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Presenting and promoting the new Erasmus+ Programme and Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions

Erasmus+ is the European Union's new programme that supports projects, partnerships, mobility and dialogue in education, training youth and sport. It has a strong international focus, and many **higher education** opportunities will be open to individuals and institutions from Partner Countries¹. EU Delegations' websites, events, publications and other initiatives will be important vehicles for promoting and presenting what the new programme offers. Our main target group are higher education institutions, students, university staff, alumni, or Ministry of Education officials.

Close cooperation between EU Delegations, the DG for Education and Culture (DG EAC), which coordinates the programme, the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) which manages it, and the External Relations DGs and the EEAS, which partly fund Erasmus+ and decide on its regional priorities – will be required.

The **Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions** (MSCA), part of Horizon 2020, the EU Framework programme for research and innovation, support the human resources behind research and innovation. 65 000 researchers will benefit by 2020 from international and intersectoral mobility plus attractive working conditions. In addition, MSCA is the main EU programme for structured doctoral training, financing 25 000 PhDs over the next 7 years. DG EAC coordinates the programme and the Research Executive Agency (REA) manages it.

By 2020 the MSCA will have enabled around 15 000 researchers from outside Europe² to start or pursue their careers in Europe. In addition, secondments elsewhere in the world are encouraged.

This note (a) provides Delegations with basic information about the new programmes, and (b) explains how the Commission in Brussels can provide more information over time, and help Delegations in their promotional activities.

A - About Erasmus+

Erasmus+ brings together seven previous EU programmes in the education, training, and youth fields. It has replaced the Lifelong Learning programme, Youth in Action, Tempus, Erasmus Mundus, Alfa, Edulink and the bilateral cooperation programmes with industrialised countries.

¹ Erasmus+ "Programme countries" are the EU 28+ Norway, Iceland, Lichtenstein, Fyrom and Turkey i.e. all countries that contribute financially to the programme and have a National Agency to manage it. The rest of the world are Partner countries.

² Europe for MSCA= EU Member States plus H2020 Associated Countries. The countries associated to the H2020 predecessor programme were: Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, FYROM, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland and Turkey. Association agreements for H2020 are being negotiated and thus have not yet been signed.

As an integrated programme, Erasmus+ offers more opportunities for cooperation and should be easier to access than its predecessors, with simplified funding rules.

The international dimension of Erasmus+ (i.e. cooperation and mobility actions with Partner countries) focuses on higher education, with some cooperation opportunities in the field of youth. In higher education, two actions (joint Master degrees and Jean Monnet) are financed from Heading 1 of the EU budget, while two others ("credit" mobility and capacity building) are funded from the external instruments (ENI, IPA, DCI and PI, i.e. Heading 4). Funding from the EDF instrument will be decided at a later stage.

Youth cooperation with Partner countries (mobility projects for young people and youth workers' and capacity building in the field of youth) is currently funded from Heading 1.

1) Three international actions for Higher Education

The funding priorities per region are decided by the External Relations DGs and the EEAS. Three higher education actions are opened to cooperation with Partner countries:

1. **"Credit mobility"**: the well-known Erasmus programme is for the first time open to Higher education institutions (HEIs), students and staff from Partner countries. Erasmus+ funds "credit mobility" i.e. student mobility between 3 and 12 months (in both directions) at all levels of higher education to obtain credits in a receiving institution, which are then recognised by the sending institution. This action also funds staff mobility in both directions, which is essential as university staff are agents of change in their home institutions. Scholarships are awarded on the basis of inter-institutional agreements between universities from Programme and Partner countries. This action is decentralised and managed by the network of Erasmus+ National Agencies located in Programme countries. It is up to universities from "Programme countries" to apply for funding to National Agencies, on behalf of their partners.
2. **"Degree mobility"**: excellent joint Master degrees are offered by consortia of EU (mandatory) and non EU HEIs (optionally). This is the continuation of action 1 of Erasmus Mundus, which has proved to be very successful and given a lot of visibility worldwide to the HEIs involved. We provide high-level scholarships to excellent students and staff worldwide to participate in the joint Master degrees. Students have to spend part of their studies in at least two universities in different European countries. This action is centrally managed by the Executive Agency (EACEA). The former Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorates Degrees have been integrated under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (Horizon 2020).
3. **Capacity building** will replace the actions that used to be financed under Tempus, Edulink and Alfa, i.e. joint projects based on multilateral partnerships to fund curriculum development and modernisation, new diploma, modern teaching and learning practices, upgrading of facilities and equipment, improving university governance and creating better links between higher education and the world of work. This action will also finance projects aiming to have an impact on national systems, through the involvement of national authorities, alongside HEIs. This action is centrally managed by the Executive Agency. It is open to all countries of the world, except advanced industrialised countries.

2) Jean Monnet activities

The Jean Monnet activities stimulate teaching and research on the European Union and foster dialogue between academics and decision makers in the EU and around the world.

- Chairs, Modules and Centres of Excellence mainly promote teaching and research.
- Networks and projects gather information, build knowledge and promote the EU integration process.
- Conferences, thematic groups and associations contribute to the interaction between academics, policy makers and the civil society.

Higher education institutions, organisations and associations from all over the world are eligible to apply for Jean Monnet activities.

3) Youth cooperation

Erasmus+ offers opportunities for cooperation with Partner countries in the field of youth non-formal learning:

1. **Mobility of young people and youth workers:** the following mobility activities managed by the Erasmus+ National Agencies in Programme countries are open to cooperation with Partner Countries Neighbouring the EU:
 - a. Youth exchanges allow groups of young people from different countries to work together for up to 21 days on socially relevant topics and to develop their intercultural skills and competences;
 - b. The European Voluntary Service (EVS) involves young people aged 17 – 30 in an unpaid and full-time voluntary service of up to 12 months in another country to contribute, for example, to the daily work of youth organisations, inclusion of disadvantaged young people, youth information, media literacy, civic engagement or social care;
 - c. Mobility and training of youth workers supports the professional development of youth workers through seminars, training courses, contact-making events, study visits or job-shadowing.
2. **Youth Capacity Building:** this action, managed by EACEA, fosters cooperation and exchanges in the field of youth between Programme and Partner countries from different regions of the world (ACP countries, Asia, Latin America and industrialised countries). These projects may contain an integrated mobility component (i.e. youth exchanges, EVS and mobility of youth workers) as part of the capacity building activities.
3. **Structured Dialogue: meetings between young people and decision-makers:** this action, managed by the Erasmus+ National Agencies, promotes the active participation of young people in democratic life. It is open to organisations and participants from Programme and Partner countries Neighbouring the EU.

Further information, also on contacts, can be found at the following website:
<http://ec.europa.eu/youth/>

B- About the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions

The Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions support the international exchange of research and innovation staff, as well as the mobility of researchers to and from EU Member States (and "Horizon 2020 Associated countries"). This includes the recruitment/secondment of doctoral candidates throughout the world as part of their research training.

Researchers of any field or nationality may be funded. Any legal entity, regardless of its place of establishment, or international organisation may participate in MSCA. In addition, organisations in 140 non-European countries of low and middle income are eligible for EU financing for their participation.

Under **Research and Innovation Staff Exchanges** (RISE) there is support for the short-term mobility of research and innovation staff at all career levels, from the most junior (post-graduate) to the most senior (management), including also administrative and technical staff. It is open to partnerships of universities, research institutions, businesses, SMEs and other socio-economic actors within Europe, as well as between Europe and other countries. In worldwide partnerships, academia-to-academia exchanges are permitted.

Individual Fellowships (IF) enable researchers from outside Europe to be trained in, and build collaboration with a European institution for up to two years. The IF also offer the possibility for European researchers to acquire new expertise in a leading organisation outside Europe and could *inter alia* be used by non-European organisations to host for up to two years free-of-charge European research fellows. Subsequently the researchers return to Europe and share their acquired knowledge.

Furthermore, non-European organisations can participate as additional partners in **Innovative Training Networks** (ITN), enabling doctoral-level candidates to gain experience outside Europe during their training. Projects funded under the ITN and **COFUND** scheme publish vacancies open to any nationality on the EURAXESS mobility portal for researchers. These positions include research training opportunities and fellowships for experienced researchers at postdoctoral level or beyond. The posts may involve mobility to or from Europe.

C- Helping Delegations promote Erasmus+ and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions

1) Website link and Facebook

We would advise all Delegations to create a direct link to the new Erasmus+ and Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions web pages and deleting references to old programmes:

- Erasmus+: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_en.htm
- MSCA: <http://ec.europa.eu/msca>

In addition, potential beneficiaries should be directed towards the dedicated Facebook pages which contain among others up-to-date information on calls, best-practise examples and inspiring testimonials:

- Erasmus+: <https://www.facebook.com/EUErasmusPlusProgramme>
- MSCA: <https://www.facebook.com/Marie.Curie.Actions>

2) Promotional toolkit for EU Delegations

By the end of April, EACEA will set up a password-protected web depository comprising information and guidance on Erasmus+, presentations, printable publications, useful links, and good practice. It will also contain a list of the desk officers in DG EAC and EACEA dealing with

a particular country or region, whom you may contact with questions on Erasmus+ in your country.

This 'toolkit' will be available for colleagues in Delegations interested in promoting the new programme. We encourage Delegation colleagues to visit the webpage on a regular basis over the coming months, as new information will be added, and existing information updated.

- http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/restricted/erasmus-plus-resources/index_en.php
- Log-in eu-delegations
- Password 2114klnji

A first Erasmus+ leaflet targeting students and university staff from Partner Countries is attached to this note. A second leaflet for Partner-Country higher education institutions will become available on the webpage in the coming days. Both leaflets will be available in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Chinese and Russian. The web depository will also soon feature print-quality files for posters and roll-ups

The MSCA general flyer is also attached to this note. It targets the general public and gives an overall view of the different actions. The leaflet is already available in English and French. Chinese, Russian and Arabic versions of the MSCA general flyer are under preparation and will be available in the summer.

Furthermore, a pocket guide to the MSCA will be available from mid-May. It provides an in-depth view to the different actions. It is addressed to stakeholders, researchers and business. All the digital versions as well as templates for MSCA posters and roll-ups can be requested by email to:

- EAC-MSCA-COMMUNICATION@ec.europa.eu

'They will shortly be available at the Horizon 2020 website publications section at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/newsroom/547/>

3) Student and education fairs, research events

DG EAC finances and participates in around 10 student fairs every year (in Russia, Ukraine, Brazil, Mexico, Japan, Korea, USA, China and more are under preparation) with a dedicated "Study in Europe" booth, which promotes the participation in EU programmes, as well as study opportunities in Europe.

For the same purposes, DG EAC, together with the REA, also regularly participates in the major research gatherings (e.g. AAAS in North America) If you decide to participate in a local student fair, research event, or organise an awareness raising event in the framework of Europe days, we can advise you and send you our promotional templates, to be produced locally.

DG EAC has developed in the past years a "Study in Europe" portal: it is a non-commercial gateway to national portals promoting higher education opportunities in different EU countries.

It is currently under reconstruction, but as soon as it will be operational again, we would advise you to create a link to "Study in Europe" from your website. You will be informed of the reopening of the site through the web depository mentioned under 2 above.

Promotional videos on Erasmus+ can be downloaded here:

http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_en.htm

For the MSCA, several promotional videos (all starting with "MSCA") have been created and could be used at conferences and fairs to highlight the different actions of the programme. They can all be found here: <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/newsroom/546/>.

4) Alumni

Our best ambassadors are our alumni. We have set up a worldwide network of bright and committed Erasmus Mundus alumni. They are present all over the world. There are over 9 000 Erasmus Mundus alumni who are ready to support you in promoting the programme, participate in student fairs, and promote the European higher education. Please contact directly the EMA country or regional representative, which you can find on their website:

<http://www.em-a.eu/en/ema/country-representatives.html>

A strengthened Erasmus+ alumni network linked to the Erasmus Student Network will be established in the second half of the year.

In addition, DG EAC recently created a network of Marie Skłodowska-Curie alumni which is rapidly growing. Currently the alumni association (<https://www.mariecuriealumni.eu/>) has over 4 000 members who are eager to foster global relationships as ambassadors of the MSCA with the wider research and innovation community through their experience of international and intersectoral mobility. They can, of course, be approached for promotional purposes at conferences and fairs. Your requests should be channelled through:

- EAC-MSCA-COMMUNICATION@ec.europa.eu

5) On-line briefings

We are planning to organise on-line briefings for Delegation colleagues in different regions of the world. These will be scheduled at a point nearer the launch of the new call for proposals, which is scheduled for September.

Furthermore, on-line briefings on each call of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions are open to all and are recorded for future viewing. The next on-line briefing on 10 June 2014 will cover the Individual Fellowships.

6) National Erasmus+ Offices and National Contact Points for the Marie Skłodowska Curie actions

In the countries formerly covered by the Tempus programme (Neighbouring countries, Western Balkans, Russia and Central Asia), National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs) are in charge of promoting, monitoring and disseminating information on Erasmus+. In these countries, the NEOs are the focal point for potential applicants and beneficiaries. Their contact details can be found on: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/tools/contacts_national_tempus_offices_en.php

National Contact Points dedicated to the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions have been and continue to be established in a number of countries around the globe. Their main role is to guide potential applicants on choosing relevant types of action, advise on administrative procedures and contractual issues, provide training and assistance on proposal writing, distribute documentation (forms, guidelines, manuals etc.) and assist in partner search. Their contact details can be found on the H2020 Participant Portal at:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/support/national_contact_points.html

7) Timing of calls for proposals

- **Erasmus+**

The first Erasmus+ call for proposals was launched in December 2013 (EAC/S11/13). Because Heading 4 funds (from the four external instruments DCI, PI, IPA, ENI) were not yet available when the call was launched, the call covers actions with Partner countries which are funded with Heading 1 funds, namely the Joint Master Degrees, the Jean Monnet action, the mobility of young people and youth workers, capacity building and structured dialogue projects in the field of youth

The next Erasmus+ call will be launched in September 2014, covering all international actions.

Depending on the type of actions, EU Delegations will be consulted on the relevance of project proposals, and the eligibility of higher education institutions from Partner countries.

They will continue to receive the results of the scholarship selections, including statistics per country as well as lists of the names and contact details of selected students. This can be useful to organise pre-departure events or support students to obtain their visa.

We will continue to inform Delegations about monitoring visits and information events organised in their countries and would appreciate being informed on activities targeting higher education institutions and/or students organised by EU Delegations.

- **The Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions**

The Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions have already published their first calls for proposals for 2014 and 2015:

Action	Year	Budget available (in EUR millions)	Call opens	Call closes
Innovative Training Networks (ITN)	2014	405.18	11/12/2013	09/04/2014
	2015	370	02/09/2014	13/01/2015
Research and Innovation Staff Exchange (RISE)	2014	70	11/12/2013	24/04/2014
	2015	80	06/01/2015	28/04/2015
Individual Fellowships (IF)	2014	240.5	12/03/2014	11/09/2014
	2015	213	12/03/2015	10/09/2015
Co-funding of regional, national and international programmes (COFUND)	2014	80	10/04/2014	02/10/2014
	2015	80	14/04/2015	01/10/2015

8) Contact us

Do not hesitate to send your questions and recommendations about Erasmus+ to the country officer responsible for your country (to be found in the web depository mentioned under 2 above).

For the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions, please contact:

EAC-MSCA-COMMUNICATION@ec.europa.eu