



Press Statement from EUA Secretary General on the 25th anniversary of the Erasmus Programme

Lesley Wilson, Secretary General, European University Association (EUA)

“As the European Commission today (30 January) launches celebrations for the 25th anniversary of the Erasmus Programme we would like to take this opportunity to send our congratulations and our support for the continuation and the increased funding of Erasmus in future. European student exchanges and mobility in higher education, in particular through the Erasmus Programme, have been one of the major EU successes of the last 20 years. Without the development of Erasmus there would almost certainly have been no Bologna Process or many of the major higher education reforms across Europe that have followed.

Millions of students have benefitted from the advantages that Erasmus exchanges have provided in terms of their overall learning experience and preparation for the workplace. EUA believes that investment in higher education mobility (not only for students but also for staff), exchanges and collaboration brings long-term benefit not only to individuals but to European societies and economies, and enhances cohesion and understanding. It also benefits the sectors in which higher education graduates will ultimately be employed.

Therefore, looking to the future of Erasmus, EUA welcomes the proposal of the European Commission to increase funding for its next long-term programme for education and training, (2014-2020) that will be called Erasmus for All, and its aim to improve mobility. We believe there is still a lot to be done to improve mobility and it will be important for the programme to focus not only on the quantity of mobile students but also on improving the quality of mobility, through emphasising the importance of using the existing tools (ECTS credits, detailing learning outcomes, including Diploma Supplements etc.) to ensure that mobility is relevant and recognised.

Furthermore, there are a number of issues which EUA has raised and that will require attention in the future to improve and increase mobility; in particular, improving participation of students from European countries with lower income levels; and improving the transferability of national grants and loans' schemes in the EU. These are issues that are also currently being addressed through the Bologna Follow Up Group – including stakeholders such as EUA – in preparation for the next Bologna Ministerial Meeting in April.”

Ends.

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The European University Association, as the representative organisation of both the European universities and the national rectors' conferences, is the main voice of the higher education community in Europe. EUA's mission is to promote the development of a coherent system of European higher education and research.

Notes to editors

More information on the 25th anniversary celebrations is available here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/12/83&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>