

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EDUCATION AND CULTURE  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL MIGRATION and HOME AFFAIRS

**NOTE TO THE HEADS OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIONS OF EU  
MEMBER STATES**

**Subject: Opening of the Erasmus+ programme to countries beyond Europe**

Your Excellency,

This note aims to inform you about the practical implications of opening the Erasmus+ programme to countries beyond Europe. We would be grateful if you could transmit this information to your national authorities managing the Erasmus+ programme as well as to those in charge of issuing visas and residence permits to students and staff of higher education institutions from third countries.

Since 1987, the Erasmus programme has enabled over three million European students to spend part of their studies outside their home country in a higher education institution in Europe. The new **Erasmus+ programme** is open to the world and, allows for incoming mobility from outside Europe to Erasmus+ "Programme Countries" (EU28, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey) and for outgoing mobility of European students to "Partner Countries"<sup>1</sup> around the world.

Students and doctoral candidates can receive a grant allowing them to spend a limited period of study (up to a maximum of 12 months per degree), for the purpose of gaining credits. After the mobility phase, students return to their home institution, where the credits count towards their home degree. Staff can also spend a teaching and/or training period abroad, ranging from five days to two months. This international mobility is managed by a network of **Erasmus+ National Agencies** established in each Programme Country.

In the 2015 Call for Proposals (published in October 2014), an amount of EUR 121 million is allocated to the 33 Programme Countries for mobility with 10 regions around the world<sup>2</sup>. Around **20,000 students** and staff will be mobile in 2015-2016, a large majority of them coming from partner countries into Europe. The deadline for application

<sup>1</sup> Lack of available budget prevents credit mobility with the following countries: Iran, Iraq, Yemen, and the Gulf Cooperation Council States. Mobility with the 57 ACP countries (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) will start from the 2016 selection onwards. Switzerland, Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and the Vatican City State are not covered by this action.

<sup>2</sup> See list in the programme guide at [http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/discover/guide/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/discover/guide/index_en.htm)

is 4 March 2015 and the first beneficiaries (students/staff) are expected to start their mobility period from the beginning of the academic year (September/October 2015) onwards. A similar number of beneficiaries is expected under each of the 5 subsequent annual selection rounds. Overall, the worldwide opening of Erasmus+ is planned to benefit around **135, 000 people** during the current 7-year programming period.

In addition, Erasmus+ is financing **Joint Master Programmes** delivered by international university consortia which must include a mandatory study period in at least two different Programme Countries. There are annual calls for proposals managed in Brussels by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), and **around 30,000 students** will be funded over the 7 year programming period, three-quarters of them from Partner countries.

Considering the difficulties experienced in the past under previous generations of academic cooperation programmes, we would very much appreciate if you could raise awareness about the external dimension of Erasmus+ among your national authorities responsible for issuing short-/long-stay visa and residence permits to third country students, doctoral candidates and staff of higher education institutions. The Programme can only be implemented smoothly if these national authorities are aware of, and sympathetic to, the aims of the programme, allowing selected students and staff originating from partner countries to reach their European hosting institutions in due time and stay for the period agreed in their mobility agreement.

Further information about the practical implementation of Erasmus+ can be provided by your Erasmus+ National Agency<sup>3</sup> responsible for the credit mobility projects. The European Commission, and especially DG Education and Culture, remains at your disposal to answer more general questions at EU level.

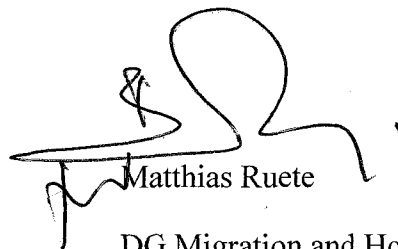
We thank you in advance for your collaboration with a view to making the external dimension of Erasmus+ a success over the next 6 years.

Yours faithfully



Xavier Prats Monné

DG Education and Culture



Matthias Ruete

DG Migration and Home Affairs

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<sup>3</sup> See list at [http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/tools/national-agencies/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/tools/national-agencies/index_en.htm)