

Education and mobility: Erasmus Mundus 2009-2013 action programme for the enhancement of quality in higher education and the promotion of intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries

2007/0145(COD) - 12/07/2007 - Legislative proposal

CONTENT: to establish an action programme for the enhancement of quality in higher education and the promotion of intercultural understanding through co-operation with third countries (**Erasmus Mundus**) (2009-2013).

PROPOSED ACT: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council.

BACKGROUND: the current Erasmus Mundus programme (2004-2008) was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on 5 December 2003 (Decision No. 2317/2003/EC). Its External Cooperation Window is based on various Council regulations, the revised Cotonou Agreement and the Internal Agreement for the period 2008 to 2013, which are the funding instruments in the field of external co-operation with specific world regions.

In the first three academic years (2004-2006), more than 2 300 students have participated in the programme and over 1 800 have just been selected to start their studies in Europe in September this year. The new Erasmus Mundus II programme builds on this by aiming to become the EU reference programme for cooperation with third countries in this area. Over a period of five years, just over EUR 950 million will be available for European and third-country universities to join forces in joint programmes or collaborative partnerships, and to grant scholarships to European and third-country students for an international study experience.

The current Erasmus Mundus programme comes to an end in 2008. According to the programme Decision, the Commission has to submit a communication on the continuation of the programme by 31 December 2007.

It is proposed that the **second phase of the Erasmus Mundus programme (2009-2013)** would continue the activities of the first Erasmus Mundus programme, incorporate its External Cooperation Window more directly, extend its scope to all levels of higher education, improve funding opportunities for European students and offer enhanced possibilities for co-operation with higher education institutions (HEIs) located in third countries.

CONTENT: this new proposal builds on the conclusions of an external interim evaluation of the current programme, an ex-ante impact assessment of the proposed new programme, and a broad consultation of the main stakeholders, including universities, teaching staff and students.

The overall aim of the new Erasmus Mundus programme is to enhance the quality of European higher education, to promote dialogue between and understanding for different societies and cultures through co-operation among higher education institutions and people-to-people contacts, as well as to promote EU

external policy objectives and contribute to the sustainable development of third countries in the field of higher education. In that sense this proposal represents a new approach and has a wider scope in terms of policy, objectives and types of activities than the current Erasmus Mundus programme.

- **Action 1 (joint programmes including scholarships)** provides support for high-quality joint master and doctoral programmes offered by a group of European and possibly third-country higher education institutions. It also provides full-study scholarships to the most talented European and third-country students to follow these joint programmes, and short-term scholarships to European and third-country academics of outstanding quality to carry out research or teaching assignments as part of the joint programmes. This Action will foster co-operation between higher education institutions and academic staff in Europe and third countries with a view to creating poles of excellence and providing highly trained human resources.

- **Action 2 (partnerships with third-country higher education institutions including scholarships)** provides support for broad co-operative partnerships between European and third-country higher education institutions as a basis for structural co-operation in order to facilitate transfer of know-how to third-country institutions and for short- or long-term exchange of students and academics at all levels of higher education with a view to developing human resources and the international co-operation capacity of higher education institutions in third countries in line with the EU external policy with the countries concerned. It is an external cooperation action benefiting all partners involved and avoiding brain drain. It is thus fully in line with EU external policy towards the partner countries concerned with the objective of promoting their sustainable development.

- **Action 3 (enhancing the attractiveness of European higher education)** provides support to transnational initiatives, studies, projects, events and other activities aiming at enhancing the attractiveness, accessibility, profile and visibility of European higher education in the world.

The programme's overall aim is to enhance the quality of European higher education and to promote dialogue and understanding between peoples and cultures through cooperation with third countries as well as to promote EU external policy objectives and the sustainable development of third countries in the field of higher education.

The programme's specific objectives are:

a) to foster structured cooperation between higher education institutions and academic staff in Europe and third countries with a view to creating centres of excellence and providing highly trained human resources;

b) to contribute to the mutual enrichment of societies by developing a pool of well-qualified, open-minded and internationally experienced women/men through promoting mobility for the most talented students and academics from third countries to obtain qualifications and/or experience in the European Union and for the most talented European students and academics towards third countries;

c) to contribute towards the development of human resources and the international cooperation capacity of higher education institutions in third countries through increased mobility streams between the European Union and third countries;

d) to improve accessibility and enhance the profile and visibility of European higher education in the world as well as its attractiveness for third-country nationals.

The Commission shall ensure that no group of EU citizens or third-country nationals is excluded or disadvantaged.

The objectives of the programme shall be pursued by means of the following actions:

- a) Erasmus Mundus joint masters programmes and joint doctoral programmes of outstanding academic quality, including a scholarship scheme;
- b) partnerships between European and third-country higher education institutions as a basis for structural co-operation, exchange and mobility at all levels of higher education;
- c) measures enhancing the attractiveness of Europe as an educational destination.

As regards the **budgetary implications**, the overall budget for the entire programming period (2009-2013) for Action 1 and Action 3 (joint masters and doctoral programmes, including scholarships, and attractiveness projects) amounts to EUR 493.69 million. Action 2 (co-operative partnerships with HEIs in specific third countries, including mobility) is funded through external co-operation instruments according to the rules and procedures provided by these instruments. The Commission will endeavour to devote for the entire programming period (2009-2013) a global indicative amount of up to EUR 460 million for Action 2 of Erasmus Mundus II. The indicative contributions from the different external instruments and the European Development Fund are as follows:

- ENPI: EUR 140 million;
- DCI: EUR 240 million;
- ICI: EUR 20 million;
- IPA: EUR 30 million;
- 10th EDF: EUR 30 million.

Detailed programming and yearly allocations for each envelop contributing to the global indicative amount of EUR 460 million will be established at a later stage according to the rules and procedures of each instrument and the European Development Fund, but not later than 1st July 2008 for the period 2009-2010 and 1st July 2010 for the period 2011-2013.