

## **MAKING THE ERASMUS+ DIGITAL AND INCLUSIVE**

*Adopted at the YEPP e-Council Meeting, 11.12.2021*

Acknowledging that:

- 1) Art. 6 TFEU states that the Union shall have competence in supporting, coordinating and supplementing the actions of Member States in areas such as educational, vocational training, youth and sport.
- 2) Art. 165 TFEU provides that the Union shall promote quality education by means of educational systems sensible to cultural and linguistic diversity. The development of youth exchanges, exchanges of socio-educational instructors and the participation in the democratic life of Europe are key tools to implement this goal. Also, art. 166 TFEU encourages the Member States in supporting the organization of vocational training for young Europeans and facilitating to industrial changes.
- 3) The Erasmus program marked over 30 years of European history, giving the opportunity to more than 9 millions scholars to study and attend trainings across the Union. In 2014 the program upgraded in Erasmus+ with the goal of including additional exchange opportunities for teachers, trainees and volunteers. The program currently covers 33 countries and is open to new collaborations.
- 4) The chance to study and train abroad builds new generations of European professionals who are ready for changes in the working environment. The mobility has in fact a negative impact on youth unemployment, a study published by the Commission shows that mobile peers are 23% less likely to be out of the labour market five years after graduation<sup>1</sup>.
- 5) The Erasmus program has had over the years a clear focus on higher education and innovation in Europe; only recently it started covering teachers, schools, young workers, athletes. The research for excellence risks however to leave behind generations of young Europeans, who cannot fully experience the geographical mobility. The program shows in fact a latent

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/priorities/erasmus/20190222STO28402/the-future-of-erasmus-more-opportunities>

deficiency in guaranteeing an equal opportunity to all individuals regardless of their level of education and family income<sup>2</sup>.

Recognizing that:

- 6) The European Commission is thoroughly committed to an innovative Youth Policy based on education and mobility opportunities. The Union aims in fact at becoming a centre of excellence characterized by a high degree of internationalisation, exchange of best practices, innovation and job creation<sup>3</sup>. In line with these goals the Youth Commissioner Mariya Gabriel works on extending programs such as Horizon Europe, Erasmus+ and the digitalization of educational systems<sup>4</sup>. Also, the Commission works with a collaborative approach grounded on a structured dialogue, namely an open discussion between young individuals and decision-makers<sup>5</sup>.
- 7) The Erasmus+ contributes to the implementation of the ET2020, the EU Youth Strategy and the European Year of Youth that are designed to improve the future prospects of young individuals. The Union is in fact committed to a wide range of policies with the following objectives: reducing unemployment and early school leaving; increasing the opportunities of adult learning to access the labour market with new skills; encouraging the participation in European democracy<sup>6</sup>. Also, the ET2020 forum provides a framework for the exchange of best practices in the field of learning and mobility, so as to promote core values such as equity, social cohesion and active citizenship<sup>7</sup>.
- 8) The Parliament understands the urgent need of investing in policies aiming at strengthening the EU by defining shared solutions to current and future challenges. The EU budget is in fact at the core of this vision, as it needs to reach the expectations of Europeans currently unsettled by the pandemic and the economic downturn. In this context the flagship programs represent an opportunity to strengthen the position of the Union in the world, by investing in learning opportunities and exchange programs<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/priorities/erasmus/20170612STO77246/the-european-parliament-celebrates-30-years-of-erasmus>

<sup>3</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/international-cooperation/international-cooperation-and-policy-dialogue\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/international-cooperation/international-cooperation-and-policy-dialogue_en)

<sup>4</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/sites/comm-cwt2019/files/commissioner\\_mission\\_letters/mission-letter-mariya-gabriel-2019\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/sites/comm-cwt2019/files/commissioner_mission_letters/mission-letter-mariya-gabriel-2019_en.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/implementation/dialogue\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/implementation/dialogue_en)

<sup>6</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_en)

<sup>7</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/european-policy-cooperation/et2020-framework\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/european-policy-cooperation/et2020-framework_en)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/priorities/eu-s-long-term-budget/20200131STO71519/the-eu-s-long-term-budget-explained>

- 9) The Parliament and the Council reached an agreement on 10 November 2020 on the multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027, based on the Commission proposal of a €1.8 trillion package. The framework provides an increase of the funds meant for flagship programs, the Parliament in its negotiations guaranteed additional €15 billion for EU core programs such as EU4Health, Horizon Europe and Erasmus+, which are understood as essential to protect and invest in the next generations. The Erasmus+ in particular will receive additional €2.2 billion (to €23.4 billion in 2018 prices) in funding<sup>9</sup>.

#### YEPP Calls for:

- 10) Raise the students' awareness about the European Union and its core values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy and the rule of law (art. 2 TEU). **We should strive towards completion** of a community committed to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms (art. 6 TEU), and to the creation of an internal market based on the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital (art. 26 TFEU). The YEPP calls for investments in digital youth programs sensitizing its young citizens and future voters on the key values and overall goals of the Union.
- 11) The EU programs designed to give scholars the opportunity to study and train abroad risk leaving behind entire generations that do not have the means to enjoy learning mobility. The YEPP calls on the digitalization of the Erasmus+ program by increasing the chance to attend online courses at the selected Universities. This policy proposal would increase the equality of access for young Europeans to educational opportunities across the continent.
- 12) Bring the EU closer to the young Europeans that are unfamiliar with the range of opportunities it offers. The YEPP calls for an increase of the investment in youth sports programs and in youth workers, with the goal of extending the European experience to those that are less likely to attend the already well-established activities related to educational and vocational training abroad. The coordination of sport and work activities across Europe represents a remarkable opportunity to increase the participation of young Europeans that do not belong to academia in the projects promoted by the Union. The YEPP sees this capital allocation as strategic to increase the spectrum of participation and inclusion in its programs.
- 13) Invest in effective programs that could involve the demographic and sociological bracket of the NEETs, in order to integrate them into the active part of society. For instance, the VDL worked on the new program ALMA for NEETs. Also, it could be insightful and inclusive for

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<sup>9</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/QANDA\\_20\\_2088](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/QANDA_20_2088)



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this group to attend virtual fairs, which would help them, connect with working, training and education opportunities.