STATEMENT - ERASMUS+ 2028-2034

The time is now: deliver on Erasmus+ and double the budget

With the Commission, the Council of the EU and the European Parliament each now having adopted their position on the next Erasmus+ programme, negotiations are set to enter into the next crucial phase. On behalf of the Dutch knowledge sector, Neth-ER calls on the co-legislators to remain steadfast on the proven value of the Erasmus+ programme and secure the following points:

Our recommendations in short

Neth-ER asks the co-legislators to secure the following points:

- A secured and sufficient Erasmus+ budget;
- A programme with education and mobility at its core;
- A programme that is accessible for all learners;
- Structural and equal support for European University Alliances and Centres of Vocational Excellence;
- Concrete and structural simplification with adequate funding;

ERASMUS+

Budget. A secured and sufficient Erasmus+ budget.

Erasmus+ has proven to be one of Europe's most successful and most valued programmes. Even so, in order to reach its targets and be truly inclusive, it needs to be strengthened, not scaled back. Moreover, the programme for 2028-2034 comprises an expanded set of ambitions, and therefore requires an ambitious budget to match. The proposals fall short in this regard. The Commission proposed a budget of EUR 40,8 billion, while the Irish Presidency is steering towards an even lower amount. Underfunding the programme now would mean leaving gaps we cannot afford. Therefore, Neth-ER reiterates its call for a doubled Erasmus+ budget of at least EUR 60 billion, with at least 50% secured for mobility actions. New actions such as scholarships in strategic fields must not come at the expense of mobility targets or improved access for vulnerable groups.

Education and mobility. A programme with education and mobility at its core.

Neth-ER emphasises that Erasmus+ should be first and foremost an education and mobility programme. The role of Erasmus+ in a future-proof and resilient society reaches far beyond its strategic value for the labour market alone. The programme is instrumental in students' personal development, transversal and soft skills, and active citizenship and participation in democratic life. Rapidly changing societies and labour markets make transversal, intercultural and soft skills and opportunities for lifelong learning all the more essential. Mobility and strategic cooperation for the future of education are the proven core of the programme and must therefore continue to be supported across all sectors and fields of education, rather than narrowed to areas with strategic priority.

Accessibility. A programme that is accessible for all learners.

Neth-ER welcomes proposed inclusion measures such as the Europe on the Move target of 20% of participants from groups with fewer opportunities. The ability of the programme to provide opportunities to all learners is paramount to its value and success. Ensuring equal opportunities for all learners includes safeguarding various forms of mobility, alongside the traditional 'semester abroad', such as blended mobility, internationalisation at home and short mobility formats. Such Erasmus+ actions make the programme more accessible for students for whom an extended stay abroad may not be within reach, thereby fostering inclusion as a key priority of the Erasmus+ programme.

Long-term investment. Structural and equal support for European University Alliances and Centres of Vocational Excellence.

Neth-ER welcomes explicit recognition of the strategic role that European University Alliances and the Centres of Vocational Excellence play. It is now imperative that this recognition also translates into commitment for structural long-term investment pathways and concrete implementation measures for the Alliances as well as the Centres of Vocational Excellence. To this end, European University Alliances and Centres of Vocational Excellence should be systematically tied in with other programmes, such as the European Competitiveness fund where it addresses skills, the European Social Fund+ and the National and Regional Partnership Plans.

Simplification. Concrete and structual simplification with adequate funding.

Neth-ER strongly supports proposed moves towards simpler procedures, user-friendly tools and a single-entry digital environment for applicants and beneficiaries. However, Neth-ER is concerned that the relative reduction in the budget allocated to National Agencies as proposed in the EP's position would undermine said efforts to improve accessibility and inclusion. We therefore urge the institutions to ensure in the negotiations that simplification measures are backed by sufficient support and funding.