

## JOINT STATEMENT

# A stronger Europe needs a properly funded Erasmus+

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7 January 2026



The European higher education sector calls on member states, the European Parliament and the European Commission to ensure an allocation of **at least €60 billion for Erasmus+ from 2028 to 2034** during the ongoing negotiations on the EU's next long-term budget (multiannual financial framework).

As highlighted in the Draghi report, over the coming decade Europe needs significantly more talent – that can work together across borders, particularly in strategic sectors and at high skill levels. In this context, **investing in people – through higher education exchange and collaboration – is central to Europe's future prosperity, competitiveness and resilience**, as reflected in the European Education Area, the Union of Skills and the Competitiveness Compass.

Europe now faces a strategic choice. **Underinvestment in education would undermine the EU's own political objectives**. Therefore, we welcome the European Commission's efforts, under the leadership of Executive Vice-President Roxana Mînzatu, to secure an increased budget for Erasmus+ in a highly constrained financial environment.

Erasmus+ is one of Europe's most tangible success stories. Its contribution to citizens' lives and to Europe's future needs investment that matches its proven impact. For nearly 40 years, this popular flagship programme has **empowered millions of learners, strengthened institutional cooperation, deepened European integration and fostered global outreach**.

At a time of heightened geopolitical tensions, Erasmus+ delivers **long-term returns in skills, employability, innovation capacity and civic engagement**. Few EU programmes combine such broad public support with such clear and measurable societal impact. Erasmus+ contributes directly to developing a highly skilled, mobile and adaptable workforce, strengthens Europe's knowledge base and enhances societal cohesion and democratic resilience.

The undersigned organisations, together representing thousands of higher education institutions, millions of students and key stakeholders, underline a shared conclusion: **Europe can only achieve its ambitions in education, skills and talent if Erasmus+ is ambitiously resourced**.

## **WHY DOES ERASMUS+ NEED AT LEAST €60 BILLION?**

The proposed allocation of €40.8 billion for 2028–2034 represents a step in the right direction, recognising the programme's value and political importance.

Nonetheless, the European Parliament's call to triple the Erasmus+ budget compared to 2021–2027, as well as the sector's experience from the current programme and a wide range of new challenges and ambitions articulated at EU level, demonstrate that a higher level of investment (at least €60 billion) is needed.

Indeed, the proposed Erasmus+ budget put forward on 16 July 2025 by the European Commission would barely maintain the level of activities in 2027, once **inflation and rising costs, the integration of the European Solidarity Corps and additional responsibilities** are taken into account. In practice, this would leave very limited scope to expand access, improve quality and deliver on newly agreed priorities, including:

- the mobility targets endorsed by member states in the Council Recommendation 'Europe on the Move', alongside commitments to inclusive learning mobility and talent attraction under the Union of Skills agenda;
- the consolidation of the European Universities Initiative and the Centres of Vocational Excellence;
- enhanced inclusion of learners with fewer opportunities;
- new actions such as scholarships in strategic fields.

**Erasmus+ is one of the EU's most cost-effective instruments.** In a context of competing policy priorities, it stands out as a programme where relatively modest additional investment delivers long-term returns across multiple EU objectives, from competitiveness and skills to cohesion, inclusion and global engagement.

A budget of at least €60 billion would allow Erasmus+ to:

- meet the programme's agreed political targets without reducing quality or participation;
- deliver on key European priorities, including skills development, innovation capacity, digitalisation and AI literacy, democratic engagement, sustainability, and social and territorial cohesion;
- expand access, enabling more learners, especially those with fewer opportunities, to benefit from high-quality mobility and cooperation;
- consolidate established, high-impact initiatives, notably European Universities alliances and joint programmes;
- respond to demographic change and labour-market needs, supporting Europe's long-term prosperity and competitiveness;
- serve Europe's geopolitical priorities, by promoting it as an attractive destination for talent and building sustainable partnerships with institutions worldwide, in close interplay with the Global Europe programme.

The undersigned organisations stand ready to work constructively with all of the European institutions, provide evidence and data where useful and contribute to solutions that ensure a stronger Erasmus+, and by extension, a stronger Europe.

## SIGNATORIES

- ACA - <https://aca-secretariat.be/>
- AURORA - <https://aurora-universities.eu/>
- CESAER - <https://www.cesaer.org/>
- Coimbra Group - <https://www.coimbra-group.eu/>
- DAAD - <https://www.daad.de/en/>
- EAIE - <https://www.eaie.org/>
- ECIU - <https://www.eciu.eu/>
- ESN - <https://www.esn.org/>
- ESU - <https://esu-online.org/>
- EUA - <https://www.eua.eu/>
- EUF - <https://uni-foundation.eu/>
- EURASHE - <https://www.eurashe.eu/>
- The Guild - <https://www.the-guild.eu/>
- LERU - <https://www.leru.org/>
- UNICA - <https://www.unica-network.eu/>
- UNIMED - <https://www.uni-med.net/>
- YERUN - <https://yerun.eu/>