



Resolution on ERASMUS+ and the funding of the pillar of social rights

The European Students' Union (ESU) **calls upon the European Union (EU) to increase accessibility, quality and funding of the ERASMUS+ successor programme**, providing more opportunities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and/or with disabilities to participate in mobility programmes, in view of the negotiations and adoptions of the Erasmus+ successor programme within the post-2020 EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

The European Commission has stated that next MFF will have to “fund more with less”, especially in light of an impending Brexit. In the European Parliament's (EP) resolution on the future of EU finances, the EP repeats its longstanding criticism that the current MFF is too small and inflexible to respond effectively to old and new challenges.

ESU joins the EP's criticism of MFF inadequate allocation for the challenges and opportunities EU faces. With a special regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights, **ESU calls the EU member states to approve the MMF which adequately financially support actions leading to achieve the key principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights post 2020.**

The full implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights needs to be properly funded and prioritized. The EU's proclaimed commitment to equal opportunities, social inclusion and cohesion cannot be realised without investing properly in the new pillar. A fairer union can only be achieved through a more equal Europe that can be reached through free and accessible education.

Ongoing discussion on Brexit and the financial contribution of the UK to the EU budget should not affect current visions of student and youth mobility in the EU and Europe at large. The successor programme of ERASMUS+ must be more ambitious than the current one even in light of a departing member state. Furthermore, the mobility options of learners across Europe need to be considered thoroughly when completing the negotiations for Brexit. International mobility has a proven positive effect on European values, encompassing equality, solidarity and democratic beliefs across participating Erasmus+ states, including partner countries. As such, the learners of the UK and the learners of Europe, wishing to study in the UK, post-Brexit must be able to benefit from the Erasmus+ successor programme to ensure sustained development of these values across Europe.

Currently, the financial allocation to the ERASMUS+ programme makes up only 1.36% of the entire EU budget, which is too low to achieve its objectives and reach out to learners, individuals and young people in Europe. **ESU encourages the EU**

member states to support the initiative to make ERASMUS+ programme ten times bigger, as proposed by the Erasmus+ Coalition. This increase is necessary to ensure realisation of core European values within the Erasmus successor programme, such as equality through accessibility. Although increased funding does not guarantee accessible and balanced mobility in Europe, it is clear that mobility is currently out of reach for many marginalized groups because of underfunding and lack of cohesion.

The numbers of mobile students continue to increase both for short and long-term mobility. However, the mobile student population remains an elite group, mobility being a privilege of a few. On average across countries, 62% of all students do not plan to enrol abroad because of the financial barriers. ESU calls for the ERASMUS+ successor program, to be seen as an encompassing process and be beneficial for everyone, not a benefit for the few.

Increased flexibility regarding the funding distribution within the National Agencies is required, as well as overall simplification of the application and reporting. **The application policy should be revised**, as in some countries there is a demand for different levels of funding levels for different activities, according to the realities of different organisations. Furthermore, Erasmus learning mobility grants should be adjusted to realistically cover the study and living costs of the destination country.

In view of the above, the current 3.5% of the total budget allocated to the ERASMUS+ programme for the master loan scheme, which has benefited few students, should be reallocated to the higher education mobility and grants.

ESU demands equal chances and access to mobility for all, reflecting the diversity of the population. The ERASMUS+ successor program should acknowledge the barriers that students with disabilities and/or from disadvantaged backgrounds face. It needs to ensure widening access for all, along with a comprehensive approach to dismantle existing barriers to mobility. Adequate support measures and resources must be put in place, starting with redistributing some of this funding to institutions.

ESU looks forward to working together with European institutions to ensure a better future through quality internationalisation and mobility in education.

Proposed by: EC