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The new "ERASMUS FOR ALL" programme: an outlook

15 February 2013

The proposal for a regulation establishing the "ERASMUS FOR ALL" programme for the period 2014-2020 was presented by the Commission in November 2011 ([17188/11](#)) + *ADD 1-6*).

The proposal 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 also includes activities in the new area of European competence, sport.

The proposed budget for the programme is EUR 19 billion and its main operational priorities are streamlined procedures and performance-based allocation of funds, and closer links between the formal, informal and non-formal education and learning sectors, continuing to focus on three types of key actions, namely:

- the learning mobility of individuals;
- cooperation on innovation and good practices; and
- support for policy reform.

There are also a number of innovative proposals, such as the Erasmus Master's degree student loan guarantee scheme - aiming to promote mobility and access to affordable finance for students taking their Master's degree in another member state -, knowledge alliances and sector skill alliances.

Finally, the Programme also 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.

At the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council on 10 and 11 May 2012 (see press release, [9362/2/12](#)), EU education ministers unanimously adopted a partial general approach on the proposal ([9873/12](#)), i.e. they reached preliminary agreement on the whole text, with the exception of any provisions with budgetary implications pending the outcome of negotiations on the next MFF, such as the total budget for the Programme, the breakdown between the various sectors and the Master's student loan guarantee scheme.

Although it maintained the overall architecture of the Commission proposal, with emphasis on simplification and on different types of action rather than a purely sectoral approach, the Council did introduce a number of changes to the text, many of which have since been taken up by the European Parliament, in particular:

- creation of a separate chapter for youth and a separate budget allocation, together with increased access for non-organised youth activities;
- giving member states more flexibility in terms of implementation, e.g. allowing for more than one national agency and for more activities to be managed at national level;
- guaranteeing minimum levels of spending for each education sector (schools, higher education, vocational education and training and adult education);
- broadening access to the Programme with a view to ensuring the participation of persons with special needs or fewer opportunities.

The lead committee of the European Parliament (CULT) voted 273 amendments to the proposal on 27 November 2012. Four other committees - BUDG, DEVE, EMPL and ITRE - have also given opinions. The main areas of divergence from the Council's position can be summarised as follows:

- new name for the programme: the YES Europe Programme;
- retention of the current 'brand names' for the sub-programmes (Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig, etc.);
- detailed objectives for the education, training and youth chapters;
- inclusion of the indicators in (an annex to) the basic act;
- greater use of delegated acts.

A first informal meeting between the Council (represented by the Irish Presidency), the Commission and the European Parliament (trilogue), aimed at preparing an agreement on the proposal, is scheduled for 19 February 2013. The Presidency hopes to achieve an agreement before the summer, which would enable important preparatory work by the Commission to be completed in time for the programme to begin, as proposed, on 1 January 2014.

In its meeting of 7-8 February, the European Council agreed on a substantial increase of the financial means for future geared expenditure such as research, innovation and education, in order to promote growth and create jobs. In fact, sub-heading 1a ("Competitiveness") had an increase of more than 37% compared to the MFF 2007-2013. In addition, the European Council committed to increase the funding for the EU research programme "Horizon 2020" and the "Erasmus for all" programme in real terms.

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 to study abroad and currently some 4 % of all students in participating countries in Europe receive a grant during their studies to go abroad.

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). Its annual budget amounts to 450 million euro; more than 4 000 higher education institutions in 33 countries participate, and more are willing to join.

See also:

- 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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