

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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*Committee on Foreign Affairs*

**2007/0145(COD)**

14.3.2008

## **DRAFT OPINION**

of the Committee on Foreign 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 co-operation with third countries (Erasmus Mundus) (2009-2013) (COM(2007)0395 – C6-0228/2007 – 2007/0145(COD))

Draftsman (\*): Samuli Pohjamo

(\*) Procedure with associated committees – Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

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## **SHORT JUSTIFICATION**

The second phase of the Erasmus Mundus programme (2009-2013) will continue the activities of the first Erasmus Mundus programme (2004-2008), with the exception that the new programme incorporates its External Cooperation Window, extends its scope to all levels of higher education, and improves funding opportunities for European students, as well as offers enhanced possibilities for cooperation with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

Whereas the main objective of the Erasmus Mundus programme continues to be the promotion of "excellence", its second phase adds through the incorporation of the External Cooperation Window a foreign policy dimension to the programme. The funds for the this part of the programme will be drawn from external assistance instruments, including the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and Pre-Accession Instrument (IPA), which support the European Neighbourhood Policy and Accession Process, respectively.

The Committee on Foreign Affairs is the lead committee for the democratic scrutiny of the ENPI and IPA, meaning in practice that it receives all relevant strategy papers at the same time as they are transmitted to the Member States. The Parliament and the Commission then engage in a dialogue on the strategy papers the Parliament wishes to discuss.

Promotion of people-to-people contacts, research, and educational and youth exchanges lies at the core of the ENP and the EU's enlargement strategy and the amendments seek to ensure that the objectives of the relevant actions of the programme reflect the priorities of the above-mentioned policies.

However, he believes that the cumbersome visa policies that the Erasmus Mundus students have to face are major obstacles towards making full use of the opportunities of the programme. Since the visa policy is a Member State competence, your draftsman calls on the Member States to take all possible steps to simplify the obtaining and renewing of visas.

Finally, your draftsman believes there is a clear need for better coordination of information on the programme in third countries, for example via the delegations of the Commission and the Embassies of the Member States.

## **AMENDMENTS**

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

## Amendment 1

### Proposal for a decision Recital 2 a (new)

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

***(2a) In the course of negotiating the external assistance instruments and the Interinstitutional Agreement on budgetary discipline and sound financial management, the European Parliament and the Commission reached a number of understandings on democratic scrutiny and the coherence of external action, set out in the declarations annexed to the Interinstitutional Agreement. The consultation process and dialogue with the European Parliament will operate in parallel with the latter's rights under Council Decision 1999/468/EC of 28 June 1999 laying down the procedures for the exercise of implementing powers conferred on the Commission<sup>1</sup>, and in particular Article 8 thereof.***

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 184, 17.7.1999, p. 23. Decision as amended by Decision 2006/512/EC (OJ L 200, 22.7.2006, p. 11).

Or. en

#### *Justification*

*The agreement on the new external assistance instruments (the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument - ENPI, the Instrument for Stability - IfS, and the Pre-Accession Instrument - IPA) grants the European Parliament increased scrutiny over the implementation of Community assistance.*

## Amendment 2

### Proposal for a decision Recital 10 a (new)

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

***(10a) The promotion of European common values and people-to-people contacts in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy, in particular through educational and youth exchanges, must lie at the core of the Erasmus Mundus programme, supported by a policy dialogue aimed at reinforcing modernisation and reform efforts by the partner countries in the area of education, and must contribute to convergence with EU policies, including the Bologna process. Mobility of researchers is an essential part of increasing research cooperation between the EU and the ENP countries and improving excellence.***

Or. en

## Amendment 3

### Proposal for a decision Article 3 - paragraph 1

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

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 and to promote dialogue, ***common European values*** and understanding between peoples and cultures through cooperation with third countries as well as to ***support the EU's*** external policy objectives, ***including the promotion and consolidation of democracy and the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms***, and to ***promote*** sustainable development of third countries

in the field of education.

Or. en

*Justification*

*Clarification of the objectives of the programme in the light of the external policy objectives of the EU.*

**Amendment 4**

**Proposal for a decision**

**Article 3 - paragraph 2 - point d a (new)**

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

***da) to achieve a regional balance in the support provided for partnerships with third countries, as set out in the Annex.***

Or. en

*Justification*

*The programme should seek to achieve a regional balance and support educational exchange with regions with less "excellent" HEIs and offer special support for these regions.*

**Amendment 5**

**Proposal for a decision**

**Article 6 - paragraph 2 - point b a (new)**

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

***(ba) in particular, take steps to simplify the obtaining and renewal of visas for Erasmus Mundus students;***

Or. en

## Amendment 6

### Proposal for a decision

#### Article 6 - paragraph 3 - point a

*Text proposed by the Commission*

(a) appropriate information, publicity and follow-up with regard to actions supported by the programme;

*Amendment*

(a) appropriate information, publicity and follow-up with regard to actions supported by the programme, ***and in particular the visibility of the programme in the third countries concerned;***

Or. en

#### *Justification*

*More focus should be put on the visibility of the programme in the third countries and availability of information on it.*

## Amendment 7

### Proposal for a decision

#### Article 7 - paragraph 3 a (new)

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

***3a. The Commission shall consult the European Parliament in line with the Interinstitutional Agreement on budgetary discipline and sound financial management and Council Decision 1999/468/EC, in particular Article 8 thereof.***

Or. en

#### *Justification*

*The agreement on the new external assistance instruments (ENPI, the Instrument for Stability - IfS, and IPA) grants the European Parliament increased scrutiny over the implementation of Community assistance. The consultation process and dialogue with Parliament will operate in parallel with Parliament's rights under Council Decision 1999/468/EC of 28 June 1999 and in particular of Article 8 thereof, which provides that the Parliament may pass a resolution to*

*the effect that the Commission has exceeded the implementation powers conferred on it.*