

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

---

*Committee on Employment and Social Affairs*

**2007/0145(COD)**

3.4.2008

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

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 cooperation with third countries (Erasmus Mundus) (2009-2013) (COM(2007)0395 – C6-0228/2007 – 2007/0145(COD))

Draftswoman: Jamila Madeira

PA\_Legam

## SHORT JUSTIFICATION

The draftswoman welcomes the Commission proposal to extend the Erasmus Mundus programme until 2013 and, in particular, to widen its scope to encompass new levels of study and fields of activity.

As regards the main new features introduced by the proposal, the programme is to be broadened out to cover the doctoral level; scholarships may be awarded to European students taking part in the programme; European industry and commerce and research centres are to be actively involved in implementing and developing the programme; and the External Cooperation Window is to be incorporated into the programme under Action 2, which extends to every level of study, including bachelor's degrees, a fact which could enable exchanges with third countries to be translated into reality at the starting level of higher education.

The Americans have a worldwide model with a known history of creaming off foreign brains for US master's or doctoral-level studies; to counteract this, we need to exploit our excellence and promote what are the EU's best assets, namely teaching of recognised high quality, the magnet of cultural and linguistic diversity, and grants commensurate with a decent standard of living in Europe.

The EU is at present facing a number of challenges related to population trends and hence the sustainability of the European social model, not least high unemployment rates and, above all, a brain drain away from Europe towards the United States or the emerging economies.

It must endeavour to create the conditions required to keep European brains on Union territory as well as investing in the training of third-country nationals in our higher education institutions and providing them with opportunities to settle in Europe, which can thus become a reference point and a centre of excellence in world terms. The efforts in this area will depend on the involvement of business and on public-private partnerships, the idea being to enable the highly qualified personnel in question to enter the labour market as soon as they have completed their Erasmus Mundus master's or doctor's degree courses and to discourage them from joining the brain drain once they have been trained in the EU. Creating more and better jobs is a concern that must remain very much to the fore when the programme is implemented.

There are considerable rough edges to be smoothed in order to make a success of the programme: one example is to be found in the issue of visas to Erasmus Mundus students, who frequently encounter difficulties in obtaining or renewing them and are very often compelled to live in a kind of legal limbo in which they attend master's courses, but have only tourist visas, which may have expired. One option to consider, therefore, is to introduce an Erasmus Mundus student visa.

As regards the cultural and linguistic diversity of the EU and the partnerships to be promoted outside EU territory, it must always be borne in mind that learning the host country's language is an invaluable way of enabling programme participants genuinely to engage with local culture.

The draftswoman considers it essential for the programme to spell out a commitment to equal

opportunities for men and women and to the provision to be made for people with disabilities, for instance by adjusting scholarship awards according to their special needs.

## AMENDMENTS

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

Text proposed by the Commission	Amendments by Parliament
<p>Amendment 1 Recital 5 a (new)</p>	
	<p><b><i>(5a) The Commission communication entitled ‘Putting knowledge into practice: A broad-based innovation strategy for the EU’<sup>1</sup> points to the need for an approach based on innovative regional clusters, since it is very often at regional level that businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), interact with each other and with centres of learning and technology. Proximity is a key factor in the innovation process that enhances the effectiveness of innovation policy.</i></b></p> <p><sup>1</sup> COM(2006)0502.</p>
<p><i>Justification</i></p> <p><i>Innovation, the establishment of centres of excellence, and partnerships between universities and the business world should diversify their spheres of activity in order to work to advantage and generate added value in host regions.</i></p>	
<p>Amendment 2 Recital 7</p>	
<p>(7) Enhancing the quality of European higher education, promoting understanding between peoples as well as contributing to</p>	<p>(7) Enhancing the quality of European higher education, promoting understanding between peoples as well as contributing to</p>

the sustainable development of third countries in the field of higher education avoiding brain-drain whilst favouring vulnerable groups are the core objectives of a higher education cooperation programme aimed at third countries. The most effective means to achieve these aims in a programme of excellence are highly integrated study programmes at **postgraduate level**, collaborative partnerships with third countries, scholarships for the most talented students and projects to enhance the worldwide attractiveness of European higher education.

the sustainable development of third countries in the field of higher education, avoiding brain-drain whilst favouring vulnerable groups, are the core objectives of a higher education cooperation programme aimed at third countries. The most effective means to achieve these aims in a programme of excellence are highly integrated study programmes at **all levels of study**, collaborative partnerships with third countries, scholarships for the most talented students and projects to enhance the worldwide attractiveness of European higher education.

Amendment 3  
Recital 9

(9) Promoting the teaching and learning of languages and linguistic diversity should be a priority of Community action in the field of higher education. The teaching and learning of languages *is* of special relevance in relation to third countries.

(9) Promoting the teaching and learning of **at least two** languages and linguistic diversity should be a priority of Community action in the field of higher education. The teaching and learning of languages *are* of special relevance in relation to third countries **and to the European students who go to those countries**.

*Justification*

*Language learning is one of the keys to familiarisation with other cultures and should be highlighted in this programme as a way for students to integrate.*

Amendment 4  
Recital 9 a (new)

***(9a) The objectives of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 should also be promoted with regard to higher education, by means of education actions and programmes.***

*Justification*

*The objectives of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 are fully shared by the European Union and all the programmes implemented by it. With a view to achieving more*

*effective results from this Year, the objectives of multiculturalism should also be adapted in the field of education programmes such as Erasmus Mundus.*

Amendment 5  
Article 2, point 14

14. “mobility” means moving physically to another country, in order to undertake study, work experience, research, other learning or teaching or research activity or related administrative activity, supported **as appropriate** by preparation in the host language;

14. “mobility” means moving physically to another country, in order to undertake study, work experience, research, other learning or teaching or research activity or related administrative activity, supported **wherever possible** by preparation in the host language;

*Justification*

*Language learning is one of the keys to familiarisation with other cultures and should be highlighted in this programme as a way for students to integrate.*

Amendment 6  
Article 3, paragraph 1

1. The programme's overall aim is to enhance the quality of European higher education and to promote dialogue and understanding between peoples and cultures through cooperation with third countries as well as to promote EU external policy objectives and the sustainable development of third countries in the field of higher education.

1. The programme's overall aim is to enhance the quality of European higher education, **to help improve and enhance the career prospects for young people** and to promote dialogue and understanding between peoples and cultures through cooperation with third countries as well as to promote EU external policy objectives and the sustainable development of third countries in the field of higher education.

Amendment 7  
Article 3, paragraph 2, point (b)

(b) to contribute to the mutual enrichment of societies by developing a pool of well-qualified, open-minded and internationally experienced women/men through promoting mobility for the most talented students and academics from third countries to obtain qualifications and/or experience in the European Union and for the most talented European students and academics towards

(b) to contribute to the mutual enrichment of societies by developing a pool of well-qualified, open-minded and internationally experienced women/men **who are able to satisfy the requirements of the labour market** through promoting mobility for the most talented students and academics from third countries to obtain qualifications and/or experience in the European Union and for the most talented European students

third countries;

and academics towards third countries;

*Justification*

*Education programmes can play a particularly important role in the context of efforts to achieve the economic and employment objectives of the Lisbon Strategy. Many Commission and Parliament documents have called for the closest possible correlation between education programmes and the requirements of the labour market.*

Amendment 8

Article 3, paragraph 2, point (d)

(d) to improve accessibility and enhance the profile and visibility of European higher education in the world as well as its attractiveness for third-country nationals.

(d) to improve accessibility and enhance the profile and visibility of European higher education in the world as well as its attractiveness for third-country nationals **and citizens of Member States.**

*Justification*

*As the programme is now open on equal terms to citizens of Member States and third-country nationals, the campaign to promote higher education must be carried on within and outside the Union. Excellence must be promoted globally.*

Amendment 9

Article 4, paragraph 1, point (c)

(c) measures enhancing the attractiveness of Europe as an educational destination.

(c) measures enhancing the attractiveness of Europe as an educational destination **and a centre of excellence at world level.**

*Justification*

*The excellence of European education must be highlighted; Europe's attractiveness as an educational destination depends on how successfully we promote the potential of our universities.*

Amendment 10

Article 4, paragraph 2, point (b)

(b) enhanced support for mobility, between the Community and third countries, of people in the field of higher education;

(b) enhanced support for mobility, between the Community and third countries, of people in the field of higher education, **for example under arrangements providing for**

*an effective visa system compatible with the duration of Erasmus Mundus study programmes;*

*Justification*

*Visa policy is frequently at odds with the Erasmus Mundus programme, for example because of the waiting time entailed in the issue of a visa or of the fact that a master's degree course might last two years and a visa is valid for just one year, often resulting in a situation in which students attend the relevant courses in given host countries when they are legally not entitled to be there. It would be more useful to establish an 'Erasmus Mundus visa' valid for a period allowing for the duration of study programmes.*

Amendment 11

Article 4, paragraph 2, point (d)

(d) support for pilot projects based on partnerships with an external dimension designed to develop innovation and quality in higher education;

(d) support for pilot projects based on partnerships with an external dimension designed to develop innovation and quality in higher education, ***as well as for public-private partnerships between universities and enterprises, with a view to fostering excellence in research and achieving the innovation objectives;***

*Justification*

*Partnerships between universities and private firms should be encouraged and implemented, given that they could help to foster excellence and create opportunities for the intellectually gifted to settle in Europe.*

Amendment 12

Article 6, paragraph 1, point (c a) (new)

***(ca) ensure, when setting the individual amount of student grants, that the student's estimated study and living expenses in the country of destination are taken into account.***

*Justification*

*Specific arrangements need to be laid down for calculating the amounts necessary for the duration of university exchanges in line with actual living costs in the state of destination, since living costs differ considerably both within the European Union and elsewhere.*



Amendment 13  
Article 6, paragraph 2, point (c a) (new)

***(ca) mutually recognise both informal and non-formal qualifications gained within the framework of the Erasmus Mundus programme, as well as formal qualifications, on the basis of the common reference system embodied in the European Qualifications Framework.***

Amendment 14  
Article 6, paragraph 3, point (b a) (new)

***(ba) that the communication strategy aimed at potentially interested European parties is intensified, and partnerships between universities, the social partners and non-governmental organisations are encouraged, with a view to developing the programme.***

*Justification*

*Communication strategy is of paramount importance for the success of the Erasmus Mundus programme. Contact between universities and the social partners and non-governmental organisations plays a central role in this regard.*

Amendment 15  
Article 10, point (a)

(a) enhancing the knowledge base of European economy ***and*** contributing to strengthening the global competitiveness of the European Union.

(a) enhancing the knowledge base of European economy, contributing to ***creating more jobs in line with the Lisbon Strategy objectives and*** strengthening the global competitiveness of the European Union.

Amendment 16  
Article 10, point (a a) (new)

***(aa) increasing labour mobility in the European Union and attracting students and researchers from third countries who***

***can bring significant added value to the European academic world;***

*Justification*

*The strategy for the Erasmus Mundus programme must take into account the integration of participating students in the labour market and the contribution that the programme can make to European mobility, a key factor for economic growth. At the same time, the European university world has much to gain from study periods spent by students from third countries.*

Amendment 17  
Article 10, point (a b) (new)

***(ab) fostering culture, knowledge and skills for peaceful and sustainable development in a Europe of diversity;***

*Justification*

*An integrated approach for the programme entails providing deliberate support for culture, knowledge and skills. This will open up a wider horizon beyond the promotion of employment and the labour market.*

Amendment 18  
Article 10, point (c)

(c) making provision for students with special needs, and in particular by helping to promote their integration into mainstream higher education;

(c) making provision for students with special needs, and in particular by helping to promote their integration into mainstream higher education, ***and promoting equal opportunities for all;***

*Justification*

*It is necessary to prevent high-flyers being left behind on account of economic difficulties or because they are denied the necessary access to information.*

Amendment 19  
Annex, Action 1, Part A, point 2 j)

j) shall establish a joint tuition fee regardless of the actual place of study of the students within the masters' programme.

j) shall establish a joint tuition fee regardless of the actual place of study of the students within the masters' programme ***with respect to the right of the national states to decide***

*the model of financing in education;*

## PROCEDURE

<b>Title</b>	Erasmus Mundus programme (2009-2013)	
<b>References</b>	COM(2007)0395 – C6-0228/2007 – 2007/0145(COD)	
<b>Committee responsible</b>	CULT	
<b>Opinion by</b> Date announced in plenary	EMPL 3.9.2007	
<b>Drafts(wo)man</b> Date appointed	Jamila Madeira 11.9.2007	
<b>Discussed in committee</b>	23.1.2008	26.2.2008
<b>Date adopted</b>	2.4.2008	
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: –: 0:	43 1 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Jan Andersson, Edit Bauer, Iles Braghetto, Philip Bushill-Matthews, Milan Cabrnoch, Alejandro Cercas, Ole Christensen, Derek Roland Clark, Luigi Cocilovo, Proinsias De Rossa, Harlem Désir, Harald Ettl, Richard Falbr, Carlo Fatuzzo, Ilda Figueiredo, Stephen Hughes, Karin Jöns, Ona Juknevičienė, Raymond Langendries, Bernard Lehideux, Elizabeth Lynne, Thomas Mann, Jan Tadeusz Masiel, Jiří Maštálka, Elisabeth Morin, Csaba Őry, Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, Pier Antonio Panzeri, Jacek Protasiewicz, Bilyana Ilieva Raeva, Elisabeth Schroedter, Kathy Sinnott, Ewa Tomaszewska, Gabriele Zimmer	
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Jean Marie Beaupuy, Beniamino Donnici, Donata Gottardi, Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, Magda Kósáné Kovács, Sepp Kusstatscher, Jamila Madeira, Kyriacos Triantaphyllides, Anja Weisgerber, Tatjana Ždanoka	