

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

Committee on Budgets

2007/0145(COD)

30.5.2008

OPINION

of the Committee on Budgets

for the Committee on Culture and Education

on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an action programme for the enhancement of quality in higher education and the promotion of intercultural understanding through co-operation with third countries (Erasmus Mundus) (2009-2013) (COM(2007)0395 – C6-0228/2007 – 2007/0145(COD))

Draftswoman: Helga Trüpel

PA_Legam

SHORT JUSTIFICATION

1. Current Erasmus Mundus programme

The current Erasmus Mundus programme covers the 2004-2008 period. Its overall aim is to enhance the quality of European higher education by fostering cooperation with third countries. The particular objectives include: promoting a quality offer in higher education, attracting quality graduates and scholars, fostering cooperation with third countries' educational institutions, improving accessibility and visibility of higher education in the EU.¹

The financial framework of the programme for the years 2004-2008 has been set for EUR 230 million, financed under Heading 1a of the Financial Framework.

The so called "External Cooperation Windows" of the programme are based on several Council regulations concerning various external policy instruments; accordingly, they are financed separately, under the financial envelopes of these instruments.

2. Commission's proposal for the extension of the programme

The aim of the proposal is to extend the programme for a further five years (2009-2013), in a modified form. One of the major modifications to the programme, apart from the inclusion of doctoral studies, is the proposal to incorporate its External Cooperation Windows more directly.

The programme has, so far, been implemented by the Education and Culture Executive Agency (EAC EA), and according to the proposal it would still be the case in the coming years. One should note, however, that the mandate of the Agency still needs to be extended for that purpose (see amendment 2).

From a budgetary point of view, a major modification is the integration of the activities currently covered by the "External Cooperation Windows" into the Erasmus Mundus programme itself as Action 2 (Erasmus Mundus Partnerships with Third-Countries Higher Education Institutions including Scholarships). The financial provisions are very much different from those applying to Action 1 (Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes including Scholarships) and Action 3 (Enhancing the Attractiveness of European Higher Education).

Financing of Action 1 and 3

The overall reference amount for the five years of the duration of the programme is EUR 493,69 million, to be financed under Heading 1a of the Financial Framework. This represents a serious increase compared to the envelope foreseen for the 2004-2008 period, which is to be welcomed, in light of the proposed inclusion of doctoral studies into the programme and the declared ambition to ensure better funding to the successful applicants.

¹ Decision No 2317/2003/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 5 December 2003 establishing a programme for the enhancement of quality in higher education and the promotion of intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries (Erasmus Mundus) (2004 to 2008) (OJ L 345, 31.12.2003, p. 1).

The breakdown of this expenditure is as follows:

EUR million

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014+	Total
Operational expenditure - CA	90,25	92,52	94,1	95,86	98,54		471,27
Operational expenditure - PA	63,17	91,839	93,63	95,33	97,74	29,56	471,27
Administrative expenditure within ref. amount	4,42	4,46	4,48	4,51	4,56		22,42
Total reference amount - CA	94,67	96,98	98,58	100,37	103,10		493,69
Total reference amount - PA	67,59	96,30	98,10	99,84	102,29	29,56	493,69

The operational expenditure is in line with the Financial Programming as presented by the Commission in January 2008. This is also the case for the overall amount of administrative expenditure of the programme.

The administrative expenditure within reference amount comes to EUR 22,42 million over the five years of the duration of the programme. It represents 4,5% of the reference amount, which seems to be an acceptable ratio. Out of this sum, EUR 17,44 million (78%) will cover the needs of the Executive Agency, which, according to the information from the Commission, will implement some 97-98% of the operational budget.

Financing of Action 2

The current "External Cooperation Windows" were launched in 2005 at the initiative of the Commission's DG AidCo and implemented on the basis of various external policy instruments, such as DCI or ENPI.

However, the proposal for the new Erasmus Mundus regulation does not include concrete and binding provisions on the financing of Action 2; it only refers to the legal bases of the external policy instruments, namely: Instrument for Pre-Accession (Regulation 1085/2006), European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (Regulation 1638/2006), Development Cooperation Instrument (Regulation 1905/2006), Instrument for Cooperation with Industrialised and Other High-Income Countries (ICI, Regulation 1934/2006), and European Development Fund (ACP Partnership Agreement (Decision 2005/599/EC) and the relevant Internal Agreement (Decision 2006/608/EC)). The indicative expenditure on Action 2 of Erasmus Mundus under those instruments - covered by Heading 4 of the Financial Framework - would amount to EUR 460 million, with following indicative breakdown:

- ENPI: EUR 140 million
- DCI: EUR 240 million
- ICI: 20 EUR million
- IPA: EUR 30 million

- 10th EDF: EUR 30 million

It should be noted, however, that this overall amount and contributions from these instruments are neither definite nor legally binding, as they are not determined in the legislative part of the proposal. Accordingly, your rapporteur proposes amendment 3 to the legislative resolution.

The detailed breakdown of the amounts planned for action 2 under different external instruments provided by the Commission is indicative only; nevertheless, it should be monitored by the responsible parliamentary committees whether this breakdown is followed and what are the extent and reasons behind its modifications, if any.

AMENDMENTS

The Committee on Budgets calls on the Committee on Culture and Education, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following amendments in its report:

Amendment 1

Draft legislative resolution Paragraph 1 a (new)

Draft legislative resolution

Amendment

1a. Considers that the financial envelope indicated in the legislative proposal must be compatible with the ceiling of heading 1a of the new multiannual financial framework (MFF) and points out that the annual amount will be decided within the annual budgetary procedure in accordance with the provisions of point 37 of the IIA of 17 May 2006 on budgetary discipline and sound financial management;

Amendment 2

Draft legislative resolution Paragraph 1 b (new)

Draft legislative resolution

Amendment

1b. Notes that the mandate of the Education and Culture Executive Agency does not cover the proposed extension of

*the Erasmus Mundus programme;
stresses that implementation of the
programme by the Executive Agency will
only be possible after a duly approved
extension of the mandate, in accordance
with the legal provisions in force;*

Justification

*Parliament should insist on the obligation to respect legal provisions regulating the
functioning of executive agencies.*

Amendment 3

Draft legislative resolution
Paragraph 1 c (new)

Draft legislative resolution

Amendment

*1c. Notes that the indicative overall
amount of EUR 460 million proposed for
the financing of Action 2 of the
programme would be covered by the
financial envelopes of the respective
external policy instruments;*

Justification

Amendment clarifies financial characteristics of the expenditure on Action 2.

Amendment 4

Draft legislative resolution
Paragraph 1 d (new)

Draft legislative resolution

Amendment

*1d. Stresses that financing of the activities
foreseen under Action 2 must not be
detrimental to other activities financed
under the respective instruments;
reiterates its position that new actions
should only be financed from the EU
budget when additional financial means
are provided for them; calls on the
Commission to provide the Parliament*

with an annual report presenting detailed data on the activities under Action 2 and their breakdown by financial instrument and among the regions and countries concerned;

Justification

Amendment aims at ensuring that expenditure on education under different external policy instruments is not made at the expense of other objectives determined in respective legal bases.

Amendment 5

Proposal for a decision

Article 7 – paragraph 2 – point (b)

Text proposed by the Commission

(b) the annual ***budget*** and the ***breakdown*** of funds among the different actions of the programme and indicative grant amounts;

Amendment

(b) the annual ***allocations*** and the ***distribution*** of funds among the different actions of the programme, ***including information on their geographical distribution***, and indicative grant amounts ***by actions and countries promoting access on an equal footing***;

Justification

This is a clearer formulation, in line with earlier legislation within the policy area.

Amendment 6

Proposal for a decision

Article 12 – paragraph 3

Text proposed by the Commission

3. The annual appropriations shall be authorised by the budgetary authority within the limits of the financial perspective.

Amendment

3. The annual appropriations shall be authorised ***in accordance with the annual budgetary procedure*** by the budgetary authority within the limits of the financial perspective.

Amendment 7

Proposal for a decision

Article 13 – paragraph 1

Text proposed by the Commission

1. The Commission shall regularly monitor the programme in cooperation with the Member States. The results of the process of monitoring and evaluation of the programme and of the previous programme shall be utilised when implementing the programme. This monitoring shall include the reports referred to in paragraph 3 and specific activities.

Amendment

1. The Commission shall regularly monitor the programme in cooperation with the Member States. The results of the process of monitoring and evaluation of the programme and of the previous programme shall be utilised when implementing the programme. This monitoring shall include the reports referred to in paragraph 3 and specific activities. ***In addition, the Commission shall report to the European Parliament, on the geographical distribution of funding by actions for all participating countries, providing also an assessment of the efficiency of the implementation of actions judged against programme priorities.***

Amendment 8

Proposal for a decision

Annex – Action 1 – Part A – point 2 – point j

Text proposed by the Commission

(j) shall ***establish a joint tuition fee regardless of the actual place of study of the students within the masters programme;***

Amendment

(j) shall ***leave Erasmus Mundus Masters consortia free to charge students as they wish according to their national legislation and according to the agreement reached within each consortium;***

Justification

Allows for all countries to participate in Erasmus Mundus regardless of the tuition schemes in each individual country.

Amendment 9

Proposal for a decision

Annex – Action 1 – Part B – point 2 – point j

Text proposed by the Commission

(j) shall ***establish a joint tuition fee regardless of the actual place of study and research of the doctoral candidates within the doctoral programme;***

Amendment

(j) shall ***leave Erasmus Mundus Doctoral consortia free to charge doctoral candidates as they wish according to their national legislation and according to the agreement reached within each consortium;***

Justification

Allows for all countries to participate in Erasmus Mundus regardless of the tuition schemes in each individual country.

PROCEDURE

Title	Erasmus Mundus programme (2009-2013)	
References	COM(2007)0395 – C6-0228/2007 – 2007/0145(COD)	
Committee responsible	CULT	
Opinion by Date announced in plenary	BUDG 3.9.2007	
Drafts(wo)man Date appointed	Helga Trüpel 24.10.2007	
Discussed in committee	6.5.2008	29.5.2008
Date adopted	29.5.2008	
Result of final vote	+: 28 -: 0 0: 0	
Members present for the final vote	Simon Busuttil, Daniel Dăianu, Brigitte Douay, James Elles, Szabolcs Fazakas, Markus Ferber, Vicente Miguel Garcés Ramón, Salvador Garriga Polledo, Ingeborg Gräßle, Louis Grech, Nathalie Griesbeck, Catherine Guy-Quint, Jutta Haug, Ville Itälä, Anne E. Jensen, Silvana Koch-Mehrin, Wiesław Stefan Kuc, Janusz Lewandowski, Vladimír Maňka, Mario Mauro, László Surján, Gary Titley, Helga Trüpel, Kyösti Virrankoski	
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Thijs Berman, Marusya Ivanova Lyubcheva, Margarita Starkevičiūtė, Gianluca Susta	