

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2914/08
by Karin Resetarits (ALDE)
to the Commission

Subject: Erasmus Mundus and Northern Cyprus

The Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus programmes were created by the European Union in order to enrich the university education of students through cultural, academic and linguistic exchange. Nevertheless there remain some students who are unable to participate in the programmes. I was contacted by a third country student (from Palestine) who has been studying at a university in Northern Cyprus and was interested in applying for a Master's programme in the EU. At first the student applied for the Erasmus programme, however was informed that the University in Northern Cyprus was not recognised as an EU university and was therefore rejected from the programme. Based on this information the student then applied through the Erasmus Mundus programme. This time the student was admitted to the Master's programme, however did not receive the scholarship that is usually granted to students taking part in the programme.

This case is not unlike many others. The question begs to be asked: are universities in Northern Cyprus considered as European universities? If yes, then students should be eligible for the Erasmus programme as Europeans. If not, then students should be eligible for the Erasmus Mundus programme as third country applicants. How is it that a student deemed to be a third country national does not qualify for funding through Erasmus Mundus for a European programme?