

## Erasmus+ DG EAC Consultation CPU Recommendations

The CPU, the French Rectors Conference which gathers 129 members, French universities and higher education institutions, strongly supports the Erasmus+ programme that enables higher education institutions and the actors in the socio-economic world to develop partnerships, both within the EU and with third countries, in order to enhance the structural development of the EHEA. It also offers a way to respond to certain of today's limitations, such as the limited number of students able to enjoy individual mobility. This will be the subject of one of the CPU's proposals for the implementation of structural partnerships alongside strategic partnerships. In today's Brexit era, this effort needs further amplification in order to seize new opportunities and reinforce the availability of attractive offers for training.

### ***An integrated, targeted, long-term approach to strengthen institutional strategy***

The CPU is deeply attached to an integrated approach at European level and in favour of much stronger links between higher education, research and innovation. An approach of this type enables higher education establishments to develop European and international strategies, and to reinforce long-term partnerships.

This integrated vision requires:

- tighter governance by the three Directorates General (notably the DG R&I, DG EAC and DG regio),
- stronger and more structuring links between the Erasmus+ and H2020 programmes and the structural funds, and real research/training interactions that work in favour of the strategy implemented by higher education institutions,
- research to be integrated into the Erasmus+ programme whenever possible, and training into the H2020 programme, notably as concerns technology transfer,
- the life span of the Erasmus+ programmes needs to be extended, including the implementation of actions that serve the institutions' strategy,
- actions to be better targeted, notably at partner level.

### ***Individual mobility***

The individual mobility mechanism is highly appreciated by the universities and other higher education establishments. It makes a major contribution to increasing learning mobility, such as through student internships.

- Virtual mobility cannot replace physical mobility. It should be considered as an additional tool enabling new types of cooperation between institutions, notably by contributing to distance learning for joint diplomas.
- It can also contribute to educational methods and innovation.
  - Where the question of mobility for students with disabilities arises, a charter drawn up by the European Commission would enable the actors concerned to clarify their reception procedure in order to harmonise practices between member countries.

- The credits' international mobility action receives insufficient funding. The period during which the funds allocated for this type of project can be used does not allow a long-term structure to be developed in the event of cooperation between an institution and pertinent partners outside of Europe.
  - The funding allocated would merit being increased. The means of assessment should be revised and institutions should know, at the time of the call for projects, how the funding will be allocated by area in order to judge the usefulness or otherwise of applying.

In order to improve the balance between individual mobility and mobility as part of a structural cooperation between institutions, part of the funding dedicated to individual mobility could, as an experiment, be integrated into structural partnerships (see the section on structural partnerships).

### ***Joint diplomas: a success to be built on (Erasmus Mundus Actions/Joint master)***

- The joint master (Mundus) offers an opportunity to provide additional structure to training shared between several institutions, to favour both student and lecturer-researcher mobility throughout the European higher education area, and to encourage multidisciplinary. Given the quality of the courses taught in the English language, joint masters attract European and non-European students of an excellent standard. It should equally be noted that certain of these masters also enable the development of strong links between training and research, a structuring element that the CPU particularly favours.

This mechanism could be improved by:

- An increase in their number (including the number of doctorate schools).
- An action over five years (with the funding for the final two years being reduced according to a sliding scale) would enable an improved structure for joint diploma training. The institution's rationale for internationalisation would be reinforced and would facilitate the bottom-up internationalisation policies of courses offered by faculties within the university.

### **Partnerships to strengthen the strategy of both the institution and the EHEA**

#### ***The knowledge alliance: an action that is costly and inappropriate***

Developing structural partnerships between universities and businesses is an important target and one that should improve employability. However, the level of successful applications for this action is dissuasive.

- The knowledge alliances could be integrated into the strategic partnerships (whose aims could be broadened).

#### ***Strategic partnerships: contributing to the EHEA***

These partnerships are appreciated by the institutions. Their horizontal dimension is particularly appropriate given the capacity of higher education establishments to coordinate projects within the framework of multi-actor partnerships:

- The budget allocated for this action could be increased.
- Their aim could be widened and integrate those of the knowledge alliances (relations with the socio-economic world).

- The centralised management would appear more pertinent, notably to avoid deposit strategies and to continue to select the highest quality projects. This would also enable the procedures for financial justification to be made more uniform.
- An increase in the set amounts allowed for personnel costs would enable, at least in part, additional staff to be taken on for the project together with a harmonisation of these costs.

### ***A strengthening of capacity building***

#### ***Structural projects or the creation of transnational European campuses***

In a period of uncertainty concerning the future development of Europe, it is important to underline the advantages provided by programmes targeting the European higher education areas. Today, these programmes need to move up a gear in terms of cooperation by encouraging the construction of structural partnerships between a limited number of higher education institutions (4 to 6). These programmes should provide fuel for institutional strategies and remain closely allied to needs. The resulting leverage effect will give further structure to relationships between institutions at student, lecturer-researcher and administrative staff levels. It will also strengthen the virtuous links between research and training and reinforce complementarity between higher education establishments:

- They will be built on the basis of a multi-annual strategy jointly drawn up by the member institutions. In this sense, they will become an integral part of the strategic partnerships with the institutions concerned (Erasmus+, joint masters, etc.). They could also form an intermediate step prior to strategic partnerships or other Erasmus+ projects.
- They will act as a vehicle for BMD, lecturer-researcher and administrative staff mobility. Certain individual mobilities could be integrated into these partnerships between higher education institutions in different EU countries (which could also include an EU 13 institution) and a third country.
- In order to create a talent mobility area, these partnerships should bring together between 4 and 6 establishments. Immediately on implementation, they could act as forerunners for the transnational campuses (specialisation, complementarity), as much in terms of training levels as research levels, thus ensuring a longer life for their *modus operandi*.
- These partnerships should combine higher education (complementary educational modules, educational innovation, the use of digital tools), research, mobility and innovation (*research training programme, dissemination and technology transfer*).
- They could equally fund training resulting from H2020 projects such as the ERC, collaborative research and Marie Curie projects.

## Funding

- An envelope could be earmarked for the institution, based on an agreement with the Erasmus+ agency, defining a mobility flow and the total allocation for scholarships. This funding could be further increased as it is a strategic investment for the institution, and the management could be strengthened with "mobility organisation" credits that benefit from better funding,
- this rationale would no doubt enable an increase in additional means (regions, institutions, ExIn, etc.) resulting in greater leverage, as happened at cross-border level in order to apply the transnational dimension of the EHEA.
- They will be managed by national agencies. Assessment will be organised by the national agency of the institution responsible for the project and each national agency for the participants concerned will contribute to funding the partnership. To this end a greater harmonisation of the operating rules (procedures for assessment, funding and transparency) between the national Erasmus+ agencies is required, implemented by the European Commission.

### ***Apprenticeships in higher education in the Erasmus+ programme***

The CPU would underline that the development of a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation, together with incentives to encourage entrepreneurship, undeniably constitute actions in favour of student employability.

The CPU fully endorses the recommendations made by the European Commission (**Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan - Reigniting the entrepreneurial spirit in Europe**) that advocate an opportunity for every student who so wishes, to be both trained and able to launch a business on their campus. The CPU would like to see this European programme benefit student entrepreneurs.

### ***The Bologna Process: the process needs to be relaunched***

The EC could identify actions to reinforce this process that would notably enable training to be considered as being linked to research, starting at undergraduate level. The Bologna Process, by imposing the construction of curricula in the form of credits, facilitated their mobility and thus led to the development of a student mobility area. However, this process is far from perfect due to the great disparity between the organisation of undergraduate and postgraduate courses. It is therefore essential to continue working on a convergence that will progressively bring into alignment the ECTS necessary to the different levels of training.

Studies, exchanges of good practices within the framework of Key Action 3.

### ***Universities and the importance of promoting European values***

- In these difficult times, universities certainly have a role to play in providing solutions to European crises. It would be useful to reinforce this role through pilot actions.

***Other proposals***

***Using project costing for higher education.***

***Strengthening synergies***

The greater interactions sought between the ESF and the Erasmus+ programme will come about through a true harmonisation of the rules for funding and the accounting calendars in order to increase leverage, for strategic and structural partnerships for example (complementary funding for individual mobility...).