



## **BM72 - MALTA**

### **Resolution: Membership of Switzerland in Erasmus+**

The current proposition of the Swiss government, the Federal Council, does no longer envisage a membership of Switzerland within the Erasmus+ program in the period lasting until 2020. In addition, the membership in the successor program starting in 2021 is no longer considered a priority but only an option. This contradicts sharply with the way the Swiss government communicated while the parliament was still discussing on how to implement the referendum on immigration that Swiss citizens accepted in 2014. While the parliamentary process was still ongoing, the Federal Council used to communicate that the main issue blocking the participation of Switzerland in Erasmus+ and Horizon2020 was the uncertainty whether the immigration referendum could be implemented without violating the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons between Switzerland and the European Community. Such an implementation was passed in parliament in December 2016. As a consequence, Switzerland is again a full member of Horizon2020 since the beginning of 2017.

For Erasmus+ the situation is different. While Switzerland contributes to Horizon2020 according to the principles of the European Economic Area, Switzerland did not accept the same terms for its participation in Erasmus+. Therefore, negotiations on the Swiss contribution to Erasmus+ were still ongoing when in 2014 the Swiss population accepted a referendum, which asked for quotas for EU immigration. As a result, the Swiss government saw itself unable to extend the Agreement on Free Movement of Persons to Croatia, which made the EU suspend the participation of Switzerland in both Erasmus+ and Horizon2020.

The European Students' Union (ESU) states that it is unacceptable and a severe violation of the values of the European Higher Education Area, that the Swiss government took a decision of this importance without first extensively consulting key stakeholders. Students are equal partners and must be treated as such both by Higher Education Institutions and government bodies.

Since Higher Education has strong links to Research, ESU deems it unacceptable that the Swiss government does not give the same priority to the international cooperation in the field of Education and Youth as it gives the cooperation in research. The participation in Erasmus+ cannot be separate from participation in Horizon2020 but must be considered as two sides of the same coin.

The European Students' Union (ESU) is being used to refer to "ESIB - The National Unions of Students in Europe" Belgian asbl BE0890.019.936, due to the fact that both legal entities are going through a merging process. Likewise the visual identity of ESU is being used instead of the one from ESIB.

ESU urges the Federal Council, the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation and the parliament of Switzerland to take the necessary steps to ensure the participation of Switzerland in the Education programs of the European Union. It is of utmost importance that Switzerland does not isolate itself from the European Cooperation and Exchange in the field of Education and Youth. In the upcoming parliamentary process, the parliament has to make clear that the participation of Switzerland in Erasmus+ and its successor program is a top priority of Swiss-EU negotiations and that it consequently attributes the necessary funds.

ESU asks both the Swiss government and the European Commission to open negotiations on the Swiss membership in Erasmus+ immediately. In the interest of Swiss students and youth it is of uttermost importance that both the Swiss government and the Commission designate the participation of Switzerland in Erasmus+ and its successor program as a priority in negotiations on the relations between Switzerland and the European Union.

**Proposed by:** VSS-UNES-USU \_\_\_\_\_

**Seconded by:** fzs, DSF, FAGE, PSRP, NSO, NUS UK, CSC, SPUM, CREUP, LÍS, UNEF, FEF, ÖH, LSVb, EÜL, LSVb, SFS, SRVS, SSU, UdU