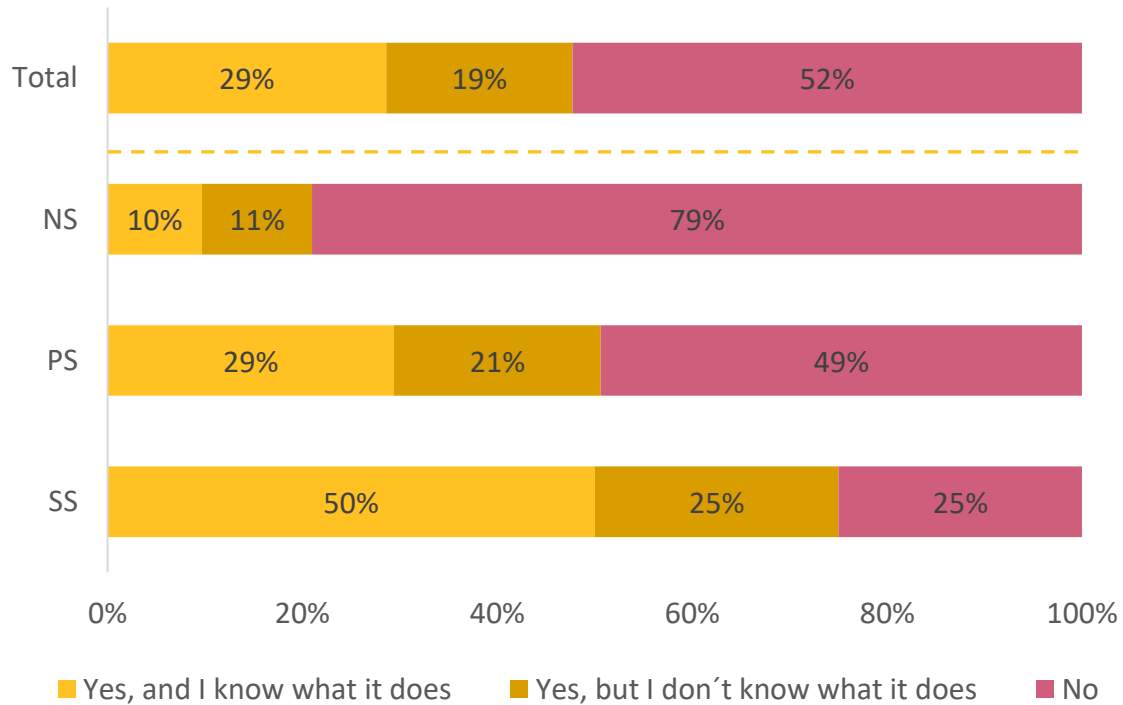
"Emails are delivered to me, so I go through it and possibly forward it to others. I use standard email filters, commercial offers go straight to spam, and otherwise I read offers that come from addresses I am familiar with or I know are related to MEYS education, Youth Homes or data boxes." (PS director)

"I get so many emails every day that I don't even have time to read them. If someone convinced me with arguments on the phone or in a face-to-face meeting, or showed me examples of good practice, so I respond to phone calls." (SVS director)

"I have an assistant and she sorts it out and distributes it to senior management and me. But it is overwhelming, I only follow up on what I need. I delete everything else, often without reading it. There is no chance to read the offers, but if there is something that resonates with what I am dealing with, I open it." (PS director)

Awareness of DZS

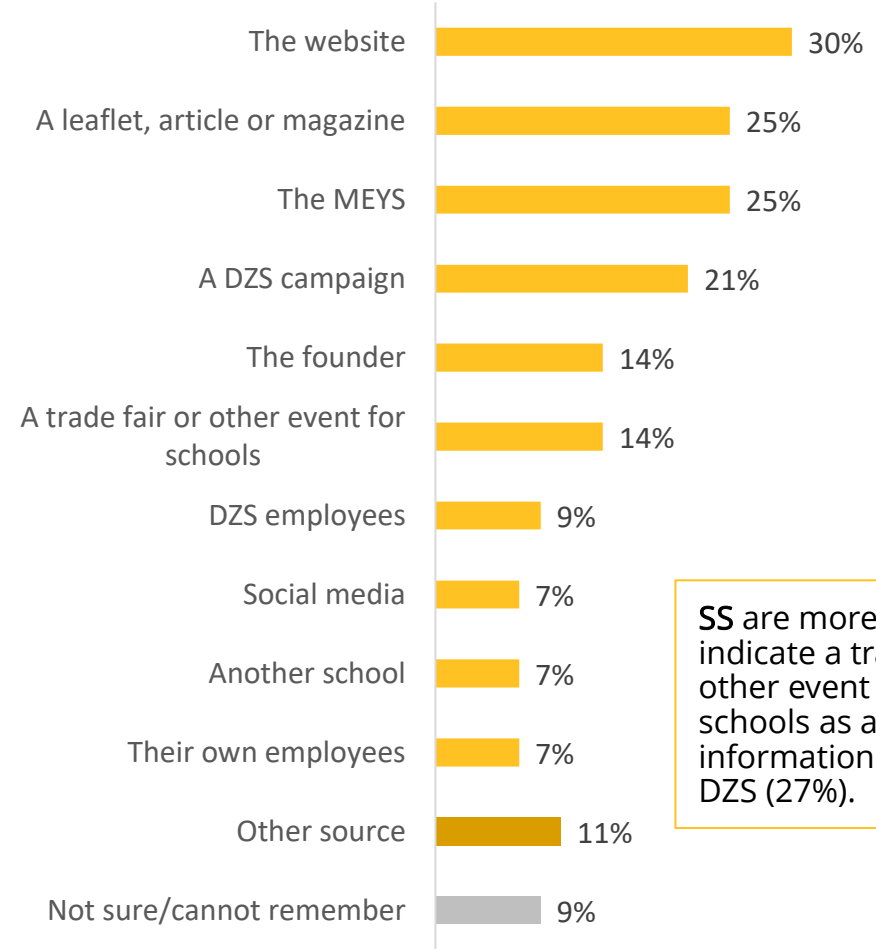
Knowledge of DZS



1% of respondents are subscribed to the **Mozaika magazine**, and another 10% know the magazine.



Where they know DZS from (n = 57)



SS are more likely to indicate a trade fair or other event for schools as a source of information about the DZS (27%).

School activities

Organising activities beyond regular teaching

Events in which schools participate

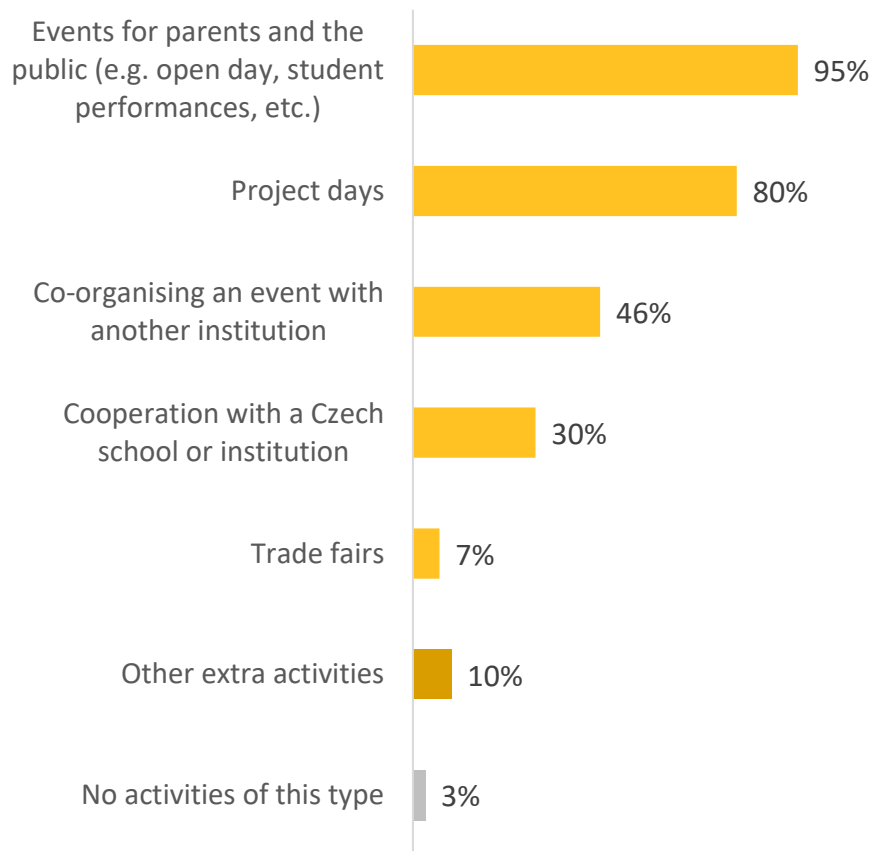
Subsidy programmes and grants

International cooperation



Organising activities beyond teaching

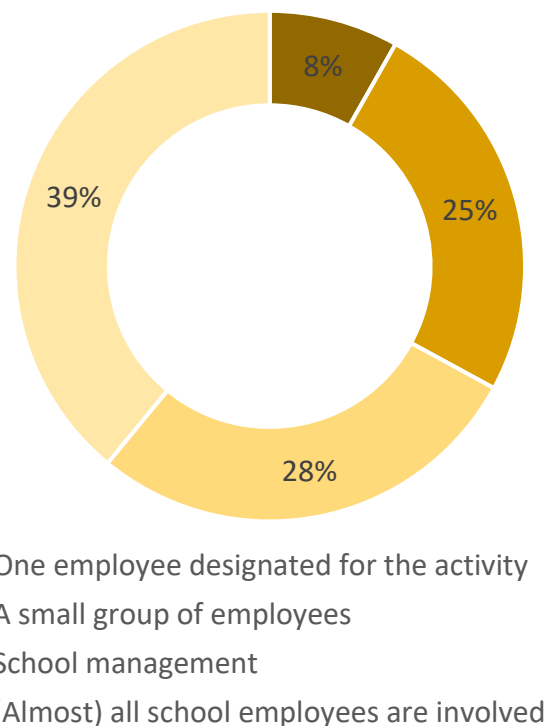
What schools organise



SS are more likely to organise trade fairs (21%) and to cooperate (42%) or co-organise events (60%) with other institutions.

Project days are more often the domain of primary schools (87%).

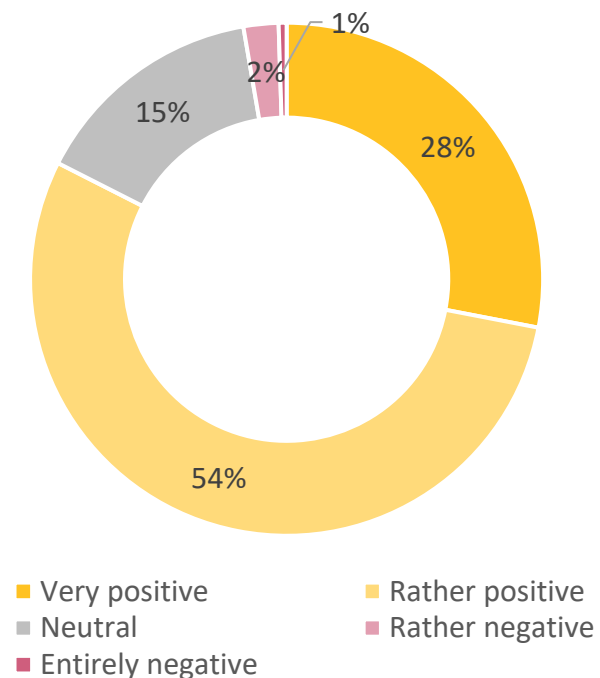
Who usually implements "extra" activities



At NS, all employees are more likely to be involved (58%).

"We have student societies, we often impose our ideas on them in order to get them moving, we have a student parliament, we encourage them to be active. We have an all-school event on Fridays, PE teachers do their part, we want to keep the school in motion." (SVS director)

Attitude of colleagues towards these activities

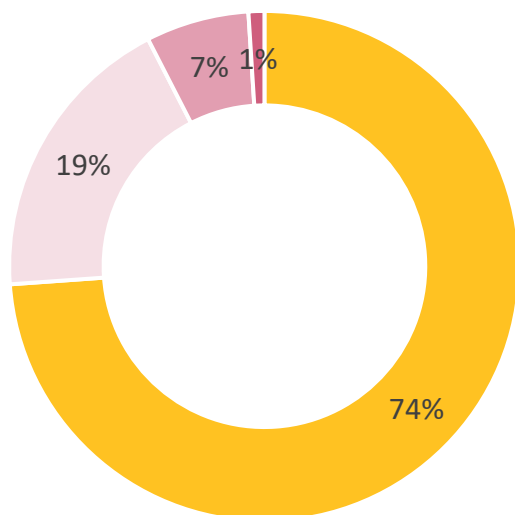


NS employees have the most positive attitude towards implementing activities (52% described the attitude of their colleagues as very positive).

Events in which schools participate



Events in the region



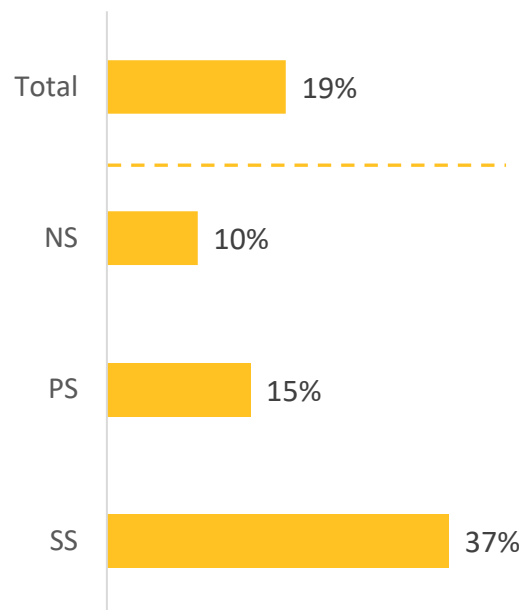
- There are such events, and we usually do participate
- There are such events, but we don't usually participate
- There are no such events, but we would like to participate
- There are no such events and we are not interested

88% of the **SS** in the survey participate in regional events.

The main reasons for non-participation are excessive workload and inconvenient dates or venues.

$\frac{3}{4}$ of the schools that participate in the events are satisfied with the number of events and their thematic focus.

Participation in events outside the region



Examples of events:

NS: Seminars organized by LAG, conferences, project days

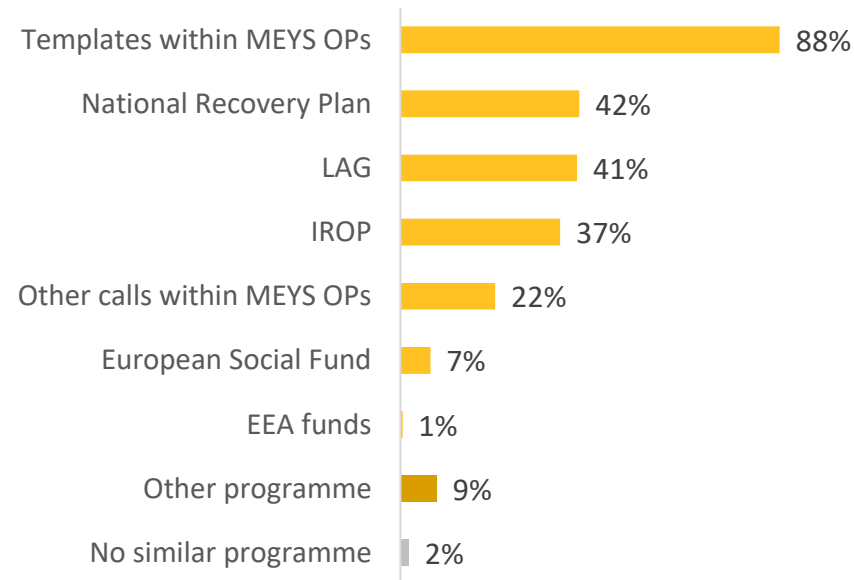
PS: LAP events, seminars, workshops, a book fair, cultural events, sports events, knowledge competitions, shows/performances (reciting, singing, art, etc.)

SS: Trade fairs, LAP/RAP seminars, exhibitions, shows/performances, competitions, a school fair, open days, DZS activities, eTwinning

For regional (smaller) events, personal participation is preferred – there is space to address specific issues, meet colleagues and share experience.

Webinars are more welcome at **larger, national events** that are organised e.g. in Prague.

Experience with subsidy programmes



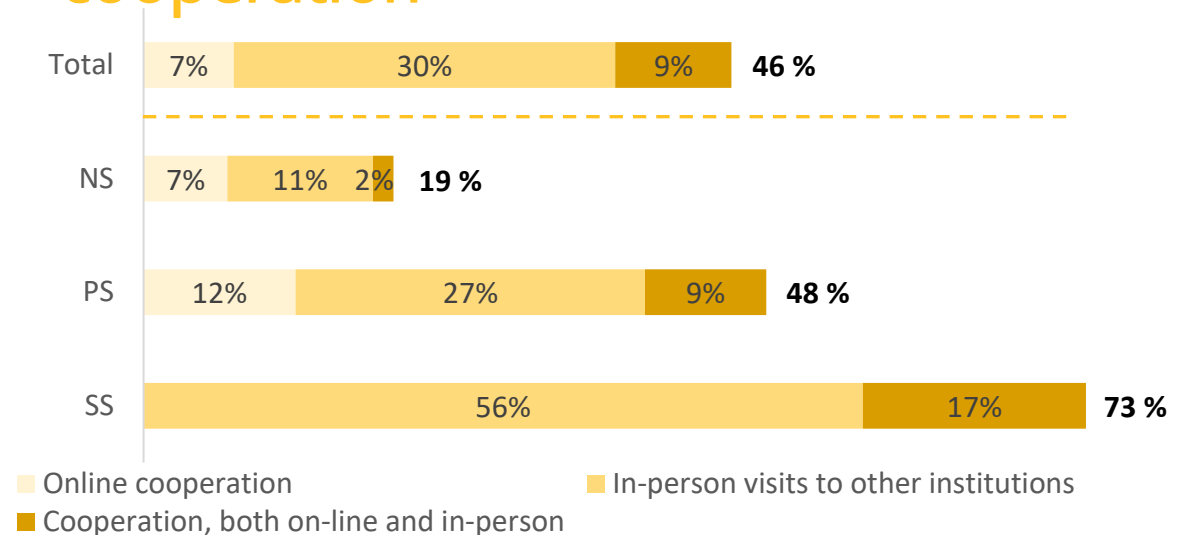
PS are more likely than other types of schools to use the National Recovery Plan (66%), IROP (47%) and LAG (55%).

"We use the Templates, but as for Erasmus and the like, we haven't had any experience yet, we're a small nursery school so nothing like that." (NS director)

"Over the past 10 years I have received and invested about CZK 570 million in subsidies, but that is due to the nature of the school, the region, etc. We take advantage of almost anything that can be used, plans for investments, subsidies." (SS director)

"They wanted to start international cooperation with schools, but that failed due to the recent situation. We still have that as a challenge ahead of us." (PS director)

Experience with international cooperation



Finding a partner was difficult for 32% of the schools that work with a foreign school or institution. In the case of SS, it is 45%.

"We cooperate with an Austrian nursery school, our families meet, children are introduced to the German language." (NS director)

"Cooperation with foreign teachers – visits to the classroom." (PS director)

"Participation in the Comenius – multilateral cooperation project (2x) which preceded the Erasmus+ activities." (SS director)

"Within a LAG programme – cross-border cooperation of schools." (PS director)

Internationalisation in education

Importance in general and to the school itself

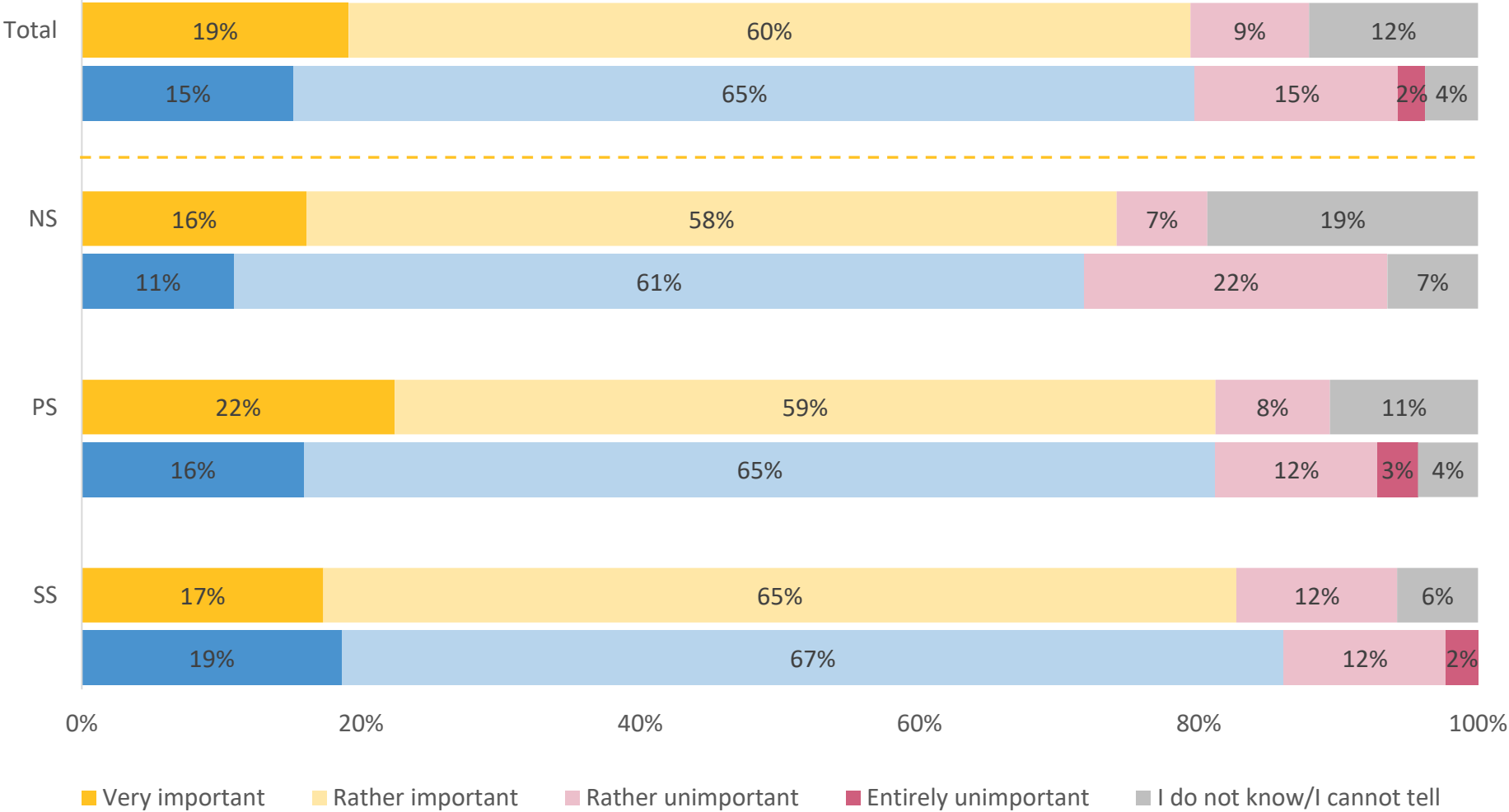
Benefits of international cooperation

Support for international activities by the founder

Current priority topics

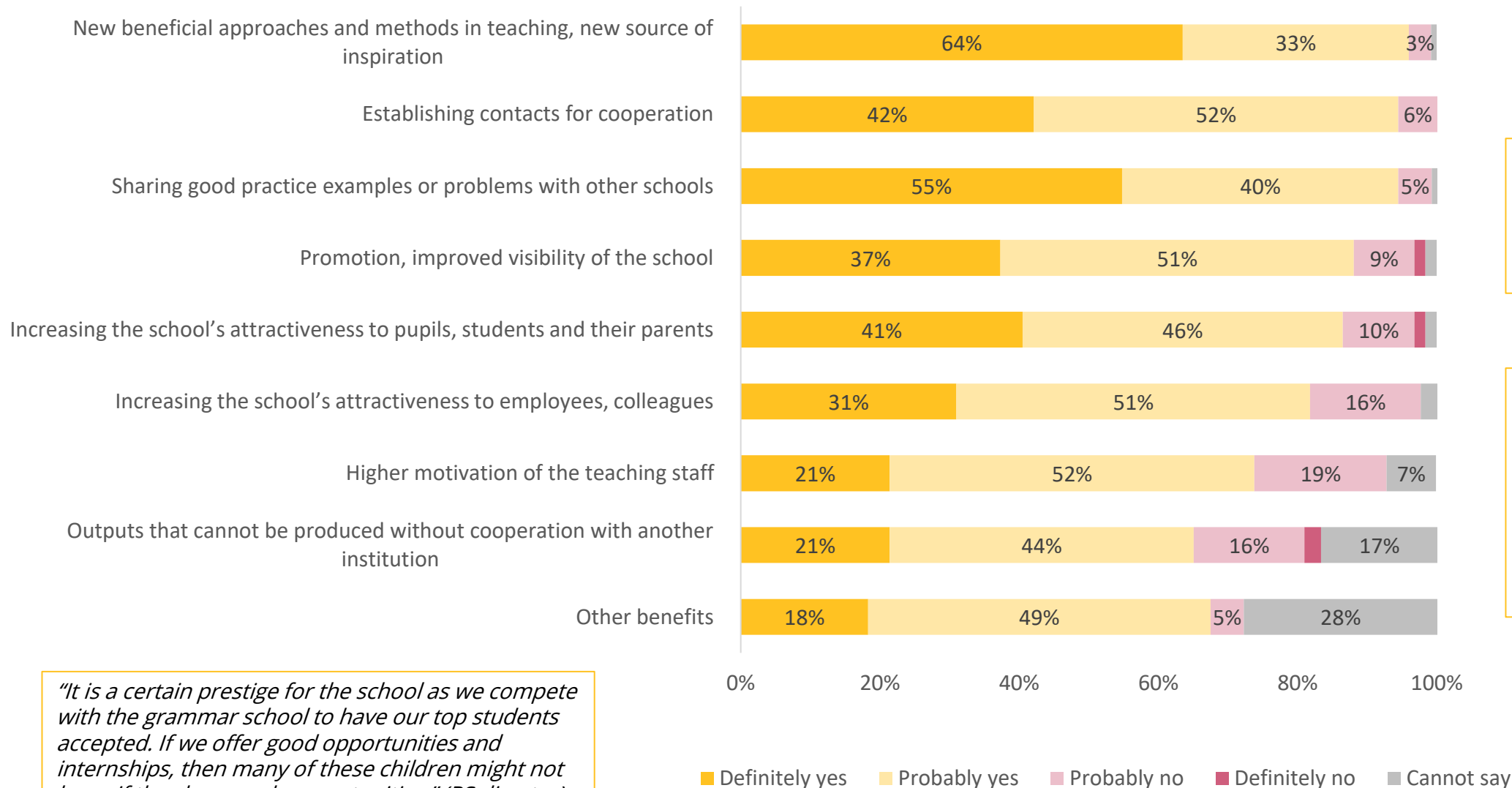


Perceived importance of internationalisation in education



■ The importance of internationalisation in education in the education system
■ The importance of internationalisation in education for the school surveyed

Benefits of international cooperation

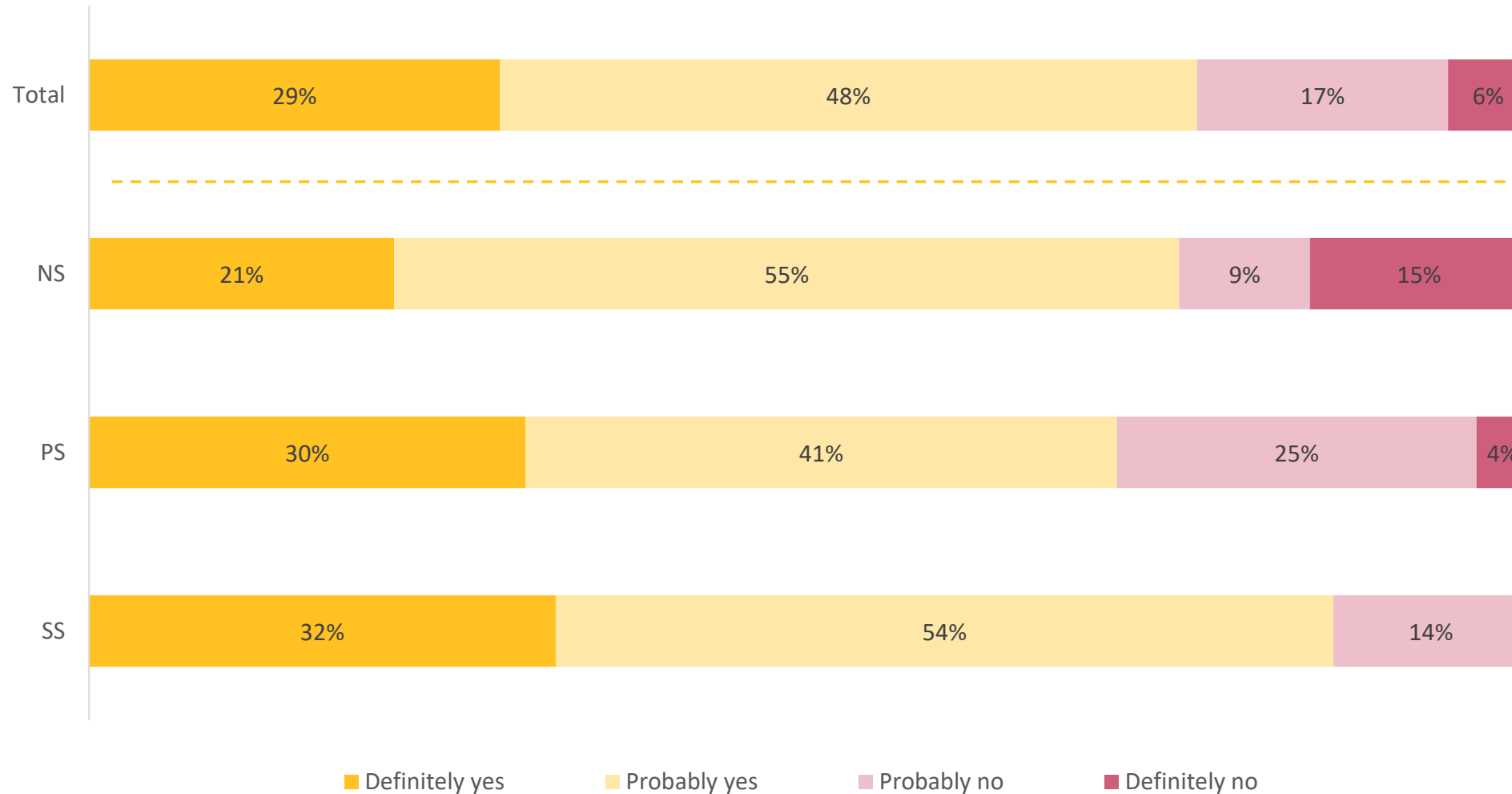


N = 126
 => only respondents from schools that find internationalisation important responded

- Other benefits:**
- developing language skills
 - getting to know other cultures
 - expanding one's horizons
 - motivation to study
 - establishing friendships

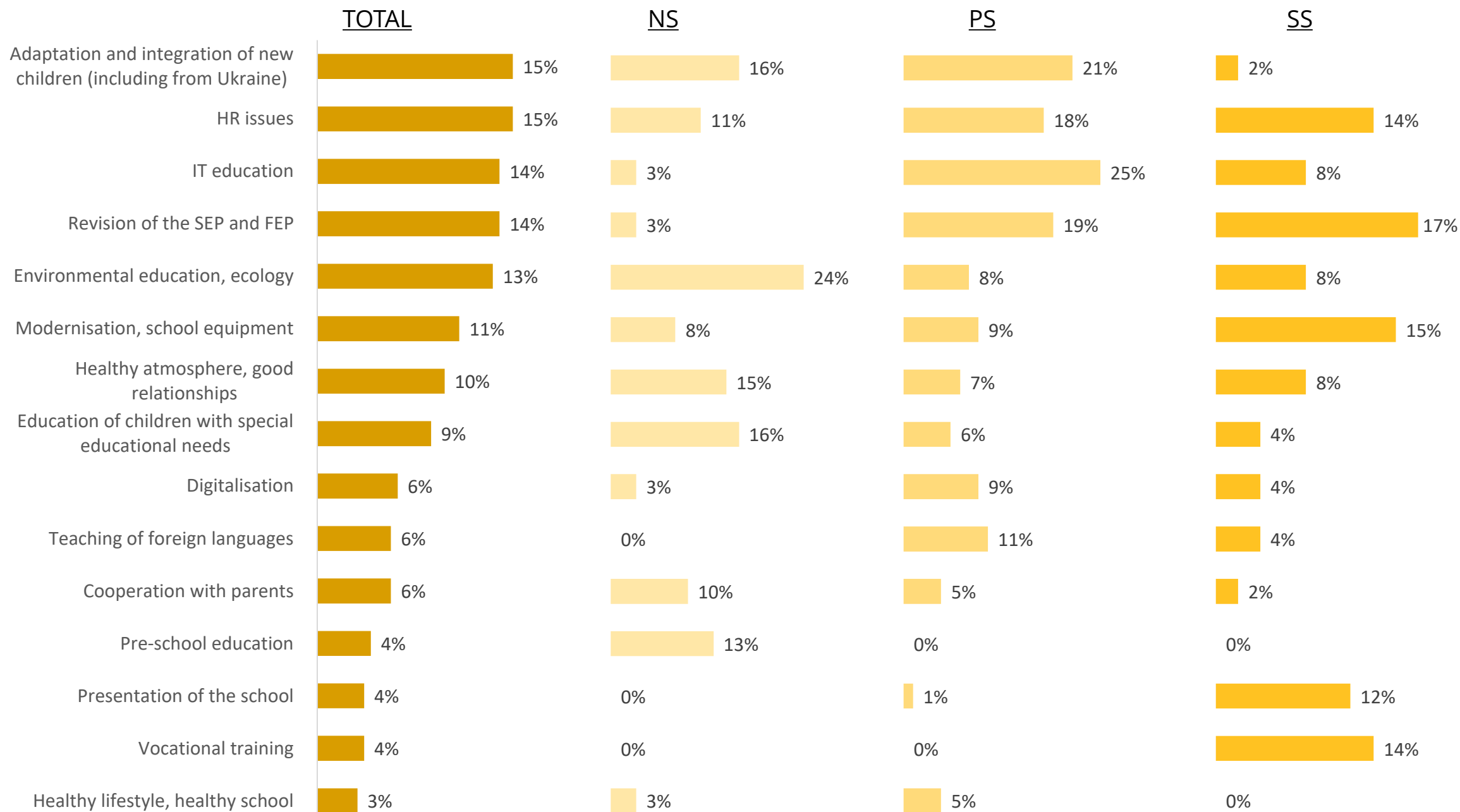
"It is a certain prestige for the school as we compete with the grammar school to have our top students accepted. If we offer good opportunities and internships, then many of these children might not leave if they have such opportunities." (PS director)

Founder's support for international activities



N = 126
=> only respondents from schools that find internationalisation important responded

Priority topics for schools at the present time



Erasmus+

Awareness of the programme in schools

Experience with the programme

Reasons for non-participation

Possibilities and needs of schools

Considering participating in the future

Support needed



Awareness of Erasmus+



Spontaneous associations



PS are more likely to mention pupil/student exchanges (39%) and internships for teachers abroad (28%).

Within the “other” option, **NS** are more likely to indicate that they do not know what this programme is about.

Within the **focus groups**, directors from the **VET sector** showed a deeper knowledge of the programme.

Even in the **school education sector**, all directors had at least a basic awareness. However, they primarily associated the programme with the **international mobility of pupils or students** (especially SS and HEI students). The information that the programme also focuses on teachers came as a surprise for some of the respondents (mainly NS representatives).

“Events within secondary schools, but I am not aware of any connection with nursery schools, maybe that’s where the word “plus” comes into play.”(NS director)

“When I think about it, I have Erasmus associated secondary schools and I have no idea what Erasmus+ can offer us. I have no information about how it could benefit us at all.”(PS director)

“Before Covid, I attended seminars at DZS and if Covid hadn’t entered the picture, we could have made arrangements with a school abroad that had a similar specialisation as we do. But we didn’t go for it due to Covid, as nobody knew how long it would last. And now we are yet again gathering information again, we’re going to look for a school and we’re going to apply.”(STS director)

“Pupil exchanges, communication in a foreign language, cooperation.”(PS director)

“As far as international cooperation is concerned, we already have some history. In our border region it is easier because it is easy to find a partner, we are 25 km from the border. We currently have 2 projects with a German partner.”(STS director)

Experience with Erasmus+

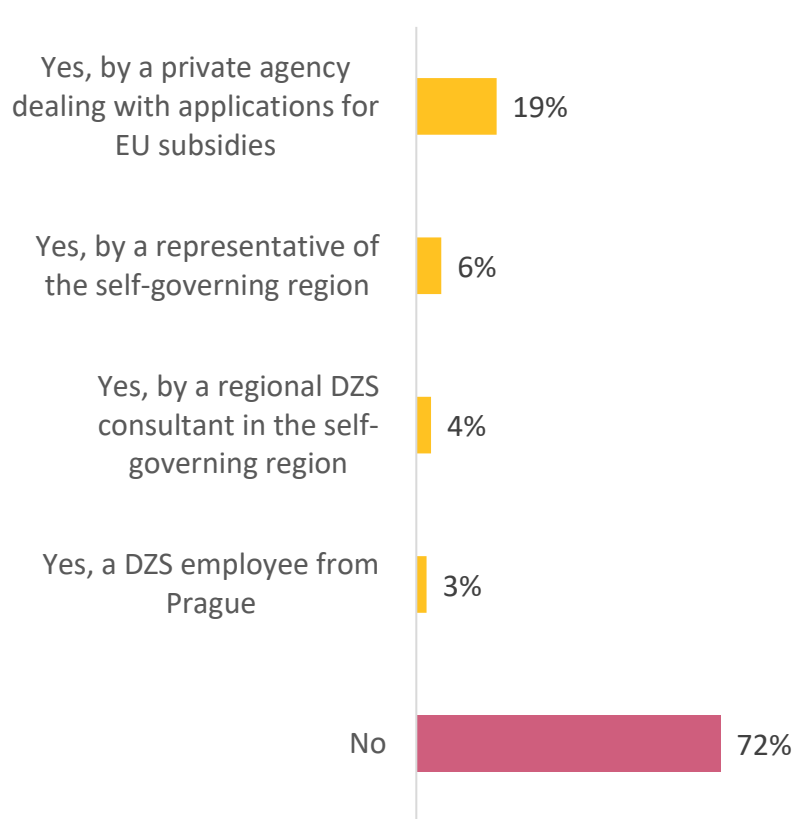
Experience from the surrounding area



NS are more likely to report that they have no experience with this programme (option "other").

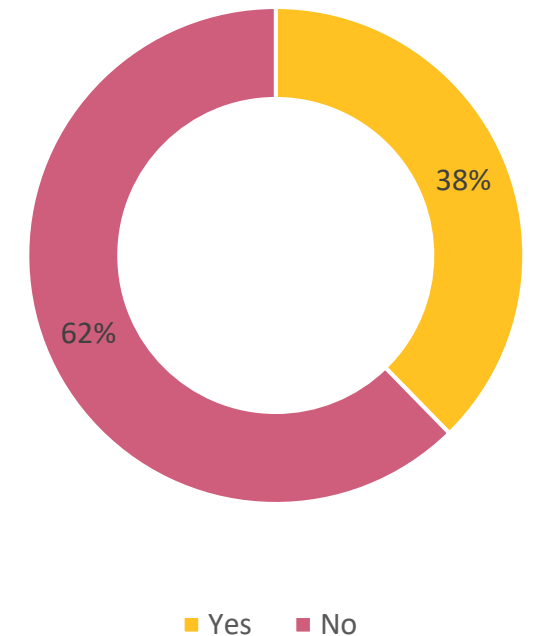
SS are more likely to know another school (63%) or organisation (23%) that participates in the programme and are also more likely to be interested in the programme and actively seek information (27%).

Whether they have been approached to join Era+ or the ESC



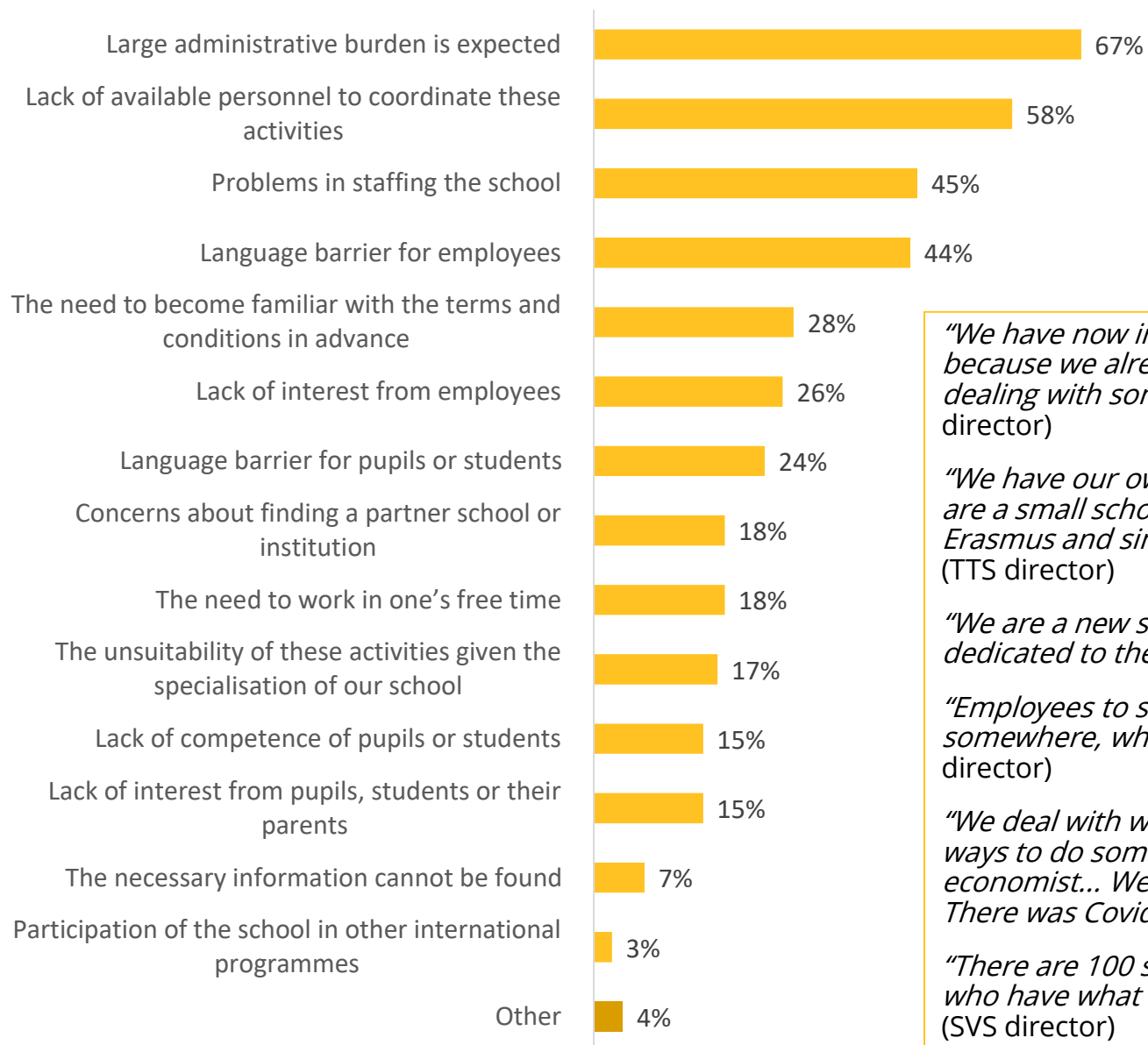
SS are more likely to report having received an offer from a private agency (37%) or from a representative of the self-governing region (13%).

They have already actively searched for information on the programme



Of the schools surveyed, 13% of **NS**, 45% of **PS** and 56% of **SS** have already searched for information about Erasmus+ in the past.

Reasons for not participating in Erasmus+



NS are more likely to report problems in staffing the school (68%) and language barriers for employees (65%).

SS are more likely to report a lack of interest from pupils, students or their parents (25%) and participation of the school in other international programmes (8%).

"We have now included international cooperation with schools in the Templates because we already know it. I chose this option because it is easier for me than dealing with some European funding, I know what a trap that can be." (PS director)

"We have our own network of international cooperation and exchange visits. We are a small school, we try to avoid the administrative burden associated with Erasmus and similar projects, so it is more at a personal level and it works well." (TTS director)

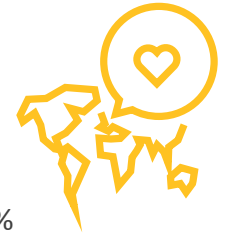
"We are a new school and our problem is that there are no people who would be dedicated to the projects. We do this as extra work and it's hard." (STS director)

"Employees to substitute for us will definitely be lacking. If someone travels somewhere, who will substitute for them in a small nursery school." (NS director)

"We deal with whatever comes along. For a while I am a builder, searching for ways to do some remodelling, then I am an energy engineer, a lawyer, an economist... We address our current problems that are bothering us right now. There was Covid, now Ukraine..." (NS director)

"There are 100 students at our vocational school, but there may only be 4 or 5 who have what it takes and also an adequate social background to go abroad." (SVS director)

Opportunities and needs of schools in the field of international cooperation



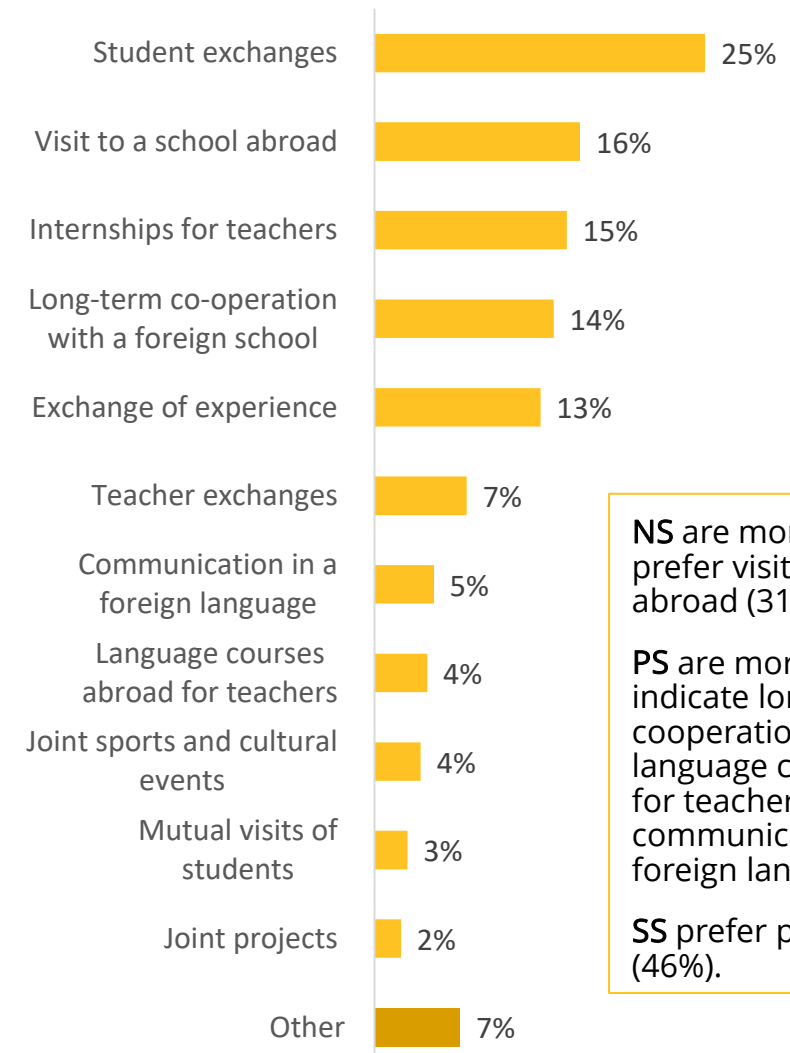
Opportunities to travel abroad in the SE sector

- **Short mobilities for teachers** (up to one week) would be acceptable given the poor substitutability in small schools.
- **Short mobilities for students** (a few days) would be more accessible to students with special educational needs, disabilities, or financial constraints, etc.
- **Alternatives for pupils who lack adequate language skills** would allow more children to complete mobilities, including those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. mobilities in Slovakia or Poland, mobilities emphasising art or physical activities, etc.).
- According to the respondents, **on-line cooperation** should only **follow after the mobility abroad** – this is reported to be the main motivation.
- Most of the schools surveyed have no experience with co-operation with foreign organisations. **They have no idea of how cooperation can be established.**

Opportunities to travel abroad in the VET sector

- For example, professional teachers (IT, electrical, mechanical engineering) were reported to be interested in mobilities – shadowing, involvement in teaching (for teachers with good language skills).
- A representative of a church school would welcome the opportunity for teachers to stay for a month/semester, combining involvement in teaching with non-teaching activities – in the sense of a sabbatical.
- According to the respondents, it would be an interesting opportunity for students to gain work experience abroad (i.e. not only to attend classes).
- Schools that have experience with on-line learning activities rate them positively.

Ideal international activity



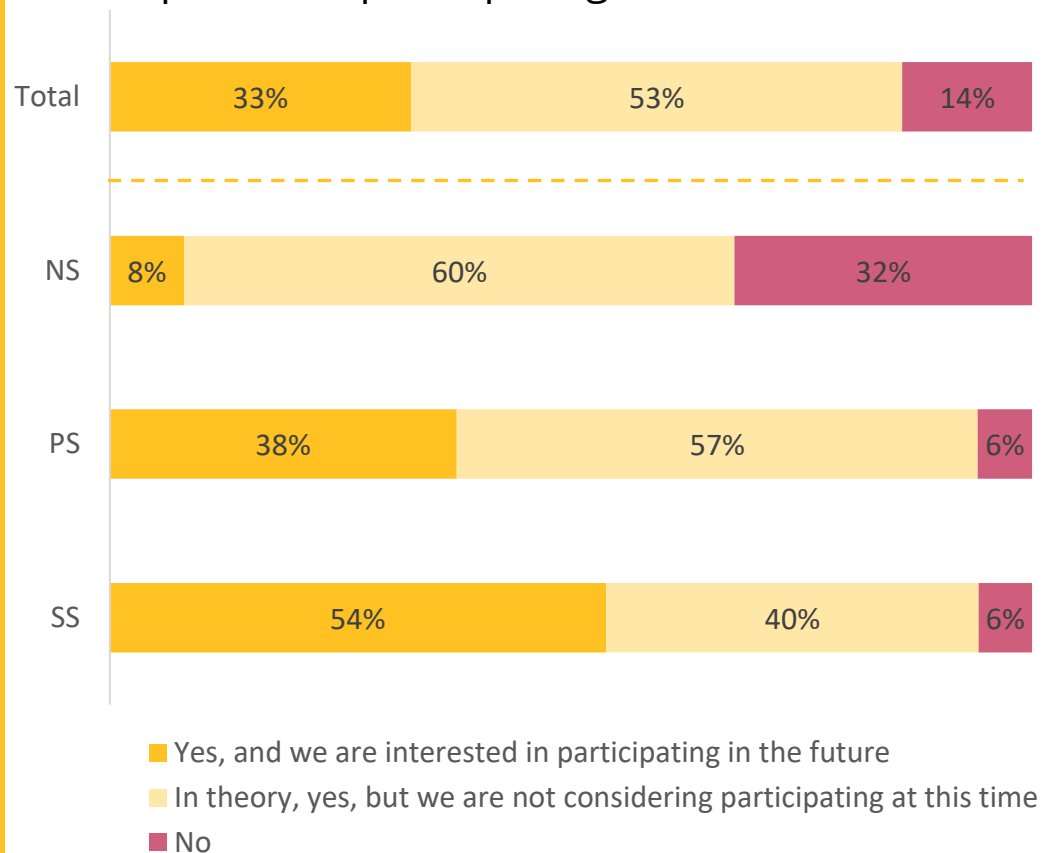
NS are more likely to prefer visits to schools abroad (31%).

PS are more likely indicate long-term cooperation (20%), language courses abroad for teachers (8%) and communication in a foreign language (9%).

SS prefer pupil exchanges (46%).

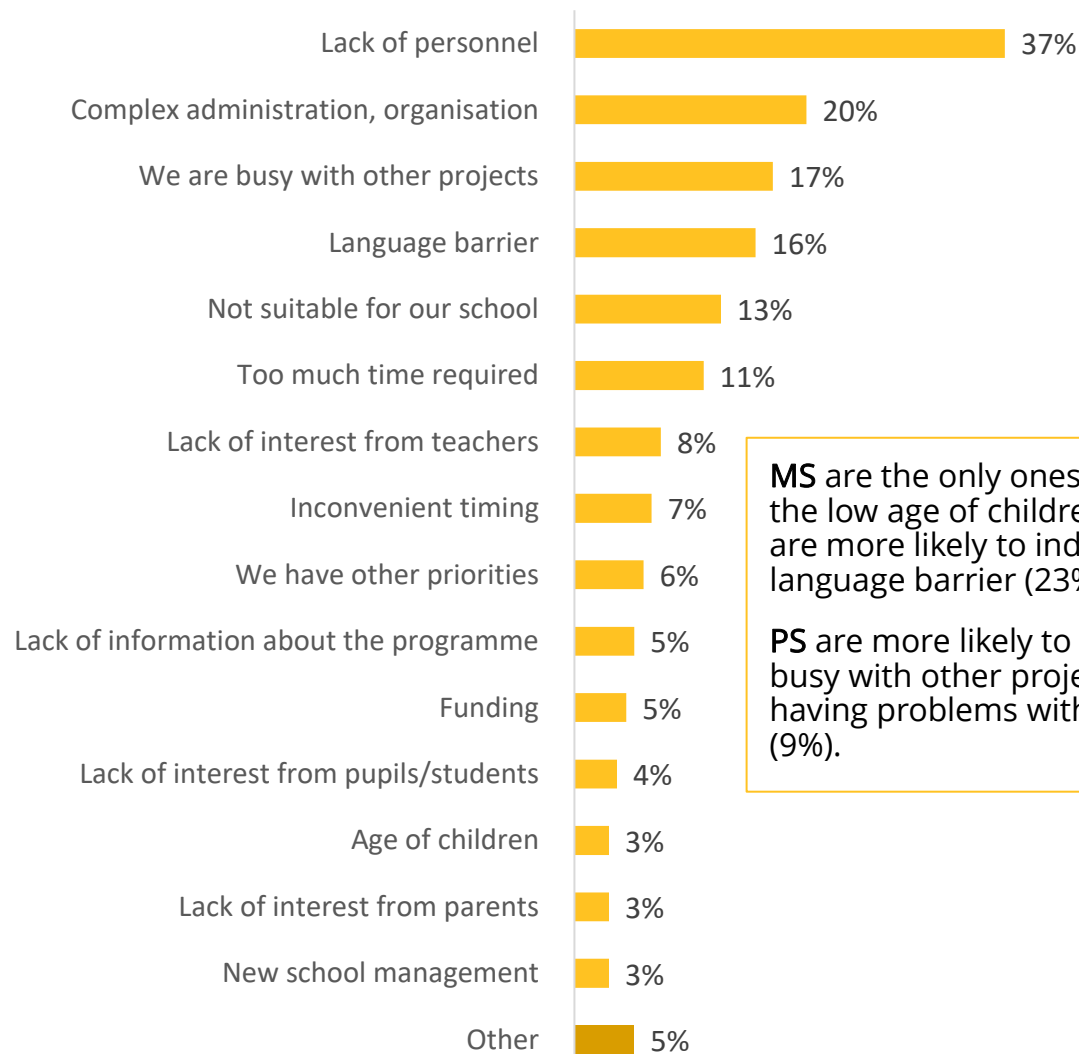
Considering participating in the future

Opinion on participating in the future



"For motivated people, it is refreshing to go somewhere, even with gifted students, it can appeal to teachers and it can be good. Another aspect is that I make effort to introduce something new into the school, so that when the teachers see in practice that it works, that it can be included, then things also work differently and it can be done. From a managerial perspective, I can also see this dimension." (PS director)

Reasons for non participation in the future (N = 134)



MS are the only ones to mention the low age of children (7%) and are more likely to indicate a language barrier (23%).

PS are more likely to report being busy with other projects (30%) and having problems with funding (9%).



Support needed

Preferred types of support:

Availability and clarity of information

- All necessary information on the programme in one place (website)
- What requirement must the school meet in order to participate
- Suitable format – e.g. videos (tutorials)
- Support from DZS (seminars, webinars, consultations)
- Project support (e.g. subsidy office)

Sharing good practice

- The opportunity to contact experienced schools, ideally within the region
- Sharing at DZS seminars or webinars, the presence of representatives of participating schools
- Practical advice through DZS materials (brochures, presentations, etc.)

Assistance, simplifying the possibility of finding a partner for international cooperation

- For example, an easier way to search for and sort schools on the eTwinning platform

“If someone came and explained what it would entail, the paperwork, the administration, how much it would cost the school, etc. That would be the easiest way, to ask whatever I want to know.”(NS director)

“I would welcome a webinar where someone from DZS would present the project, what it entails and, most importantly, include examples from practice. To have participants or directors speak there. So that they could explain what the problems were, what to watch out for. Not something to read, but rather a webinar.”(SVS director)

“It seemed to me that what you do is find a school on the eTwinning platform and then contact it yourself. I found that disorganised, I expected that there would be a list of secondary schools of mechanical engineering or electrical engineering, and that would have helped.”(STS director)

Preferred forms of information about the programme



NS are more likely to not be interested in (more) information about the programme (13%).

PS are more likely to prefer the transfer of experience from a school that has participated successfully (54%) and also webinars (48%).

SS are more likely to indicate personal consultations with an expert (46%).