

## EU Policy Update (EU2012.01):

### Erasmus for All

Updated: 02 February 2012

#### Summary of main points in proposals

##### Introduction

On 23 November 2011 the European Commission (‘the Commission’) published proposals for **Erasmus for All**<sup>1</sup>, which would support mobility and other co-operation activities in the field of education, training, youth and sport during the period 2014-2020.

The Erasmus for All programme merges together the current **Lifelong Learning Programme**, the various international programmes in the field of higher education (e.g. **Tempus** and **Erasmus Mundus**), and the **Youth in Action** programme. It also includes, for the first time, scope to support transnational co-operation in the area of **sport**.

One of the drivers behind the streamlined programme is simplification, aimed at achieving efficiency gains and making it easier for potential participants to become involved in the programme.

##### Europe 2020

Erasmus for All is explicitly aligned towards delivering **Europe 2020**, the EU’s headline strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. In particular Erasmus

<sup>1</sup> The Erasmus for All proposals comprise a draft Regulation (the legislative proposal that must be agreed by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers) and an accompanying explanatory Communication.

for All is focused on the education targets of Europe 2020, namely reducing early school leaving rates and increasing the number of 30-34 year old students completing tertiary education.

##### Proposed budget €17.3 billion

A budget of **€17.3 billion** (an increase of around 70% compared to the 2007-2013 funding) is proposed for Erasmus for All, the bulk of which (over 95%) will go towards supporting actions in the field of education, training and youth, with the majority of this funding being managed through delegated actions by Member States. Sport actions are allocated a 1.5% share (€240 million).

##### Education, training and youth

For the education, training, and youth actions there will be new ‘brand names’, to distinguish the different target groups of the various support actions, with ‘minimum’ allocations of funding to each of these proposed:

- Erasmus Higher Education (25%)
- Erasmus Training (17% – within this 2% for adult education)
- Erasmus Schools (7%)
- Erasmus Youth Participation (7%)

Three main types of action are proposed for education, training and youth:

- Learning Mobility of individuals (65% of budget)

To include: (1) Staff mobility programmes (2) Mobility for Higher Education (HE) and vocational education and training (VET) students (3) Master degree mobility of HE students through a new loan guarantee mechanism, and (4) Youth mobility, including volunteering and youth exchanges (informal learning)

- Cooperation for innovation and good practices (26% of budget)

To include: (1) Transnational strategic partnerships between organisations involved in education, training, youth activities to exchange best practice and develop joint initiatives (2) Transnational partnerships between business and education institutions through Knowledge Alliances (for HE) and Sector Skills Alliances (for VET providers) (3) IT support platforms including e-Twinning (4) Support to development capacity, regional integration and co-operation.

- Support for policy reform (4% of budget)

There is broader scope in all of these activities to work with so called 'third countries' (i.e. non-EU countries).

### Simplification and performance

Another theme in the new programme is simplification and streamlining of management. This is reflected in the move towards a single programme and a common menu of support actions. It is also reflected in the proposed management of the programme.

### Delegated delivery: National Agency

As with the current programmes there will be delegated delivery for many of the actions (and most of the budget) by Member States through "national agencies". However, there is a change in approach: Member States would be required to designate one single body ('National Agency') to implement the "decentralised" actions at national level<sup>2</sup> (currently in the UK, there are a number of different national agencies responsible for decentralised actions in the Lifelong Learning and the Youth in Action Programmes). The areas that would be implemented by the National Agencies would be: (1) all Learning Mobility of individuals (except mobility for joint degrees and the loan guarantee scheme); (2) co-operation for innovation and good practice; and (3) grassroots activities in Support to Policy Reform

Each Member State would be allocated a budget for

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<sup>2</sup> These bodies would also be required to report to the European Commission and to their own National Authority on a yearly basis.

these delegated actions. As part of the agenda to focus on results and outcomes, a performance criterion is proposed for the whole programme, which would see 25%<sup>3</sup> of the allocation to National Agencies to support mobility actions determined on the basis of 'budget implementation, number of individuals on the move and implementation of the National Agencies work programmes' – the allocation for 2014 would be based on performance in the current Lifelong Learning Programme. The remaining budget would be allocated to National Agencies primarily on the basis of the size of the population (as is currently the case).

### Sport

As regards sport, the programme has three objectives: (1) to tackle transnational threats to sport such as doping, match-fixing, violence, racism and intolerance; (2) to support good governance in sport and dual careers of athletes; and (3) to promote social inclusion, equal opportunities and health-enhancing physical activity through participation in sport. The budget would be used to provide support for transnational activities including collaborative projects, non-commercial European sport events, strengthening of the evidence base for policy-making, the capacity building of sport organisations, and dialogue with European stakeholders.

### Timing and legislative process

The draft proposals will go through the 'ordinary legislative procedure', which requires agreement by the Council of Ministers and European Parliament on the final text. This process could take 18-24 months (possibly earlier) and the details of the proposals may change during these negotiations.

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<sup>3</sup> This is the same share as the performance-based allocation already applicable in the current Erasmus Programme 2007-2013.

## Background context to proposal

The European Commission first consulted on proposals for the Erasmus for All programme through an online consultation towards the end of 2010 and secondly through a number of conferences, seminars and meetings with stakeholders and interested parties up until April 2011.<sup>4</sup>

The Treaty of Lisbon brought sport within EU competence, specifically within the context of education and training policy (Article 165 of Treaty of Lisbon)<sup>5</sup>.

## Relevance to Wales

Given education and youth policy are devolved competences Erasmus for All is of high relevance to Wales. In respect of the aims of increasing the number of people in education, the percentage of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Wales has remained relatively unchanged for the past ten years. Latest Welsh Government official statistics published in 2011, based on data from the end of 2010, show the current rate of NEETS is 11%.

A wide range of organisations in Wales, including schools, further education colleges, universities, local authorities, non-governmental organisations, and businesses, have participated in formal and informal learning in the EU education and youth mobility programmes.

During the third Assembly the European and External Affairs Committee (EEAC) undertook an inquiry into Welsh participation in EU research, innovation and education programmes, including the Lifelong Learning and the Youth in Action Programmes.

<sup>4</sup> See [DG Education and Culture web-site](#)

<sup>5</sup> See [European Commission Sport web-site](#).

The report includes detailed statistics on Welsh participation in the various programmes during 2007-2010, which shows that:

...Overall there has been a positive level of Welsh participation in LLP between 2007-2010. For each of the programmes, Wales is on a par with, or performing better than England, and, for a number of the programmes, is outperforming Scotland (Transversal and Comenius) and Northern Ireland (Erasmus). (paragraph 31)<sup>6</sup>

Currently, there are two National Agencies in the UK for the Lifelong Learning and the Youth in Action Programmes: British Council and Ecorys. They operate UK wide but have undertaken activities to promote engagement in both programmes within Wales. Under the 'Erasmus for All' proposals these agencies would be replaced by one National Agency, that would be responsible for implementing parts of the new programme across the UK.

## UK Government position

***The UK Government publish an Explanatory Memorandum (EM) on the Erasmus for All proposals on 20 December 2011<sup>7</sup>. This includes references to the Welsh Government's views of the proposals – which are covered in the next section. This section focuses on the UK Government view.***

The UK Government 'broadly agrees with the overall objectives and much of the content of the proposals', including the focus on three priority themes, and the streamlining and rationalisation of the existing proposals.

However, it does not support the budget proposals, and is committed to an overall reduction of the EU budget (as a whole) in the wider negotiations on the Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2014-

<sup>6</sup> [Welsh participation in EU research, innovation and lifelong learning programmes, National Assembly for Wales, February 2011.](#)

<sup>7</sup> [UK Government Erasmus for All EM 17574/11.](#)

2020<sup>8</sup>.

The UK Government EM also raises questions on a number of other points in the draft proposals, including the establishment of a single national agency – the UK Government says it favours ‘national flexibility’ on this point. It also seeks clarification on how the financial loans for Erasmus Masters would work in practice, and calls for any pre-set minimum thresholds for the different types of Erasmus activities supported (i.e. for school, youth, adult, and higher education) to be revisited should there be changes in the overall budget allocated to Erasmus for All. Finally, on the question of integrating the Youth Programme into Erasmus for All, the UK Government notes the concerns of other Member States on this issue, and says it is willing to consider this point provided this does not compromise any efficiency savings that can be made by integrating youth within a single Erasmus for All framework programme.

## Welsh Government position

The Welsh Government has not yet published a position on the Erasmus for All proposals, however, it has fed in to the UK Government’s EM, which notes:

The Welsh Government has indicated its strong interest in the ‘Erasmus for All’ proposal and its intention to contribute its view on the proposal as it proceeds through Council. It also strongly supports the proposal for a new sports programme as an innovative and positive development (paragraph 10)

In its **response** to the EU Budget review (page 21, April 2008) the Welsh Government stated:

...Education at the EU level, through cross-border experiences, adds value in terms of prosperity by increasing the exchange of knowledge between Member States and regions, by facilitating trade and by increasing labour market mobility. It also enhances the quality of life by increasing mutual understanding and cultural exchanges.  
...the Government believes that there should be greater visibility and a greater allocation of funding for the EU’s

<sup>8</sup> See **UK Government EM 12475/11 15 July 2011**

Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action Programmes.

A range of Welsh Government policy and strategy have parallel aspirations to the key aims of the ‘Erasmus for All’ proposals: in respect of increasing the rates of people participating in education; the emphasis on lifelong learning; developing the right skills and knowledge for learners including basic skills; increasing employability skills; and securing increased links between education, training and business. The Wales ‘Programme for Government 2011-16’ includes ‘key actions’ which specifically aim to increase post-16 staying on rates; improve the percentages of 16-24 year olds who are NEET; increase apprenticeship rates opportunities for young people; transform the HE sector to ‘support the economy of Wales’; and support economy and business through encouraging ‘collaboration between our universities and with the best universities outside Wales.

A suite of Welsh Government policies such as *Skills that Work for Wales*; *The 21st Century Higher Education Strategy and Plan for Wales*; the *2008 Transforming Education and Training Provision in Wales Policy* to reconfigure post-16 education and training provision (including FE mergers); the 2004 *14-19 Learning Pathways Policy* (and the subsequent *Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009*) aim to deliver on the stated intention that ‘everyone has access to high-quality training and to gain the right skills to increase sustainable employment and business growth’. Specifically, one of the key aims of the *14-19 Learning Pathways Policy* is to ensure that by 2015, 95% of young people by the age of 25 will be ready for high skilled employment or higher education.

More recently the 2011 *Welsh Government Review of Qualifications for 14-19 year olds* includes a focus on

...the value to learners in terms of preparation for and access to next steps in education, employment or self-employment, as well as the value placed on qualifications by higher education institutions and employers.

The 2009 Welsh Government strategy and action plan *Reducing the proportion of young people not in*

*education, employment or training in Wales*, focuses on the 16-18 year age group and was supplemented in 2011 by the Youth Engagement and Employment Action Plan which outlines the Welsh Government approach to preventing children and young people from disengaging from learning and supporting them with entry to the labour market. In respect of the Erasmus for All Education and training through traineeships

In respect of the 'Erasmus for All' aim of increasing the learning mobility of individuals, responsibility for European and international engagement in the education field is managed by various policy teams across the Welsh Government department, and coordinated by an International Education Unit (IEU). Welsh Government Funding is also provided to support the British Council aim of foster international collaboration, and specifically to promote the international dimension in education with learning institutions in Wales by increasing participation in international education programmes and contributing to the development of the skills young Welsh people need for living in a globalised world and labour market.

There may also be relevance to the **Wales, Europe and the world** component of the Welsh Baccalaureate.

## Progress of dossier in EU institutions

***This section will be updated as the negotiations take place in Brussels and the official positions of the EU Institutions become clear.***

### Monitoring the dossier

The progress of the dossier through the EU decision-making process can be followed on two web-sites (both hyperlinks take you direct to the Erasmus for All dossiers):

- **European Parliament's Legislative Observatory**
- **European Commission's Pre-Lex web-site**

Note: these pages will contain info on the broad EU

level discussion, but will not contain specific information on the UK/Welsh positions/interests on the dossiers. We will pick up on the latter in the sections below.

### European Parliament:

Lead committee will be the **Culture and Education Committee**, which is chaired by **German MEP Doris Pack**, who has also been appointed as **rapporteur** for Erasmus for All. There are no Welsh MEPs on this Committee.

The Committee held an **exchange of views** with the EU Commissioner on 23 November. This brought into focus concerns around the creation of a single programme, including integration of Youth in Action, concerns over the choice of the "Erasmus" brand name, and scrapping the established brands (i.e. Leonardo, Socrates, Comenius, Grundtvig). There was support for the proposed priorities and for the increased budget, and for inclusion of sport in the programme.

### Council of Ministers:

The **Education Youth Culture and Sport Council** will be responsible for the formal negotiations on the draft regulation. During 2013 the two EU Presidencies of the Council will be Denmark (1<sup>st</sup> half) and Cyprus (2<sup>nd</sup> half).

There has been a strong reaction to the proposals to integrate youth into the new programme, with informal information suggesting 15 Member States wish to retain a separate Youth in Action Programme, including **Germany**.

The UK is not the only Member State with concerns over the proposed budget increase, for example we understand that France is opposed to this.

### Others:

**European Universities Association (EUA)** welcomes the proposed increase in the budget for education and training, and also supports the proposals to simplify and streamline actions through a single programme.

**European Students Union** is critical of the measures

for loan finance, and argues that more grant funding is needed to support student mobility across the EU.

**European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA)** supports the increased budget but is critical of the abolition of a dedicated adult education programme (i.e. Grundtvig Programme 2007-2013).

**SALTO-Youth** (a network of resource centres across the EU supporting engagement in EU youth exchanges) notes the support of the national agencies for continuation of a separate Youth in Action Programme for 2014-2020.

## Further information

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