

Newsletter

Committee meeting 4 and 20 February 2019



Report on the proposal for a regulation establishing 'Erasmus', the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport - Adoption of draft report (Rapporteur: Milan Zver, EPP)

The CULT Committee gave resounding support (28 votes in favour and 1 against) to the Zver report on the next generation of the hugely successful Erasmus+ programme. Apart from reverting to the Erasmus+ name in use for the current programme, the report takes the Commission's stated desire to make the programme more inclusive by boosting participation among people with fewer opportunities and proposes a series of wide-ranging and more specific measures to ensure that this aim can be delivered and properly measured. The report requires the Commission to develop an EU framework for inclusion measures within which national agencies would develop inclusion strategies to target additional support (training, accessibility, information etc) to those people who need it most in the national context. Moreover, where a lack of money or excess costs (for example because a learner has a disability) are a barrier to access, the Commission and Member States are required to ensure that financial support is provided, whether through the European Social Fund+, through national schemes or through a dedicated pot in Erasmus+. The cost of measures to enable inclusion can never justify rejection of an application under the programme. These specific inclusion measures are supported by a definition of 'learning mobility' that is purely physical (no virtual exchanges can replace mobility) and a set of indicators that carefully measure the impact of inclusion measures.

Elsewhere, the CULT Committee backs a real-terms tripling of the budget for Erasmus+, making it clear that the aim of expanding the programme and making it more inclusive, together with the new initiatives planned for the 2021-2017 period (European Universities, DiscoverEU, Vocational Centres of Excellence), demand the right level of budgetary backing. As made clear in a political statement annexed to the report, any failure to deliver the threefold increase will necessitate a rethink on the new initiatives since core activities and inclusion are the committee's priorities. The report also insists on an ongoing role for the European Parliament in approving, through delegated acts, the work programme with the secondary policy choices and budgetary priority-setting that are essential in a programme that requires flexibility if it is to be effectively implemented over a 7-year period. The lack of clarity about the new initiatives merely underscores the need for ongoing parliamentary scrutiny.

The Committee also expands the scope of some mobility actions – adult learners are added to staff under adult education, young people regularly practising organised sport are added to sport staff under sport (and sport mobility also becomes possible with third countries) and pre-school and early education staff are added to school mobility. European added value – defined broadly – remains a prerequisite for support under the programme as it is in the current programme, but was not explicitly in the Commission proposal.

Another key feature of the Commission's proposal was the desire to simplify the programme for beneficiaries and to create better synergies and complementarity across EU funding programmes. Again, the CULT Committee report goes further, introducing the requirement to develop a one-stop-shop tool for Erasmus beneficiaries and seeking to ensure that synergies and complementarity actually make the lives of applicants easier in practice. Other innovations include a requirement to provide all essential programme documentation in at least the official EU languages, to make language learning tools developed under Erasmus more widely available, to ensure the dissemination of project results and to develop and roll out a European Student Card for all Erasmus students by the end of 2021 and to the wider student community by the end of 2025.

The report is expected to go to plenary in the second March session where the Parliament will adopt its first reading before trilogue negotiations begin after the elections.

[Procedure file](#)

Report on the proposal for a regulation establishing the Creative Europe Programme for the years 2021-2027 - Adoption of draft report (Rapporteur: Silvia Costa, S&D)

The report on the Creative Europe Programme received near-unanimous backing (28 in favour, 1 abstention). The report proposes a doubling of the budget (2 806 000 000 EUR in constant 2018 prices) and fixed percentages for each of the strands under the programme. The report focuses considerable attention on the intrinsic value of culture and the role of artists and cultural and creative operators and their contribution to people's personal development and social inclusion.

The new Creative Europe programme would support new actions on the mobility of artists and the cultural and creative sectors' operators, music, heritage and architecture, with a particular focus on the concept of *Baukultur*.

In the MEDIA strand, independent European production companies will benefit from support for development, production and circulation of their audio-visual works. Special attention is also given to audience engagement, in particular among young audiences, and film education. Members also supported the inclusion of the priority to foster a free pluralistic media environment, which seeks to promote media literacy, critical thinking and introduced a reference to university radio networks.

The report gives special attention to the indicators measuring the impact of the programme. The strands should have a common set of qualitative indicators and each strand a specific set of indicators, which will be assessed and, if necessary, revised through a delegated act. Concerning data gathering on the cultural and creative sector and the impact of cultural policies, the Commission should reinforce cooperation among its services, such as EUROSTAT and the Joint Research Centre and to intensify its collaboration with centres of excellence in Europe, national statistical institutions, the Council of Europe and UNESCO.

The European Union Youth Orchestra has been designated as grant beneficiary for its contribution to the circulation of European works abroad and to the internationalisation of young musicians' careers. The same status has been granted to the European Film Academy in order to allow the signature of the cooperation agreement with the Parliament concerning the further development of the LUX Film Prize.

The report is expected to go to plenary in the second March session where the Parliament will adopt its first reading before trilogue negotiations begin after the elections.

[Procedure file](#)

Brexit contingency measures

With no objections received under the simplified procedure, the CULT Committee adopted its report on the draft Regulation providing for contingency measures for the current Erasmus+ Programme in the event of a no-deal Brexit (Rapporteur: Bogdan Zdrojewski (EPP)). The Regulation would ensure that, should there be no withdrawal agreement between the EU and the UK at the point of the UK's departure, people participating in Erasmus+ could complete their exchange programme without interruption, without losing credits and with continued financial support. The Commission estimates that 14,000 EU-27 learners are currently in the UK and 7,000 UK learners in the EU. It would apply only to mobility actions and only to those that have started prior to the UK's departure. It is therefore a temporary measure. The report will go to plenary in the March I session, with the aim being to sign the text into law as soon as possible thereafter.

[Procedure file](#)

Report on the proposal for establishing the European Solidarity Corps programme - Adoption of draft report (Rapporteur: Michaela Šojdrová, EPP)

The Committee approved its report on the new European Solidarity Corps programme (2021-2027). The new in favour, one against and one abstention/ will create more opportunities for young people to volunteer or work in solidarity-based projects, whether in their own country or abroad. The report aims enable young people across all socio-economic backgrounds to further develop their skills and competences, while committing to projects that meet real community needs and challenges.

As in the current Regulation, MEPs focused on the core aim of volunteering, ensuring that young people aged between 18 and 30 can engage in solidarity-based activities. However, high-skilled and trained young people can also engage in humanitarian aid actions outside the EU. CULT Members made the programme more accessible for disadvantaged young people and insisted on the need to provide candidates with personalised guidance, with help with registration and with proper training (including web-based tools, such as online and off-line language courses), and with evaluation and feedback tools. While the focus for the Corps remains cross-border solidarity activities, in-country activities are also eligible for support provided that they have a strong European dimension and include participants from other countries.

The committee supported the overall budget of €1.26 billion for the next MFF, where the Solidarity Corps has its own budget line. Members also supported a clear division of the programme's budget for each strand, allocating 86% of the overall budget to volunteering, 8% to traineeships and jobs and 6% to humanitarian aid activities.

CULT Members insisted on robust quality control and adopted strict rules for participating organisations. In order to be eligible for support under the Solidarity Corps, organisations will have to adhere to a number of principles and obtain a quality label by type of activity, which will be regularly re-evaluated.

The Parliament is scheduled to adopt its first reading position in the March I plenary session.

[Procedure file](#)

The next committee meetings: 11 March and 2 April 2019

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