

Implementation of Erasmus+

Following two and a half years of implementation, the European Commission will submit a mid-term evaluation of the new umbrella programme Erasmus+ at the end of 2017. Parliament is preparing its contribution, with an own-initiative report on the implementation of Erasmus+ to be discussed in plenary in February.

30th anniversary of Erasmus

The student exchange programme Erasmus (now under the first pillar of Erasmus+, Key action 1) marks its [30th anniversary](#) in 2017. The kick-off [event](#) launching the celebrations was held on 26 January 2017 at the Parliamentarium in Brussels, timed to coincide with the publication of the yearly assessment report by the Commission.

Erasmus+

Erasmus+ is the EU funding programme dedicated to education, training, youth and sport. Member States are solely responsible for these areas, but the EU supports cooperation, policy innovation, and cross-sectoral projects as well as mobility. The financial envelope of €14.7 billion represents 1.36 % of the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework, and Parliament follows the programme's implementation to make sure that the money is well spent.

European Parliament

The implementation of [Erasmus+](#) was the focus of a [conference](#) and a [hearing](#) hosted in 2015, and featured in several debates during the October 2016 [Lifelong Learning week](#) and an [exchange of views](#) in December 2016. In support of the discussion in the European Parliament, EPRS undertook a [European Implementation Assessment](#) (July 2016), looking at both centralised and decentralised implementation, while a Policy Department [study](#) (July 2016) focused specifically on decentralised implementation. Both studies noted that the programme is balanced in its objectives but that its implementation still needed fine-tuning. On the other hand, the lack of funding and the low rate of applicant success could have a negative influence on future interest in the programme. The studies also recommended easier application procedures, clearer [guidelines](#) and role definitions as well as improvements in the IT and language learning tools. Programme users are not all happy with the new umbrella programme. A larger [budget](#) made it possible to approve some big projects, but at the cost of small projects, and this has added a degree of distance between citizens and the institutions. On a different level, while national agencies favoured more streamlining, some youth and sectoral organisations thought that the process has already gone too far.

The [report](#) on Erasmus+ implementation, adopted on 5 December 2016 by the Committee on Culture and Education (CULT), will be discussed in plenary in February. It reflects much of the feedback received from the hearings, the studies and the suggestions in the opinions of the Committees on Budgets and on Employment and Social Affairs. It highlights that the programme's success has made it an EU flagship. It also expresses an appreciation of the fact that the Commission was quick to react to feedback about encountered difficulties and made adjustments by working on the IT tools and creating spaces for small sized projects. It further suggests that the old 'brand names' should be used alongside Erasmus+ to make the structure clearer for applicants, while the Commission needs to clarify what is intended by cross-sectoral cooperation. It draws attention to the potential of Erasmus+ to support quality improvements in vocational education and training, by attracting groups that are under-represented. It supports cross-border volunteering, and calls for the removal of financial barriers to mobility to facilitate access, especially as studies have shown that participants enjoy better career prospects.

Own-initiative report [2015/2327 INI](#); Committee responsible: CULT; Rapporteur: Milan Zver, EPP, Slovenia.

