



Student Social Lab

European Students Union

20th of May 2022

The **European Students Union** organized the **Student Social Lab on May 20th in Brussels** with the goal of **gathering students' opinions and recommendations regarding the Erasmus+ Program funding**. The event was held in a hybrid format to allow students from various countries to participate and have a say on the most important question:

what would the ideal Erasmus grant system look like, taking into consideration inclusiveness and affordability requirements?

The **ESU team**, comprised of Tiziana Fantucchio and Stanimir Boyadzhiev, participated in the discussion with **8 participants from various nationalities** – Polish, Armenian, Indian, Dutch, Belgian, Slovakian, Albanian, and Bulgarian – and **with varying mobility experiences** – outgoing and incoming Erasmus+ Programme students, and students who have not yet participated in a mobility but are interested in doing so.

Participants provided valuable **feedback on the importance of the E+ programme** as well as the **improvements that need to be made to its grant**. While the grant is a motivating factor for any student to participate in mobility because it covers the **main and basic expenses**, the amount of the grant was a **deciding factor for many other students in deciding whether or not to carry mobility** and in which country. The Erasmus Plus programme should take more into account the various **costs of living in the different program countries**, even if they are in the **same group of countries**. Housing is a common issue for international students. Many cities are not prepared to accommodate a large number of incoming students and lack student dormitories.

Furthermore, students expressed a desire for the grant to be based not only on the **costs of living in the host country**, but also on the **area where a student is from** – for example, rural areas – and to adjust the **travel grant amount** accordingly. Also, while grateful for the **enriching opportunity provided by the mobility program**, a **more inclusive grant** would allow many students to **enjoy their mobility experience without being concerned about financial issues**.

Some participants did not participate in Erasmus exchanges because they were **unaware of the opportunities**. Universities should provide more information and engage students in mobility. In this regard, **ESN Culture and Education Policy Assistant Anna Kowalczyk** made a significant contribution by supporting the event and presenting the key findings of the research report on **Student and Staff Perspectives on Diversity and Inclusion in Student Exchanges**. Anna provided an overview of the mobility opportunities and encouraged and motivated the participants.

Thank you so much to everyone who participated for your helpful suggestions and feedback!