

Changing lives,  
opening minds

# Erasmus+

What's in it for higher education?

An introduction for students, teachers  
and staff in higher education



Erasmus+



A blurred, blue-tinted background image showing the silhouettes of several people walking in a crowd, creating a sense of movement and anonymity.

# Are you?

A student or recent graduate?

A researcher?

A lecturer or academic professional?

A university leader or policy

A representative of a company or other



A blue-tinted background image showing a blurred crowd of people, suggesting a busy public space or event. The figures are out of focus, creating a sense of movement and a large gathering.

maker with an interest in higher education?  
organisation with an interest in higher education?

**Have a look!**

There may be something in it for you...

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# Introduction

## Why do we need Erasmus+?

Education and training are essential when it comes to creating jobs and improving Europe's competitiveness. The world is changing fast, and education systems need to modernise and adapt to new ways of teaching and learning and embrace the new opportunities that exist. Europe must equip its citizens with the education, skills and creativity that they need in a knowledge society. That's why Erasmus+ will make a key contribution to addressing these challenges.

### Key Facts

**4,000,000**

Erasmus+ will fund more than 4 million people to study, train, volunteer or teach abroad

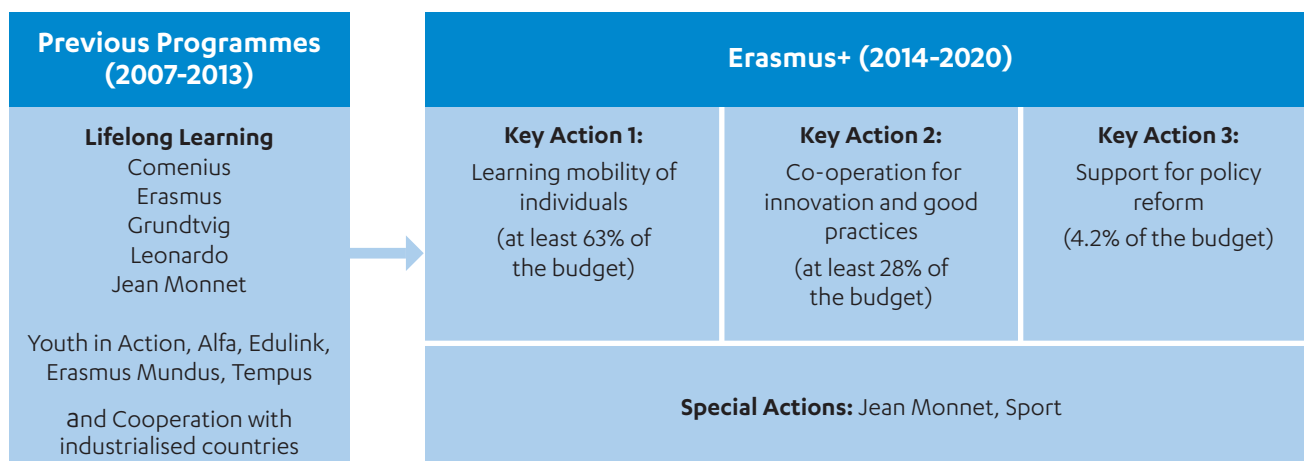
**€14.7 billion**

The budget has increased by 40% compared to previous programmes – totalling €14.7 billion (2014-2020)



## How is Erasmus+ structured?

Erasmus+ is a broad programme offering European opportunities in the fields of education, training, youth and sport. It replaces several programmes with one, making it easier to access, and changes in the rules mean it has never been simpler to apply. The new programme also adopts a single, unified structure with three clear 'Key Action' areas explaining the activities funded. Throughout this brochure we provide full details of higher education activities in each Key Action area.



## Which countries can participate?

The Erasmus+ **programme countries** are the 28 Member States of the European Union, as well as those countries having signed an agreement for participating in Erasmus+. All other countries are Erasmus+ **partner countries which can participate in several Erasmus+ actions**.

## What's in it for you?

This brochure will show you the main opportunities available within the field of higher education and where to go to get started.

If you're new to European funding, this is an ideal introduction. If you've been involved in Erasmus before, the brochure will update you on some of the exciting new features of Erasmus+. If you're interested in reading about other Erasmus+ opportunities, please visit the Erasmus+ website at [ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus](http://ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus)

# What's new for higher education?

The European Union (EU) has an ambitious agenda for modernising and internationalising higher education. Here's an overview of the priority areas for higher education and how Erasmus+ helps achieve them.

## 2,000,000+

### Student and staff mobility

The EU aims to increase the number of higher education graduates to 40% and ensure at least 20% of students study or do a traineeship abroad – all by 2020.

#### *That's why Erasmus+ will fund:*

**2 million** higher education students within Erasmus+ programme countries

An additional **135,000** students to and from Erasmus+ partner countries

Around **300,000** staff from higher education

**200,000** Master student loans

**25,000** scholarships for Joint Master degrees



### Inclusion

Higher education is a vehicle for social mobility and the EU is working to ensure European opportunities are embraced by those who need them most.

#### *That's why Erasmus+ provides:*

Better **linguistic support** for those on exchanges in other countries

Specific support to people with **special needs**

More support to participants from **disadvantaged backgrounds** and in **remote areas**

A **loan guarantee** to help students finance their European Master degree





## Open to the world

The EU wants to encourage closer cooperation between higher education institutions around the world.

### *That's why Erasmus+ is:*

**Promoting the internationalisation of Europe's universities and colleges and building the capacity of partner countries** through extended mobility and institutional cooperation opportunities to include organisations beyond the EU



## Quality

The EU wants to improve the quality and relevance of higher education and European higher education opportunities.

### *That's why Erasmus+ is:*

**Strengthening the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE)** and instigating new, clearer agreements between institutions and their participants

**Increasing the range of mobility activities** available to students, staff and recent graduates



## Innovation

Europe needs closer cooperation between institutions, business and social partners to increase our capacity for innovation.

### *That's why Erasmus+ is funding:*

**25,000 Strategic Partnerships** between over 125,000 institutions, building alliances within and between educational sectors and with outside partners

**150 Knowledge Alliances** between 1,500 higher education institutions and enterprises

**1,000 Capacity-Building Projects** between higher education institutions in programme and partner countries



## Impact

The EU wants to ensure that European funding has a direct impact upon academic excellence.

### *That's why Erasmus+ creates:*

**Individual impact** by offering more personal development opportunities to boost job prospects

**Institutional impact** by supporting institutions to deliver skills for the future and increase their internationalisation

**Policy impact** by addressing policy priorities more closely







# Part 1:

## Improving and extending mobility opportunities in higher education

Part 1 focuses on opportunities available under **Erasmus+ Key Action 1: Learning Mobility**.

This section describes how students, lecturers and other higher education staff can enhance their personal and professional development through work, studies and traineeships abroad.

These activities have expanded significantly under Erasmus+. In fact, by 2020, the EU aims to double the proportion of students completing a study or training period abroad to 20%.

A policy priority for Member States and higher education institutions is to ensure that credits gained abroad are recognised. The Erasmus Charter for Higher Education reinforces this issue by putting greater emphasis on the “before, during and after” of a mobility exchange, clearer inter-institutional agreements and reinforced learning agreements.

# Student and staff mobility

## *Benefits for higher education institutions:*

As well as promoting student and staff mobility, Erasmus+ helps higher education institutions to modernise and become more international in their outlook.

Universities that took part in the previous Erasmus programme have become more open and accessible to the outside world, rethinking their courses, teaching methods and support structures, in order to attract foreign students and establish new partnerships with institutions abroad.

Being actively involved in staff exchanges is a way for higher education institutions to achieve academic quality and become well-known. They can also lead to new cooperation with higher education institutions abroad.

Erasmus+ will contribute to this modernisation, not only through intensified mobility, but also by giving higher education institutions the chance to reach beyond Europe and exchange their students and staff with the rest of the world.

### **Vilnius University (VU)**

VU is the largest university in Lithuania. When it first took part in Erasmus in 1999, 50 courses were taught in English. There are now more than 500 available.

Studying abroad is offered within all Bachelor programmes, and traineeships are fully integrated into the curricula.

VU was also the first coordinator of an Erasmus Mundus course in the Baltic States.





## ***Benefits for students***

Since 1987, over 3 million university-level students have experienced what it means to do an Erasmus term abroad across 33 countries.

Students in programme and partner countries can participate from their second year onwards..

An Erasmus+ traineeship can be taken from the first year and even beyond graduation.

Students may be eligible for travel and subsistence grants. Those with special needs may get extra funds as well as those from disadvantaged backgrounds or from remote areas. Students do not need to pay fees at the receiving institution.

Before departure, students are provided with a learning agreement setting out their study programme or traineeship. They also receive a Student Charter setting out their rights and obligations.

At the end, the receiving institution must provide confirmation that the programme has been completed.

The sending institution in the programme country must give full academic recognition for the agreed activities, preferably using European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits. They should also record the mobility period in the Diploma Supplement.

**Erasmus+ student credit mobility now includes an international component, with mobility for students and staff to and from partner countries worldwide, at all levels of higher education.**

Students should enquire at the international office of their institution to find out more.

**// Studying at another university helped me broaden my scope in my field of study and gave me an experience which very few people have //**

**Robert Bye**

A UK student, on studying industrial design with Erasmus for 10 months at Delft University of Technology, the Netherlands





## Student credit mobility facts

- Study period: 3-12 months
- Traineeship period: 2-12 months
- A combination of study and traineeship is possible
- Graduates can do traineeships within up to 1 year of graduation
- Grants available in each of the 3 cycles (short-cycle/Bachelor, Master and Doctorate) in all disciplines
- Grant levels depend on destination country
- Top-up grants may be provided for students with special needs, from disadvantaged background or from remote areas



## ***Benefits for staff***

Staff mobility has become very popular since its introduction in 1997. Over 300,000 staff exchanges were supported under the previous Erasmus programme. Staff mobility can include teaching, training and the possibility of higher education institutions inviting staff from companies to teach.

Staff mobility contributes to employees' personal and professional development. It also aids the modernisation of higher education through cooperation between institutions.

Having teaching staff coming from abroad enables students to benefit from new lectures and different teaching methods, and perhaps experience learning in a foreign language.

Teachers gain different perspectives, establish new contacts and build their academic network.

Visiting lecturers from companies provide fresh insights for students, and may set up student traineeships or staff training.

Teachers and other higher education staff can receive training abroad in a business or at another institution. The stay is an opportunity to stimulate further cooperation.

Higher education staff should enquire with the international office at their home institution for more details.

**“ Although you may think that you are familiar with the culture you are going to, when you are immersed it turns out there is always something new to learn ”**

**Rumyana Todorova**

Vice-Rector for International Relations at the University of Shumen, Bulgaria

A woman with short brown hair, wearing a grey button-down shirt and black trousers, stands in a modern, brightly lit room. She is pointing her right index finger towards the camera. Behind her is a large, translucent red DNA double helix graphic that spans across the background. To the right of the woman is a tall, narrow red vertical panel with white icons and text. The floor is made of light-colored wood. In the foreground, the back of a person's head and their raised hand are visible, suggesting an audience or a presentation setting.

### Staff mobility facts

- Higher education staff can train or teach abroad
- Mobility period for programme countries: from 2 days - 2 months (excluding travel days)
- Mobility period for staff from partner countries: from 5 days - 2 months
- Lecturing abroad must include at least 8 teaching hours
- Staff from enterprises are encouraged to teach at higher education institutions abroad

# Student degree mobility – Joint Master degrees

Higher education institutions can receive funding to run excellent Joint Master degree programmes aimed at attracting the best students from all over the world.

Erasmus Mundus Joint Master degree courses are delivered by an international consortium of higher education institutions, and by other educational and non-educational partners.

All participating higher education institutions must be Master degree awarding institutions.

The degree awarded through the Joint Master programme must be fully recognised by the national authorities in the countries where the higher education institutions are established.

To apply to take part in a Joint Master Degree, contact the consortium via:

**<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/jointmasterdegrees>**

## **Tip!**


Funding for Joint Doctorate courses is also available within the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions under the Horizon 2020 Research programme.

See **<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/>** for details.

After graduating from the Erasmus Mundus Master course EUROMIME (European Master in Media Engineering for Education), Youssef Achaaoud, Morocco, worked on an educational radio project at the Regional Academy of Education and Training in Agadir - the only one of its kind in Morocco.

From 2012 on, Youssef has been working at the Regional Centre of Literacy and Non-Formal Education in Agadir.



The background of the page is a photograph of a graduation ceremony. In the foreground, the back of a graduate's head is visible, wearing a black mortarboard cap and a white collar. The background is filled with other graduates in similar attire, seated in rows, with their faces blurred. The lighting is warm, suggesting an indoor venue.

## Joint Master degree facts

- Joint Master degree courses are high-level, integrated, international study programmes of 60, 90 or 120 credits under the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)
- They are offered by higher education institutions from programme countries and/or partner countries to attract the best students worldwide
- There are already around 150 excellent Joint Master degrees that will continue receiving funding through Erasmus+
- Students follow a Master study programme in at least 2 programme country institutions, receive competitive scholarships and obtain joint or multiple degrees

# Erasmus+ Master degree loans

The Student Loan Guarantee Facility allows students to apply for a loan for their Master degree studies abroad.

It has been established in cooperation with the European Investment Bank Group (EIB), and students can apply irrespective of whether their home country provides student loan schemes or not.

Participating banks or student loan agencies will be selected by the EIB and must offer students loans at affordable rates, and allow up to two years after graduation before repayments begin. The facility provides a partial guarantee against loan defaults for participating banks or student loan agencies in

programme countries. This guarantee will reduce the risk for financial institutions when lending to borrowers they wouldn't normally consider.

Financial intermediaries will be selected to operate the Erasmus+ student loans in programme countries. These financial intermediaries will be responsible for the assessment of individual loan applications, issuing loans and collecting repayments.

The names of the participating loan providers will be published on the Erasmus+ website as they become available: **[ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus](https://ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus)**

## Loan facts

- Students will be able to apply for a favourable loan for a Master degree abroad
- Students can borrow up to €12,000 for a 1 year course or up to €18,000 for a 2 year course
- Students should contact participating national banks or student loan agencies











# Part 2:

## Fostering cooperation between education, research and business

Part 2 reviews opportunities available under **Erasmus+ Key Action 2: Cooperation Projects**.

The contribution of higher education to jobs and growth can be enhanced through close links between education, research and business, and by strengthening cooperation with other education and training sectors.

This section describes activities that stimulate entrepreneurship and creativity across all disciplines and cycles (Bachelor, Master and Doctoral degrees). It also covers opportunities to enhance innovation in higher education through interactive learning environments, knowledge-transfer infrastructure and capacity-building measures aimed at supporting the modernisation of higher education in different parts of the world.

The cooperation projects under Key Action 2 have positive and long-lasting effects on the participants, their organisations and on the policy systems.

# Strategic Partnerships

Strategic Partnerships support organisations from different fields to collaborate and implement innovative practices leading to high quality teaching, training, learning and youth work.

These partnerships should help to deliver change not only in the organisations that participate directly in the action, but also in higher education systems by sharing the learning and good practices that emerge. They could for example implement activities such as:

- Developing and delivering **joint study modules, programmes and curricula** - between partnership members from different countries, disciplines and sectors (public/private), ensuring the relevance towards the needs of the labour market
- Implementing project-based activities involving enterprises and students/staff at higher education institutions
- Making more effective use of **virtual mobility, open educational resources and ICT to implement innovative teaching approaches**
- Integrating **distance, part-time and modular learning into the delivery of higher education**
- Strengthening higher education institutions' engagement with local/regional authorities and stakeholders from civil society
- Reinforcing cooperation between the different formal and informal education and training sectors
- Enhancing guidance counseling, coaching methods and tools, student support services







### **Strategic Partnerships facts**

- Projects: 2-3 years
- Funding: up to €300,000 for 2 years or €450,000 for 3 years

Support stronger cooperation between:

- Higher education institutions
- Higher education and other education sectors
- Higher education and the labour market

Aims:

- Improving quality of learning and teaching
- Developing new and innovative curricula
- Harnessing the potential of virtual collaborative platforms and other open educational resources

Activities may additionally include:

- Blended mobility of students (physical mobility of less than 2 months coupled with virtual mobility)
- Joint staff training events and intensive study programmes (5 days to 2 months)
- Long-term teaching or training assignments (2 to 12 months)

Partnerships include a minimum of 3 organisations from 3 programme countries.

# Knowledge Alliances

Knowledge Alliances strengthen Europe's capacity for entrepreneurship and encourage innovation in higher education, business and the broader socio-economic environment.

Within Knowledge Alliances, higher education institutions and enterprises work together to encourage innovation by:

- Developing innovative learning and teaching methods
- Organising continuing education programmes and activities
- Strengthening the exchange, the flow and the co-creation of knowledge
- Developing solutions for challenging issues

Knowledge Alliances can help stimulate entrepreneurship by:

- Introducing entrepreneurship education in any discipline
- Offering new learning opportunities to apply entrepreneurial skills

Higher education and enterprises can share knowledge through:

- Study activities in enterprises that are recognised within the curriculum
- Trials testing innovative measures
- Student, researcher and staff exchanges
- Involving company staff in teaching and research

**“ The factory staff had the chance to interact with a pool of students that had a new way of thinking and problem solving capacity ”**

**“ In the pilot with the company, the problems were much more complicated and challenging. And this really motivated us and made us eager to participate actively ”**

Testimonials of a student from the University of Patras, Greece, and from a business partner, VOLVO, who participated in the Teaching Factory Knowledge Alliance (KNOWFACT)





### **Knowledge Alliance facts**

- Projects: 2-3 years
- Maximum funding € 700,000 (2 year project) and € 1,000,000 (3 year project)
- Organisations established in a programme country can apply
- Minimum 6 organisations from at least 3 different programme countries. At least 2 higher education institutions must be involved, as well as at least 2 enterprises
- Open to any discipline, field and to cross sectoral collaboration



# Capacity-Building Partnerships

Higher education institutions can take part in collaborative, capacity-building partnerships. These projects are set up and managed by a group of higher education institutions from programme countries on the one hand, and partner countries\* on the other.

There are two kinds of project:

- **Joint projects** help higher education institutions from partner countries develop, modernise and share new curricula, teaching methods or materials. They also help boost quality assurance and governance of higher education institutions.
- **Structural projects** help to develop and reform higher education institutions and systems in partner countries. The aim is to enhance their quality and relevance, and promote regional cooperation.

In certain partner countries neighbouring the EU, capacity-building projects may also include a mobility strand targeted at students and staff.

\* Industrialised partner countries are not eligible for this action.

// Staff are invigorated by the renewed enthusiasm of their students; universities benefit from stronger community ties; and communities benefit from students' fresh ideas //

**Michelle Lamb**

Roehampton University (UK), on the benefits of a partnership between universities in Jordan, Lebanon, the UK, Ireland, Sweden and Bulgaria.



### Capacity-Building Partnerships facts

- Projects: 2-3 years
- Set up and managed by a group of universities from programme countries and those from another region of the world
- **Joint projects** help all partners to develop, modernise and share new curricula, teaching methods or materials, as well as boost quality assurance and governance
- **Structural projects** develop and reform higher education institutions and systems, enhancing their quality and relevance, as well as promoting regional cooperation







# Part 3:

## Supporting policy reform

### **Erasmus+ Key Action 3: Support for Policy Reform**

provides support for policy makers in providing the most effective environment for the development of education and training.

Policy reform support reinforces the knowledge and evidence base underlying political decision-making, by encouraging cooperation among higher education institutions, international organisations and policy makers.

Activities funded in this area are designed to meet the Europe 2020 goals for education, training and youth by strengthening cooperation between all strands of education and training, including higher education, and government.

## Policy support activities

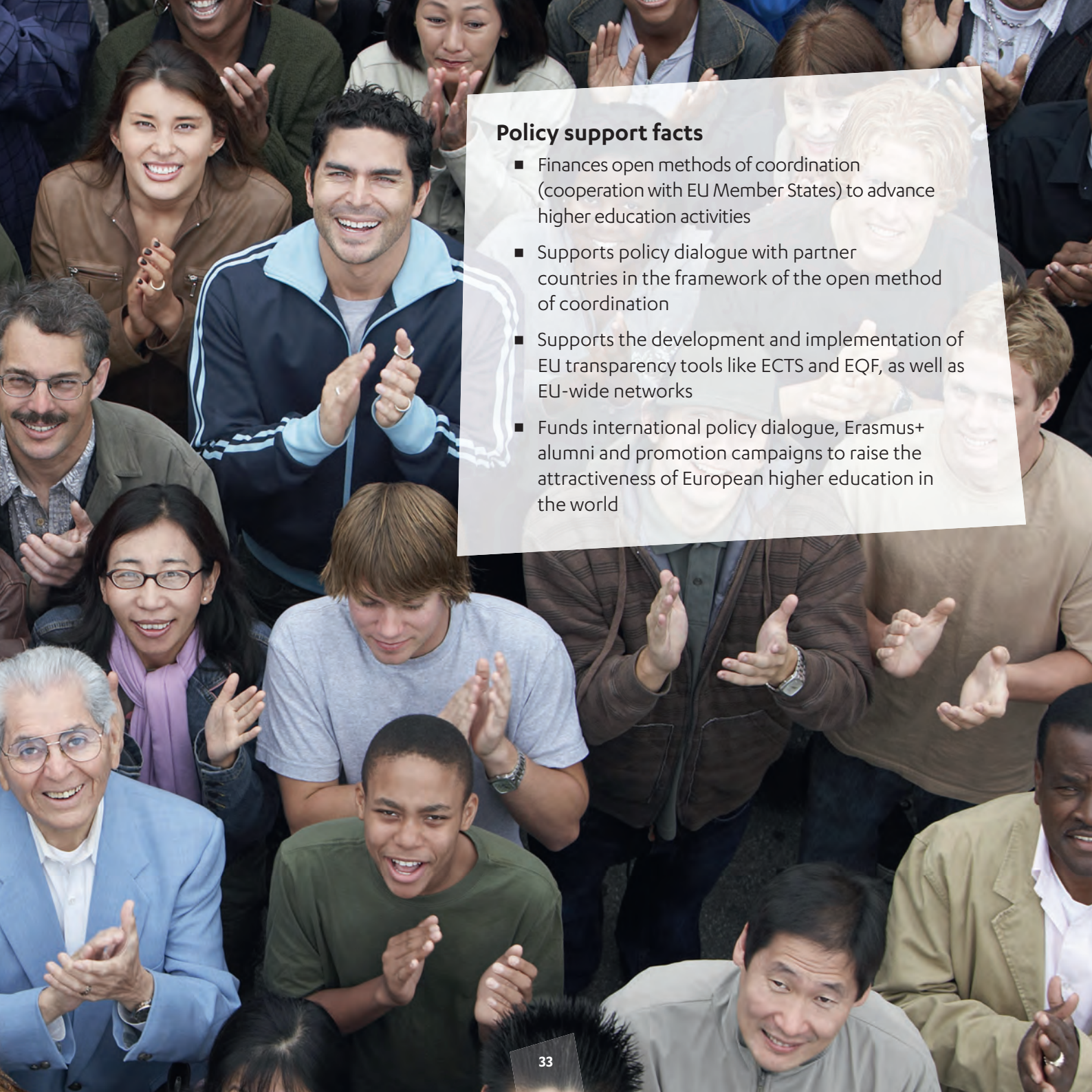
These activities help improve the policies that are essential to growth and job creation.

Through different activities like peer review, policy experimentation with national and regional authorities, providing European tools like the European Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (ECTS), working with networks of universities and colleges and supporting the Bologna Process, EU support helps to modernise higher education policies across Europe and in partner countries.

Policy dialogue and Erasmus+ alumni will contribute to promote a European Higher Education Area. Calls for proposals are published annually by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency to invite governments, stakeholder organisations and researchers to submit.







## Policy support facts

- Finances open methods of coordination (cooperation with EU Member States) to advance higher education activities
- Supports policy dialogue with partner countries in the framework of the open method of coordination
- Supports the development and implementation of EU transparency tools like ECTS and EQF, as well as EU-wide networks
- Funds international policy dialogue, Erasmus+ alumni and promotion campaigns to raise the attractiveness of European higher education in the world



# Specific activity: Jean Monnet

Jean Monnet activities stimulate teaching and research on the European Union and foster dialogue between academics and decision-makers in the EU and around the world. Jean Monnet actions include:

**Jean Monnet Chairs:** teaching posts that specialise in EU studies for university professors or senior lectures (minimum teaching time: 90 hours per academic year).

**Jean Monnet Academic Modules:** short, single or multidisciplinary teaching programmes or courses in the field of EU studies at a higher education institution (minimum teaching time: 40 hours per academic year).

**Jean Monnet Centres of Excellence:** focal points of knowledge on EU subjects that encourage cross-border links and multidiscipline collaboration. Higher education institutions located in any country around the world can apply.

**Jean Monnet Networks:** encourage the creation and development of groups of international higher education institutions, centres of excellence, departments, individual experts, etc.

**Jean Monnet Projects:** activities that promote innovation, cross-fertilisation and the spread of EU content from the ground up (duration: 12-24 months):

- **Innovation projects** explore new ways of making EU subjects more attractive and easily adaptable to different kinds of target populations (e.g. projects on Learning EU @ School)
- **Cross-fertilisation projects** promote discussion on EU issues and enhance knowledge of the EU and its processes in specific contexts
- **Spreading content projects** mainly concern activities that generate and share information

Jean Monnet also supports **institutions and associations** that:

- Enhance teacher and training activities on EU subjects at postgraduate level and/or for other relevant stakeholders. It also encourages activities that analyse EU subjects and their teaching, elaborate upon them and help increase their popularity
- Specifically contribute to the study of the European integration process

Associations should be interdisciplinary and open to all professors, teachers and researchers specialising in EU issues in their country or region. Support will only be given to associations that are officially registered and have independent legal status











# Information for applicants

## Where can I find out more?

[ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus](http://ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus)

## How do I apply?

Students or staff should ask at the international office or Erasmus+ office within their higher education institution.

To apply to take part in a Joint Master Degree, contact the consortium via <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/jointmasterdegrees>

Organisations should contact:

- their Erasmus+ National agency for student and staff mobility and Strategic Partnerships at:  
[ec.europa.eu/education/tools/national\\_agencies\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/national_agencies_en.htm)

Or

- the Executive Agency (EACEA) in Brussels for Joint Master Degrees, Knowledge Alliances, Capacity-Building Partnerships, Policy support projects and Jean Monnet at:  
[eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus\\_en](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus_en)

If you are a higher education institution from a partner country interested in applying for credit mobility, contact your partner university in a programme country, which will be in charge of applying for funding.



**Erasmus+**

## **What's in it for higher education?**

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