

STATEMENT ON THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME AND ITS IMPACT ON HIGHER EDUCATION, ADDRESSED TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CULTURE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The *Erasmus+* programme, the new multiannual programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport, has reached its final preparation stage as the European Parliament will give its vote by the end of November. *EURASHE*, following a decision by its Council, reiterates its strong support for the *Erasmus+* programme, while acknowledging its appreciation to the *European Commission - DG Education and Culture* and the *Culture and Education Committee* for the support given to both higher education and the civil society organisations involved in the HE sector.

EURASHE believes that success of the 'Europe 2020 Strategy' in creating smart and sustainable growth requires the continuous support of the broad range of higher education institutions, each in their own domain, and in line with their specific missions and profiles. Contribution of research and innovation at all levels, next to the human resources and skills of well-educated and trained younger generations, are essential. In addition, sustainable growth depends upon youth with perspectives for employment, where higher education plays a crucial role for realising it.

The current economic crisis leads certain governments to cut budgets pertaining to higher education and research, which, undoubtedly, has negative consequences on programmes of study and curricula that are vitally necessary for a progressive and sustainable European society. We believe that robust and systemic investment in higher education and learning is a key response not only to the current crisis, but also to long-term challenges that Europe faces. Therefore, we acknowledge the support that the European Parliament has given to increase the overall budget of the *Erasmus+* programme, and we hope this action will give a clear sign to the governments on the direction they should take when it comes to supporting education, recognising it as a path fostering higher employability and further development of economies.

At the same time, EURASHE would like to stress the need for further support towards civil society organisations that foster cooperation on the institutional level and harmonise approaches to, in particular, professional higher education and applied research. In order for this support to be more effective, we strongly advocate for a longer-term cooperation between the European Commission and the civil society organisations, for ensuring continuity and better implementation of targeted goals.

EURASHE, as the main advocate for further recognition and harmonisation of professionally oriented higher education and representing more than 1 400 affiliated institutions across the European Higher Education Area, such as Universities, University Colleges, Polytechnics and other types of institutions, is prepared to carry on initiatives under the *Erasmus+* and *Horizon 2020* programmes, as well as to continue cooperating on the development of *Rethinking Education*. We believe that these programmes show that the European Union is taking the right path in developing European education policies. We, therefore, urge the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union to recognise their vital importance and suitably allocate the budget under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020.



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Professor Andreas G. Orphanides
President of EURASHE

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