



2023/2042(INI)

29.6.2023

OPINION

of the Committee on Culture and Education

for the Committee on Foreign Affairs

on EU-Switzerland relations
(2023/2042(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion (*): Hannes Heide

(*) Associated committee – Rule 57 of the Rules of Procedure

PA_NonLeg

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Culture and Education calls on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Observes Switzerland's disassociation from the Erasmus+ programme since 2014, following its referendum on immigration; takes note of its unrestricted application of the 1999 agreement on the free movement of persons and the rejection of the result of the 2014 referendum in a new referendum on immigration in 2020; highlights that the free movement of persons is a precondition for participation in Erasmus+;
2. Welcomes the fact that the 2022 Erasmus+ call for proposals allowed associated partners from the European Higher Education Area to be involved in forming European Universities alliances, leading to Switzerland's participation;
3. Stresses the tie between Switzerland's participation in Erasmus+ and its full acceptance of the fundamental freedoms established by the EU treaties and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, as Erasmus+ exchanges depend on the free movement of persons;
4. Regrets the Swiss Government's unilateral decision to terminate negotiations on the EU-Swiss institutional framework agreement in 2021, which affected Switzerland's participation in the Erasmus+ programme;
5. Acknowledges the fact that numerous education stakeholders in Europe are calling for Switzerland to be associated to Erasmus+ and that Swiss student and youth organisations are urging the Swiss Government to engage in constructive negotiations with the EU; underlines the educational and other benefits of such an association for Switzerland and the European Union;
6. Acknowledges that stakeholders in the youth sector are calling for Switzerland to be involved in the volunteering carried out within the framework of the European Solidarity Corps, thus supporting young volunteers, youth workers and youth organisations;
7. Remains convinced that a more stable, future-oriented partnership will benefit both sides and help Switzerland's association to Erasmus+ and other European programmes;
8. Notes Switzerland's relegation to the status of non-associated third country in Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe; underlines that access to Horizon Europe and ongoing and future pilot projects in both programmes would be mutually beneficial, considering the European research landscape and the need to fill gaps in skills development and labour markets, including in cross-border settings;
9. Welcomes the exploratory discussions between the Commission and the Swiss chief negotiator held since the end of March 2022; believes that these discussions could provide an acceptable basis for the swift recommendation to start negotiations; underlines the importance of having a framework agreement that covers all the structural issues addressed by the various bilateral agreements;

10. Underlines that all interested neighbouring and like-minded countries, including Switzerland, are welcome to be associated to the Erasmus+ programme, thus contributing to European education systems and to the strengthening of the European Education Area as a whole;
11. Stresses that learner mobility between the EU and Switzerland should eventually be inclusive and involve participants from all Member States, regions and social backgrounds, and that this could be achieved by extending the additional support that is offered to those facing social challenges, thus reinforcing the status of Erasmus+ as a truly inclusive European programme;
12. Notes that the participation of teachers and young people in EU programmes for all levels of education, training, youth and sport enables a strong and sustainable understanding between Switzerland and the EU; highlights the benefits of such programmes for all participants;
13. Believes that the EU and Switzerland should stand united to pursue, promote and protect European values, including democracy, academic freedom, institutional autonomy and the right to education; believes that Erasmus+ contributes to bringing societies closer together.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	28.6.2023
Result of final vote	+ : 25 - : 0 0 : 1
Members present for the final vote	Asim Ademov, Christine Anderson, Ilana Cicurel, Romeo Franz, Sylvie Guillaume, Irena Joveva, Petra Kammerevert, Niyazi Kizilyürek, Elżbieta Kruk, Predrag Fred Matić, Niklas Nienass, Peter Pollák, Diana Riba i Giner, Marcos Ros Sempere, Massimiliano Smeriglio, Michaela Šojdrová, Sabine Verheyen, Maria Walsh, Theodoros Zagorakis, Milan Zver
Substitutes present for the final vote	Chiara Gemma, Łukasz Kohut, Rob Rooker, Marc Tarabella, Iuliu Winkler, Salima Yenbou

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

25	+
ECR	Chiara Gemma, Elżbieta Kruk, Rob Roonen
NI	Marc Tarabella
PPE	Asim Ademov, Peter Pollák, Michaela Šojdrová, Sabine Verheyen, Maria Walsh, Iuliu Winkler, Theodoros Zagorakis, Milan Zver
Renew	Ilana Cicurel, Irena Joveva, Salima Yenbou
S&D	Sylvie Guillaume, Petra Kammerevert, Lukasz Kohut, Predrag Fred Matić, Marcos Ros Sempere, Massimiliano Smeriglio
The Left	Niyazi Kizilyürek
Verts/ALE	Romeo Franz, Niklas Nienass, Diana Riba i Giner

0	-

1	0
ID	Christine Anderson

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention