

From: The Erasmus500 declaration supporters

OPEN LETTER TO European Commission:

President, **Ursula von der Leyen**,
Vice-President for Promoting the European Way of Life, **Margaritis Schinas** and
Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, **Mariya Gabriel**

Saturday, 17th of October 2020

Honourable Commissioners,

We come to you today with a simple request: we ask you to be champions for an Erasmus+ programme that allows for the participation of many more students from all walks of life!

Since many years researchers have shown that the single largest obstacle to participation in international student mobility is the additional financial burden associated with living abroad. Current grants have not kept up with soaring rent prices, and in the vast majority of countries receiving financial support from the family is a pre-requisite for being able to participate in a programme like Erasmus, which means that students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds are underrepresented. Meanwhile approximately half of all European students work while they study, and those who rely on that income to meet their living expenses also find themselves structurally excluded from enjoying such life-changing opportunities.

The current pandemic has already brought a new wave of inequalities to the education sector. As we stand on the edge of yet another daunting social and economic crisis, we ask you to make sure that the next Erasmus programme is genuinely inclusive - and there is a disarmingly simple manner to partially achieve this goal.

Since last April dozens of universities, student and stakeholders organisations have joined forces to support the notion that all European students should receive a monthly Erasmus+ grant of at least 500€. This would:

Inclusiveness

Replace an unintelligible grant system with something far simpler, fairer and transparent: 98% of all students studying abroad with Erasmus+ would receive more and better financial support, which is of crucial importance when we know that during the economic crisis the ability of families to financially support students in affording such experiences can be severely curtailed;

Simplicity

Radically simplify administration, reporting and auditing requirements, engendering considerable systemic savings; having mobility as a triggering event for funding means a single documental proof would be required;

Strong support

Strongly emphasize how all citizens of the Union have comparable rights and opportunities.

We believe all political leaders would in principle be favourable to higher grants, the question being where to find the resources to do so. The **Erasmus500 proposal** already takes into account the outcomes of the MFF negotiation and the latest mobility modalities that will be introduced from 2021 onwards, combining them in such a way that, according to the latest statistical data published by the European Commission, would very nearly suffice to attain such an ambitious leap forward!

Through this letter, we speak to you on behalf of hundreds of supporters, ranging from Erasmus alumni in the furthest corners of our continent to the French and Spanish Rectors Council, that feel this is a central challenge for the future of Europe and of one of its most beloved flagships programmes.

By acting decisively together we can make sure mobility will benefit many, instead of a privileged few.

We would be honoured to have the opportunity to discuss this matter with you and illustrate how the existing Erasmus grant system could be reliably reengineered. We count on your political leadership to make such a change possible, seizing a historical opportunity to make the programme **a reality for every European student.**

#Erasmus500
www.erasmus500.eu

The supporters

Members of the European Parliament

Corina Cretu, S&D, Romania
Grace O'Sullivan, Greens/EFA, Ireland
Iuliu Winkler, EPP, Romania
Ivan Štefanec, EPP, Slovakia
Marcos Ros Sempere, S&D, Spain
Vladimír Bilčík, EPP, Slovakia

International Networks

Association Européenne des Conservatoires,
Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen
Board of European Students of Technology
Coimbra Group of Universities
Crue Universidades Españolas
Erasmus Student Network
European Students' Forum - AEGEE
European Student's Union
European Pharmaceutical Students' Association
European University Foundation
French Rectors' Conference
International Association for Political Science
Students
Junior Enterprises Europe
Lifelong Learning Platform

SGroup European Universities' Network
The Class of 2020
Mediterranean Universities Union
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Higher Education Institutions

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JAM MUSIC LAB Private University for Jazz and
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Student Organisations

Austrian National Union of Students
La Coordinadora de Representantes de Estudiantes de Universidades Públicas
Erasmus Student Network Bahcesehir
Erasmus Student Network France
Erasmus Student Network Germany
Erasmus Student Network Luxembourg
Erasmus Student Network Malta
Erasmus Student Network Spain
Erasmus Student Network TU IC
Erasmus Student Network Turkey
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Fédération des associations générales étudiantes
Federation of Estonian Student Unions
Georgian Student Organisations Association
National Alliance of Student Organizations in Romania
National Union of Students in Hungary
National Union of Students in Denmark
National Union of University Students in Finland
Student Council for Higher Education
Swedish National Union of Students
Swiss Student's Union
TU Dublin Students' Union
Unione degli Universitari
Union Nationale des Étudiant-e-s du Luxembourg
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V4+ Student Alliance

and 166 **individual supporters.**