Higher education: co-operation with third countries, Erasmus Mundus programme 2004-2008

2002/0165(COD) - 05/12/2003 - Final act

PURPOSE : to establish a programme for the enhancement of quality in higher education and the promotion of intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries (Erasmus Mundus) (2004 to 2008). LEGISLATIVE ACT : Decision 2317/2003/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council. CONTENT : the aim of this Decision, which is based on Article 149 of the Treaty - education policy - is to create European centres of higher education, thereby accelerating the process of convergence of degrees. By means of calls for proposals issued in the framework of the programme, the Community will provide financial assistance for the creation of EU masters courses involving at least three higher education institutions from three different Member States, and leading to the awarding of double or multiple degrees, scholarships for students from third countries and partnerships with third-country higher education institutions. Funding will be granted following calls for tender and calls for proposals. The programme shall be implemented over a period starting on 1 January 2004 and ending on 31 December 2008. The programme's overall aim is to enhance the quality of European higher education by fostering cooperation with third countries in order to improve the development of human resources and to promote dialogue and understanding between peoples and cultures. The programme's specific objectives are: a) to promote a quality offer in higher education with a distinct European added value, attractive both within the European Union and beyond its borders; b) to encourage and enable highly qualified graduates and scholars from all over the world, to obtain qualifications and/or experience in the European Union; c) to develop more structured cooperation between European Union and third-country institutions and greater European Union outgoing mobility as part of European study programmes; d) to improve accessibility and enhance the profile and visibility of higher education in the European Union. The Commission shall, when pursuing the objectives of the programme, observe the Community's general policy on equal opportunities for men and women. The Commission shall also ensure that no group of citizens or third-country nationals is excluded or disadvantaged. The objectives of the programme as set out in Article 3 shall be pursued by means of the following actions: a) Erasmus Mundus masters courses selected on the basis of the quality of the proposed training and hosting of students; b) a scholarship scheme; c) partnerships with third-country higher education institutions; d) measures enhancing the attractiveness of Europe as an educational destination; e) technical support measures. These actions shall be realised using the procedures described in the Annex, and through the following types of approaches, which may be combined where appropriate: a) support for the development of joint educational programmes and cooperation networks facilitating the exchange of experience and good practice; b) enhanced support for mobility, between the Community and thirdcountries, of people in the field of higher education; c) promotion of language skills, preferably providing students with the possibility of learning at least two of the languages spoken in the countries in which the higher education institutions involved in the Erasmus Mundus masters course are situated, and promotion of the understanding of different cultures; d) support for pilot projects based on transnational partnerships designed to develop innovation and quality in higher education; e) support for the analysis and follow-up of trends in, and evolution of, higher education in an international perspective. The financial framework for the implementation of the programme for the period specified is set at EUR 230 million. For the period following 31 December 2006, this amount shall be deemed to be confirmed if it is consistent for this phase with the financial perspectives in force for the period commencing in 2007. The annual appropriations shall be authorised by the budgetary authority within the limits of the financial perspective. Participation of EEA-EFTA States and candidate countries for accession to the European Union. The conditions and detailed rules on the participation of EEA-EFTA States and candidate countries for accession to the European Union in the programme shall be established in accordance with the relevant provisions of the instruments governing the relations between the European Community and

these countries. The Commission shall submit to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: - on the accession of new Member States, a report on the financial repercussions of these accessions on the programme, followed, if appropriate, by proposals to deal with those repercussions. The European Parliament and the Council shall take a decision on such proposals as soon as possible; - an interim evaluation report on the results achieved and on the qualitative aspects of the implementation of the programme by 30 June 2007; - a communication on the continuation of the programme by 31 December 2007; - an ex post evaluation report by 31 December 2009. ENTRY INTO FORCE : 20 January 2004.