



**BUILDING ON ERASMUS' SUCCESS  
ECIU'S POSITION FOR THE FUTURE ERASMUS PROGRAMME**

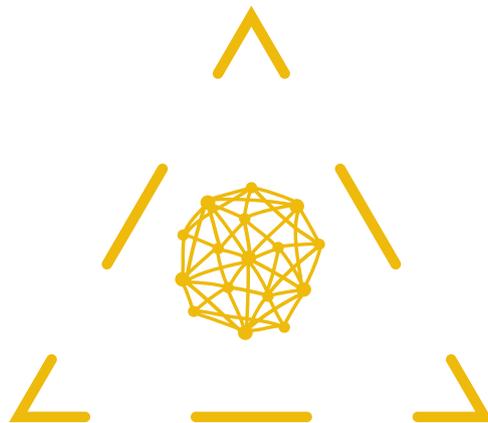
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# ERASMUS

## ABSTRACT

The European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU) is a strong supporter of the Erasmus programme, one of Europe's biggest successes. It is a true EU ambassador programme, crucial for implementing Europe's educational ambitions, developing a strong knowledge economy and strengthening European values and identity. ECIU shares its ideas for the future Erasmus programme and looks forward to continuing working together with European stakeholders on the future of the European Education Area.



### **Maximise the impact, invest in the knowledge triangle**

To maximise the impact and the relevance of the Erasmus programme, reaching out to research, industry and society is key. Fostering social entrepreneurship ensures the formation of responsible citizens and strong and inclusive societies. Research-based education, (PhD-) traineeships in industry, support for career offices and local work placements for mobile students are only some ideas. Synergies with Horizon Europe instruments, such as MSCA and the European Innovation Council are crucial for achieving the desired impact.

## Be flexible

The Erasmus programme has to become more flexible if it is to continuously adapt to the fast-changing reality of Europe's educational institutions and programmes. It is important that alternative mobility forms are eligible for funding. Short-term mobility of 1-2 weeks, flexible work placements, Intensive Programmes and virtual mobility are great opportunities for further strengthening the Erasmus programme.

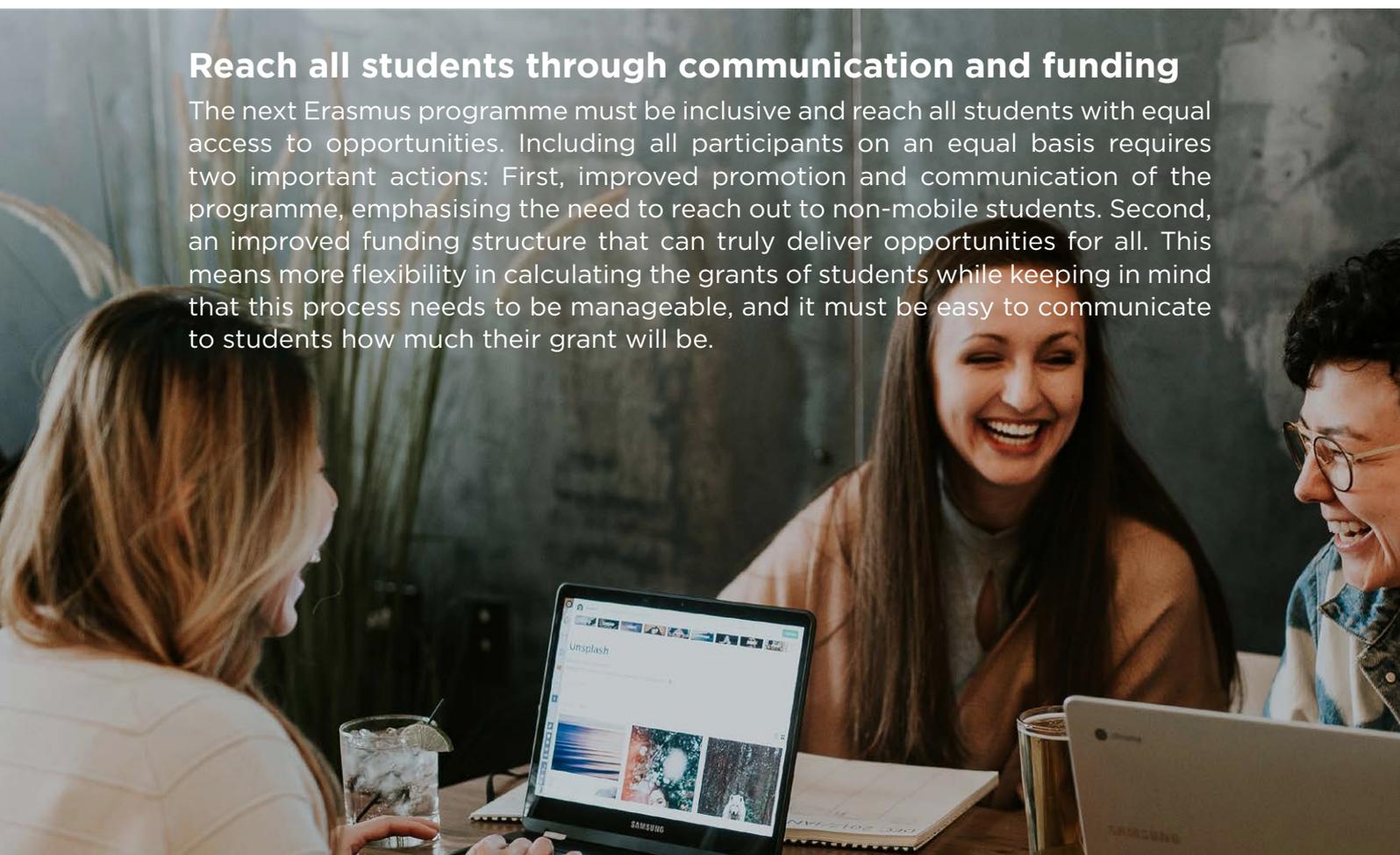
Moreover, the programme is in need of a bold and forward-looking concept of the ECTS and recognition, focusing on flexibility and the harmonisation of recognition practices. There is a need for innovative ways to combine work and studies, e.g. by offering simultaneous work placements during study exchanges to increase institutional relevance. And by supporting the establishment of more flexible curricula with more elective courses or mobility windows, so students can choose the subjects they are doing abroad more freely.

*Finally, small-scale partnerships are the perfect entry points for smaller organisations to the Erasmus programme, seeing that often the larger projects are too complex for them.*

This is why ECIU supports a diversity of project forms, allowing small-scale partnerships to become entry points, as well as stepping-stones towards the development of larger international projects. Small-scale projects could be bilateral staff exchanges to enhance pedagogical practices. Intermediate funding for such actions would be welcome.

## Reach all students through communication and funding

The next Erasmus programme must be inclusive and reach all students with equal access to opportunities. Including all participants on an equal basis requires two important actions: First, improved promotion and communication of the programme, emphasising the need to reach out to non-mobile students. Second, an improved funding structure that can truly deliver opportunities for all. This means more flexibility in calculating the grants of students while keeping in mind that this process needs to be manageable, and it must be easy to communicate to students how much their grant will be.



## Simplify by digitalisation and synergies

The main area for simplification is in the field of digitalisation of the resources of the Erasmus programme. There is much to gain from setting up user-friendly digital interfaces for participants. ECIU is happy to take note that digitalisation is already central to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency's plans for the new Erasmus programme, with the mandatory online learning agreement as a priority. Implementation of other applications via the European Student Card should be explored. Such an interface could allow a student to upload documents or voice/videos. Online inter-institutional agreements, online selection processes and online grant agreements, as well as the connection of Online Linguistic Support to the Mobility Tool, would be valued as well. This, however, needs to be accompanied by training and information campaigns so that institutions understand that their own in-house systems will not be replaced but enhanced.

Furthermore, rules, guides, real practical synergies and guidelines on how to interpret the rules for ways in which structural funds, the Horizon programme or other programmes can complement the Erasmus programme funds are important for simplification. Students could benefit from research practice experience and research groups are strengthened by students to look into specific matters that might not be otherwise considered. Academics in H2020 projects could fast track in E+ and the other way around.

## European Universities

The pilot call of the European Commission for European Universities perfectly **corresponds** to the long-term strategy of ECIU. The ambitious testing ground for educational innovation that the **European Universities' Initiative** provides is very much in line with the ECIU mission. Joint curricula, increased student mobility and innovative, flexible and challenge-based learning will allow alliances to go beyond existing frameworks and push the limits of national regulations, structures for education and innovations.

*ECIU already shared **10 criteria** to make a success out of this new initiative and appreciates that the current pilot call includes ECIU's feedback.*

ECIU is convinced that the consortium, as a cross-European alliance of like-minded universities, is well-equipped to apply for the call. ECIU also agrees with the **European Students' Union** that this initiative must not give preference to certain selective institutions, increasing divides in the higher education landscape. Erasmus must ensure that Europe is united in openness and inclusion, and allow European universities to establish open alliances based on governance models and funding structures in line with European values.

## International and transnational dimension

The new Erasmus programme has indicated a further strengthening of the international dimension. This is very important for an international consortium like ECIU. The international dimension must be active in all Key Actions, as it will help long-term strategies become reality. A stronger and more united European (Higher) Education Area can only become a reality in close cooperation with the rest of the world, as our future is global, and moreover because this brings together fields of specialisation, institutional strengths and cultural diversity.

The funding scheme for the mobility with partner countries is excessively complicated. The application should be easier and the length of funding for a selected project should be longer to have an impact.

ECIU is in favour of transnational Erasmus Consortia, to challenge the national dimension of mobility. In these consortia, universities and companies work together transnationally to organise student and staff exchanges in a network environment. Currently, this is only possible for institutions from a single country. A transnational, European Erasmus Consortium for mobility could be a testing ground for improved network-based mobility.

## Staff mobility

Staff mobility is crucial for universities to strengthen and internationalise their teachers, staff and support structures. It would be important to communicate better to staff how they can use their Erasmus grant and to ensure flexibility for them to adjust their mobility to their personal context. Mobility should be part of the regular working hours of staff since it happens too often that people have to use their holidays for being mobile. Shorter exchange possibilities could help here.

Measures need to be taken to ensure that higher education institutions recognise staff mobility formally, especially by embedding this mobility activity in the human resource development policies of institutions. Moreover, it needs to be clarified what are the opportunities for academic staff to visit companies and vice-versa. Additionally, the new programme should foster the appearance of a central course catalogue for the training of staff to help them find host organisations. The current programme does little to give staff the opportunity to do their regular work abroad, networking and preparatory visits. There is an opportunity in the new programme to boost training in pedagogical and curriculum design skills by funding virtual mobility for staff and funding recurring mobility in order to sustain partnerships.

Furthermore, a clear statement would be welcome, clarifying that unit costs must be granted directly to the mobile staff and that no other calculation method is allowed. This is important to avoid double work, as national or regional governments sometimes require local methods in addition to the method of the National Agency.



## **Budget**

The Commission proposal for an Erasmus post-2020 programme carries with it a proposed doubling of the budget. The ECIU strongly supports this move, as a solid funding structure is more important than ever to achieve our high ambitions and unleash Europe's big potential. However, ECIU is convinced that the future Erasmus programme needs at least **90 billion euro** to respond to Europe's inclusiveness and educational ambitions. 90 Billion euro is necessary for an inclusive programme, to increase the employability and competencies of its students and its workforce, and the quality and internationalisation of its educational institutions.

# ABOUT

The European Consortium of Innovative Universities is a consortium of research-intensive universities, with collective emphasis on innovation, creativity and societal impact. The member universities have a long track record in university-industry interaction and collaborating within their region. Formed in 1997, the Members are willing to change traditional university culture and methods of working. ECIU looks forward to collaborating with European stakeholders on the nature of a modern, innovative university.

## **Aalborg University**

is ranked as the best European university for engineering.

## **Dublin City University**

is Ireland's University of Enterprise and Ireland's leading university for licensing and innovation partnerships with SMEs and multinational companies.

## **Hamburg University of Technology**

offers one of the top 5 combined Management and Engineering study degree programs in Germany.

## **Kaunas University of Technology's**

return on Investment of business incubator Start-up Space is 600 % - taxes paid by start-ups in 5 years exceed the investment of the KTU 6 times.

## **Linköping University**

is ranked as Sweden's foremost university in terms of societal engagement and impact, having produced the highest number of innovative spinouts in Sweden during the last decade.

## **Tampere University**

is ranked on the 11th position in the world, and the 4th in Europe for industry collaboration according to THE rankings.

## **TEC de Monterrey**

is on the Top 25 Undergraduate Schools (NO. 14) for the Princeton Review's Top Schools for Entrepreneurship Studies for 2018.

## **The University of Nottingham**

has a £1.1bn economic impact on the UK every year.

## **The Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona**

led the UAB-CIE Sphere, comprising of scientific, technological and business parks, multinational companies, SMEs, foundations and city councils.

## **The University of Aveiro**

was designated as best-practice by the National Strategic Reference Framework Observatory, for its close cooperation with the region.

## **University of Stavanger**

produces more business ideas per researcher than any other university in Norway.

## **University of Trento**

Leading University in Italy for quality of research and education. At the centre of the economic and social innovation in the Trentino region.

## **University of Twente**

was awarded best technical university and university with the highest impact in the Netherlands.



**Olga Wessels**

Head of Brussels Office  
olga.wessels@eciu.org

**ECIU Brussels Office**

Avenue de Tervueren 35  
1040 Brussels, Belgium

[www.eciu.org](http://www.eciu.org)  
@ECIUniversities