



2021/2939(RSP)

25.10.2021

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 227(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on a new aid mobility scheme for EU students at UK universities
(2021/2939(RSP))

Dolors Montserrat

on behalf of the Committee on Petitions

**European Parliament resolution on a new aid mobility scheme for EU students at UK universities
(2021/0000(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), in particular Articles 165 and 166 thereof,
 - having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, in particular Article 14 thereof,
 - having regard to the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 establishing ‘Erasmus’: the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport (COM(2018)0367),
 - having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing ‘Erasmus+’: the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport,
 - having regard to the Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community (2019/C 384 I/01),
 - having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing Erasmus+: the Union Programme for education and training, youth and sport and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013,
 - having regard to Rule 227(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to petitions 0147/2017, 0335/2021 and 0419/2021,
 - having regard to the opinions of the Committee on Culture and Education to the report on the Sustainable Europe Investment Plan - How to finance the Green Deal (2020/2058 INI),
- A. whereas the Erasmus+ Programme is a European Union success story, with an ever-increasing number of people having participated and the Programme repeatedly appearing amongst the Union’s primary achievements in Eurobarometer opinion polls;
- B. whereas one of the most emblematic EU flagship programmes, Erasmus+ funds a wide and varied opportunities, covering mobility, international cooperation, knowledge exchange, education and training; whereas, together with the European Solidarity Corps, young students and professionals alike can benefit from fruitful exchanges and volunteer activities that strengthen educational and personal development as well as a common sense of European identity and citizenship;
- C. whereas the UK has opted not to take part to the new Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027

as an associated third country; whereas this decision came as a shock for students from EU Member States, as well as the European higher education sector; whereas a survey conducted in 2020 reveals that as many as 84% of EU students planning to study in the UK will look for alternative destinations¹;

- D. whereas UK government's decision to pull the UK out of the Erasmus scheme resulted for EU students, with very limited exceptions, as from 1 August 2021 in being deprived from enjoying the same tuition fees as local students in the United Kingdom; whereas, as a consequence, UK rules concerning international tuition fees apply to EU students, which have, therefore, to bear costs higher up to four times;
- E. whereas the Committee on Petitions has received petitions raising concerns over the negative consequences of Brexit for EU students studying in the United Kingdom; whereas these petitions call, on the one hand, for the protection of the interests of young people and on the other hand, for a new EU-UK mobility scheme for EU higher education students currently studying in the UK and for those aspiring to study in the UK, which could reinstate the several advantages of the Erasmus+ programme;
- F. whereas, despite the new 'Turing scheme' put in place by the UK government, benefits of the Erasmus+ programme would be very difficult to replicate, because this domestic scheme has not been thought as a thorough and complete exchange programme, as financial support is only provided for outward mobility of UK-based students and not for inward mobility of foreign students;
- G. whereas the COVID-19 crisis had a dramatic impact on people's everyday lives, notably with respect to mobility and education; whereas the Erasmus+ programme has also been significantly affected by the crisis; whereas the Erasmus+ programme has a positive impact on the daily lives of millions of Europeans and underpins better cohesion and cultural understanding across the Union and throughout the world through the participation of third countries, building cultural bridges;
- H. whereas there is an urgent need to support EU students, including current EU students and young people in the United Kingdom, as well as to improve education and employment prospects for young people by fostering cooperation amongst EU and UK higher education institutions and keeping the level of ambition in terms of financial mobility assistance in line with the historical ties between the EU and the UK;
- I. whereas transnational educational and cultural collaboration among the EU and the UK should continue despite the disruption of any economic, market or other agreements;
- 1. Reiterates the high importance of Erasmus+ programme, evaluated by citizens as the most successful EU programme for Europe's future generations; Highlights in this regards the importance of internships for young workers in various fields, including agriculture, supported by Erasmus+; Recalls that the further strengthening of this programme, along with its several new features, has been a priority for the European Parliament throughout the negotiations on the Multiannual financial framework 2021-2027; welcomes that the budget of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 has nearly doubled and the

¹ <https://www.study.eu/press/uk-universities-might-lose-84-of-eu-students-at-higher-fees-survey>

programme will be more inclusive, more digital and greener; Stresses the importance of the programme in promoting cooperation and innovation in European education and youth policy and the positive social and economic impact of mobility;

2. Deeply regrets the decision of the United Kingdom government to opt out from the Erasmus+ programme, resulting in the wipe out of the flourishing and long standing EU-UK university student relations, despite the strong support of the academic community to continue to participate; is particularly surprised that the UK cited excessive participation costs as the reason for its decision; emphasizes that participation in EU programmes remains open to the UK; welcomes the fact that UK universities expressed their interest to continue to participate and that students from Northern Ireland are staying in the Erasmus+ programme;
3. Expresses its concern on the disproportionate impact of this decision on EU students studying or working in the United Kingdom in terms of tuition fees and living costs, as well as visa requirement and relevant administrative and bureaucratic procedures and health insurance costs, with the most serious effects of the decision on disadvantaged students and on students with disabilities;
4. Stresses that the cultural exchange and interaction facilitated through student exchanges can help European Union to fully recover key assets of its socio-economic potential damaged by the Covid-19 crisis; Underlines that making an international mobility, including the one offered by the Erasmus+ programme, can be a transformative experience for participants and positively influence their personal and professional lives, and that it should therefore be encouraged and sustained; Considers that student mobility scheme has a significant impact for students across areas that are key for economic development, social inclusion, development of employability skills, as well as intercultural openness, tolerance and engagement with social and political issues, matters of high priority in the current political climate²;
5. Highlights the importance of high-quality workforce returning to the EU after their studies in the United Kingdom, which fosters EU economy and makes cooperation between the UK and the EU stronger;
6. Underlines the paramount importance of promptly enhancing partnership and cooperation between EU and UK higher educational institutions, in order to make agreements aimed at increasing exchange and mobility opportunities for students, lowering international tuition fees and offering financial support to all mobile students; Suggests, in this sense, on the Commission to explore the possibilities of developing and implementing a supporting strategy to mitigate negative consequences of UK's withdrawal from Erasmus+ programme;
7. Calls on the Commission to assess the feasibility of a new temporary aid mobility scheme for EU higher education students wishing to study or studying in the UK; stresses that the new scheme must be inclusive, allowing everyone to have equal opportunities of participation, including for young people with disabilities and those from socially and economically disadvantaged environments;

² <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/94d97f5c-7ae2-11e9-9f05-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

8. Recommends that the Commission set up an EU website (and mobile application) with the aim to provide information for EU students wishing to study or continue their studies under the new circumstances in the United Kingdom;
9. Reiterates in this regard, that Erasmus+ is the best possible educational exchange programme for both, EU and UK students, which cannot be substituted by any bilateral or non-reciprocal scheme in the long-term;
10. Recalls the Council that, along with the European Parliament, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, shall adopt incentive measures in order to contribute to foster a stronger cooperation with third countries, including with the United Kingdom, and the competent international organisations in the field of education and youth policy;
11. Calls on the European Parliament's delegation to the EU-UK Parliamentary Assembly to discuss the possibility of new temporary aid mobility scheme for EU students;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European Parliament's delegation to the EU-UK Parliamentary Assembly, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the government and Parliament of the United Kingdom.