

**Question for written answer E-010593/2012
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Marc Tarabella (S&D)

Subject: Funding for Erasmus under threat

While the issue of the lack of labour mobility in Europe has drawn attention, student mobility is in danger of coming to an abrupt halt.

More than 100 prominent Europeans from the worlds of education, the arts, literature, economics, philosophy and sport have signed an open letter in support of the Erasmus student exchange programme.

The signatories, who come from all EU Member States, include Spanish film director Pedro Almodóvar, the president of FC Barcelona, Sandro Rosell and the winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics, Christopher Pissarides. In Belgium, Axelle Red, Kevin and Jonathan Borlée, and Lien Van de Kelder have also rallied to the cause.

A good education is vital, as Europe's youth will have to live in a rapidly changing world which is increasingly mobile, interdependent and multicultural. The Erasmus programme is likely to record a EUR 90 million deficit this year, and the situation could get worse in 2013. If the EU budgets for 2012 and 2013 are insufficient, the number of places and grants available could be heavily reduced. A new funding programme entitled 'Erasmus for all' could extend the current programme to cover millions of additional young Europeans from 2014 and would account for less than 2% of the total EU budget.

1. Are meetings to be held with the Member States with a view to ensuring that sufficient funding is available?
2. Does the Commission have a plan B to fall back on if some Member States are unwilling to cooperate? France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands and Austria have all refused to fund the budget for 2013 proposed by the Commission, which covers a total of EUR 138 billion.
3. What will the precise consequences be if the Commission fails to secure the funds requested? Which areas will be hardest hit by budget cuts?