

## ESN statement on UK's decision to leave from the Erasmus+ programme

Four years after the Brexit vote took place, an agreement was finally reached on the future cooperation between the EU and UK. Erasmus Student Network (ESN) regrets to see that the UK chose to not continue the cooperation with the EU in the field of Education under the Erasmus+ programme. Erasmus Student Network, together with other stakeholders, has repeatedly advocated over the years for the continuation of the UK's participation in the Erasmus+ programme, highlighting what is at stake for the youth in the UK and EU. In a recent statement released by ESN together with the European Students' Union, Universities UK International, and the Association of Colleges, we urged the negotiators to seek for a mutual agreement and we are disappointed to see that the voice of students, universities and colleges was not taken into consideration.<sup>1</sup>

According to the latest Erasmus+ annual report<sup>2</sup>, UK is among the top 5 countries both for outgoing and incoming students. The Erasmus+ programme is one of the most prestigious and largest student mobility schemes in the world to be tested for more than three decades, giving the opportunity to more than ten million young people to study and train abroad. Any effort from the United Kingdom to establish a programme with similar benefits and reputation will be proven as highly challenging. Erasmus+ is more than just another mobility scheme. It is a programme that has cultivated and nurtured a young generation which identifies itself as one, the Erasmus Generation. From now on, UK students won't have the possibility to belong to this generation due to the inability of politicians to reach a mutually beneficial agreement.

Although we regret to see this development and while we believe that Erasmus+ is irreplaceable, we will work with UK officials and share our expertise to make sure that student mobility and internationalisation will continue through the Turing scheme.

Quote from Kostis Giannidis, President of the Erasmus Student Network:

*"I had the opportunity to study in the United Kingdom myself thanks to the Erasmus+ programme and it breaks my heart to see that the UK won't be an Erasmus destination anymore. If it wasn't for the Erasmus+ programme I wouldn't have the opportunity to study at Durham University, one of the world's top 100 universities, and experience the British culture."*

### About the Erasmus Student Network

Erasmus Student Network (ESN) is the biggest student association in Europe. Present at over 1000 Higher Education Institutions, it unites over 530 local associations in 42 countries. More than 15,000 volunteers take care of over 350,000 international students under the motto "Students helping students". ESN works for the creation of a more mobile and flexible education environment by supporting and developing the student exchange from different levels, and providing an intercultural experience.

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<sup>1</sup> Statement Erasmus in the UK: <https://esn.org/news/erasmus-uk-negotiations>

<sup>2</sup> Erasmus+ Programme Annual Report: [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/statistics\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/statistics_en)