



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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PRESSE 521

## **The new ERASMUS + programme fully operational in 2014**

The Council adopted today the regulation establishing "ERASMUS +", the Union Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport for the period 2014-2020. It brings together in a single programme activities previously covered by a number of separate programmes (including the Lifelong Learning Programme, Erasmus Mundus and Youth in Action) and it also covers activities in the new area of European competence, sport.

The new programme has a total budget of about €14.7 billion<sup>1</sup> - which represents an increase of 40% compared to the precedent budget - and can also benefit from additional funding from external action instruments (such as the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, the Development Cooperation Instrument, the European Neighbourhood Instrument, as well as the European Development Fund).

Its main operational priorities are simplification of procedures and a performance-based allocation of funds, as well as closer links between the formal, informal and non-formal education and learning sectors.

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<sup>1</sup> With the following breakdown: **77,5 %** to education and training (of which **43 %** to higher education, **22 %** to vocational education and training, **15 %** to school education and **5 %** to adult learning); **10 %** to youth; **3,5 %** to the Student Loan Guarantee Facility; **1,9 %** to the Institut Jean Monnet activities; **1,8 %** to sport; **3,4 %** as operating grants to national agencies; and **1,9 %** to administrative expenditure.

# **P R E S S**

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It also includes a number of innovative proposals, such as the student loan guarantee facility - aiming to promote mobility and access to affordable financing for students taking their Master's degree in another member state<sup>1</sup> -, knowledge alliances and sector skill alliances, which are partnerships between teaching institutions and firms with the aim of facilitating the transition between education and work, thus contributing to reduce youth unemployment.

Erasmus + kept a separate chapter for youth and a separate budget allocation, together with increased access for non-organised youth activities. It also guarantees minimum levels of spending for each education sector (schools, higher education, vocational education and training and adult education), and broadens the access to the programme to persons with special needs or fewer opportunities.

Thus, the new Programme aims to support the EU's efforts to overcome one of the most difficult economic periods in its history, notably by aligning itself very closely with the Europe 2020 strategy for growth and jobs, in which education and training play an essential part.

## **Background**

The ERASMUS programme celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2012 and is considered the most successful student exchange programme in the world. It also offers the opportunity for student placements in enterprises, university staff teaching and training and it funds co-operation projects between higher education institutions across Europe. Each year, more than 230 000 students benefit from the Erasmus programme and currently some 4 % of all students in participating countries in Europe receive a grant to go abroad during their studies.

Close to 3 million students have participated in the programme since it started in 1987, as well as over 300 000 higher education teachers and other staff since 1997 (this type of exchange was also expanded further in 2007) and more than 4 000 higher education institutions in 33 countries.

## **Procedural steps**

The Commission presented its proposal in November 2011 ([17188/11](#) + *ADD 1-6*). At the Council (Education, Youth, Culture and Sport) on 10 and 11 May 2012, EU education ministers reached preliminary agreement (general approach) on the proposal ([9873/12](#)), with the exception of the provisions with budgetary implications pending negotiations with the European Parliament on the MFF. The European parliament's competent committee (CULT) voted a large number of amendments to the proposal end of November 2012.

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<sup>1</sup> This mechanism must not replace any existing national grant system or prevent the creation of lending mechanisms at national level.

On this basis, and following a number of informal meetings (trilogues), the Council (represented by the Irish Presidency), the Commission and the European Parliament reached an informal agreement on the proposal (budgetary provisions excepted) end of a June. The Lithuanian Presidency took charge of the final arrangements (including budgetary provisions) that allowed for the formal adoption of the proposal today.

*See also:*

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/index_en.htm)

*Erasmus brochure:* [http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/brochure\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/brochure_en.pdf)

*European Council conclusions of 7-8 February (EUCO [37/13](#))*

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