



New figures show record number of participants in Erasmus+

Brussels, 26 January 2017

The European Commission published today new figures showing that the EU's education and training programme, celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, is more successful and open than ever.

 [Erasmus to Erasmus+, 30th anniversary: La Manche](#)

In 2015, [Erasmus+](#) enabled 678,000 Europeans to study, train, work and volunteer abroad, more than ever before. In the same year, the EU invested €2.1 billion in over 19,600 projects involving 69,000 organisations. These are the main findings of the [Erasmus+ Annual Report for 2015](#) published by the European Commission today. Results also show that the programme is well on track to meet its target of supporting 4 million people between 2014 and 2020.

Jyrki **Katainen**, Vice-President responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, and former Erasmus student at the University of Leicester (UK) said: *"Education is vital in equipping people with the knowledge, competences, skills and ability to make the most of their potential and of the opportunities open to them. Mobility broadens our horizons and strengthens us further. Erasmus can offer both. As a former Erasmus student, I have experienced this first hand. I encourage other students and in particular teachers, trainers, youth workers and vocational education and training students to also make use of the opportunities open to them under Erasmus+".*

Tibor **Navracsics**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, said: *"Erasmus has been opening up opportunities to young people for three decades now, enabling them to develop vital skills, including social and intercultural skills, and promoting active citizenship. By connecting people and supporting them in working together, the programme plays a key role in empowering our youth to build a better society. This is the solidarity Europe needs, now more than ever. I want to ensure that Erasmus+ can support even more people from a wider range of backgrounds in the future".*

In 2015, Erasmus+ expanded even further by enabling, for the first time, higher education institutions to send and receive more than 28,000 students and staff to and from countries beyond Europe. France, Germany and Spain remain three top sending countries, while Spain, Germany and the United Kingdom receive most of the Erasmus+ participants. Feedback from participants confirms that time spent abroad with Erasmus+ is time well spent: 94% say their skills have improved and 80% feel that it has boosted their career opportunities. One in three students who do traineeships abroad through Erasmus+ is offered a position by their host company.

Today's report also gives an overview of steps taken by the Commission to adapt Erasmus+ to help the EU and Member States tackle societal challenges, such as the integration of refugees and migrants. For instance, the programme's [Online Linguistic Support](#) system has been extended to benefit 100,000 refugees over the next three years; €4 million have been made available for this. The aim is to enable especially young people to enter the host countries' education systems and develop their skills.

The publication of the report coincides with the launch of the **campaign marking the 30th anniversary of the Erasmus programme** (called Erasmus+ since 2014 because it benefits **more people through a wider range of opportunities**). Events will take place throughout 2017 at European, national and local levels to highlight the positive impact of Erasmus both on individuals and society as a whole, and to give all those involved the opportunity to debate how the programme should evolve in the future. Over the past 30 years, Erasmus+ and its predecessors have supported not only more than 5 million students, apprentices and volunteers, but also staff and youth exchanges, amounting to 9 million people in total.

Background

Erasmus is one of the most successful programmes of the European Union. For three decades, it has been offering in particular young people opportunities to gain new experiences and broaden their horizons by going abroad. What started as a modest mobility scheme for higher education students back in 1987, with only 3,200 students in its first year, has developed over the last 30 years into a flagship programme benefiting almost 300,000 higher education students per year. At the same time, the programme has become much broader, providing opportunities for study periods and

traineeships/apprenticeships for both higher education and vocational education and training students, youth exchanges, volunteering and staff exchanges in all fields of education, training, youth and sport. Erasmus+ is also more open to people from disadvantaged backgrounds than any of its predecessors.

The geographical scope of the programme has expanded from 11 countries in 1987 to 33 currently (all 28 EU Member States as well as Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein).

The current Erasmus+ programme, running from 2014 to 2020, has a budget of €14.7 billion and will provide opportunities for over 4 million people to study, train, gain work experience and volunteer abroad. The programme also supports transnational partnerships between education, training and youth institutions as well as actions in the area of sport to contribute to developing its European dimension and tackle major cross-border threats. Moreover, the programme promotes teaching and research activities on European integration through Jean Monnet actions.

Throughout 2017 [many events](#) will be organised across Europe to celebrate the 30th anniversary including a flagship event at the European Parliament in June.

For More Information

[MEMO/17/83](#)

[Erasmus+](#) (the Erasmus+ Annual Report 2015; factsheets; video clips; testimonials; infographics)

IP/17/82

Press contacts:

[Nathalie VANDYSTADT](#) (+32 2 296 70 83)

[Joseph WALDSTEIN](#) (+ 32 2 29 56184)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)