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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION
TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

pursuant to Article 294(6) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

concerning the

position of the Council on the adoption of a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing 'Erasmus+': the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013

(Text with EEA relevance)

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1. BACKGROUND

Date of transmission of the proposal to the European Parliament and to the Council (document COM(2018) 367 final - 2018/0191 COD)	30 May 2018
Date the Committee of the Regions adopted its Opinion on the proposal	6 February 2019
Date the European Economic and Social Committee adopted its Opinion on the proposal	19 October 2018
Date of the position of the European Parliament, first reading:	28 March 2019
Date of Council agreement on a general approach	26 November 2018
Dates of the trilogues	7 October 2019 19 November 2019 9 December 2019 7 December 2020 11 December 2020
Date Committee of Permanent Representatives confirmed the compromise agreement	18 December 2020
Date the CULT Committee of the European Parliament voted to endorse the compromise agreement	11 January 2021
Date Committee of Permanent Representatives adopted the Position of the Council (I/A Item)	31 March2021
Date of adoption of the Council first reading position	13 April 2021

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE PROPOSAL FROM THE COMMISSION

The Erasmus+ programme is one of the funding instruments under the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) aiming at investing in people, social cohesion and values. The Commission proposed an overall budget of EUR 30 billion.

The general objective of the Erasmus+ programme is to support, through lifelong learning, the educational, professional and personal development of people in education, training, youth and sport, in Europe and beyond, thereby contributing to sustainable growth, quality jobs and social cohesion, driving innovation, as well as strengthening European identity and active citizenship. The programme is structured around three Key Actions: (1) learning mobility, (2) cooperation among organisations and institutions, and (3) support to policy development and cooperation. The integrated nature of the programme, covering formal, non-formal and informal learning, offers learning opportunities at all stages of life.

In line with the findings of the mid-term evaluation of the predecessor programme and stakeholders' opinions, the new Erasmus+ programme maintains stability, while offering improvements as well as new measures and actions, reflecting a broader ambition of the new EU policy agenda. The substantially strengthened, inclusive and extended programme steps up mobility and exchanges.

3. COMMENTS ON THE POSITION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The European Parliament's first reading position, adopted on 28 March 2019, suggested amendments to the Commission proposal, notably:

– Name: keeping the name Erasmus**+** (instead of Erasmus as proposed by the Commission);

– Budget: tripling of the budget; revision of the sectoral breakdown (vocational education and training up from 21 to 23%; school education up from 15.2 to 15.6%; adult education up from 4.8 to 6%; sport increases up from 1.8% to 2%); annual appropriations to be authorised by the European Parliament; linear spending profile over the 7-year duration of the programme;

– Objectives: new specific objectives on international cooperation, lifelong learning, and European added value;

– Governance: delegated acts for the adoption of annual work programmes; in the course of the negotiations, the European Parliament specifid its request for a governance solution that would ensure its involvement in political choices regarding the implementation of the programme;

– Reinforced inclusion dimension of the programme: stand-alone inclusion chapter and articles requiring the Commission to set up a framework of inclusion measures and the National Agencies to set up national inclusion strategies; specific objective and indicators;

– European added value: non-exhaustive list of criteria to demonstrate EU added value of programme actions;

– DiscoverEU: scope extended from 18 year-olds to those aged 18-20;

– European Universities and Centres of Vocational Excellence should involve at least one entity established in a Member State;

- Adult learners: addition of individual mobility under Key Action 1 (learning mobililty);
- Sport Key Action 1 (learning mobility): individual learning mobility extended to cover young people practicing sport in an organised setting and international mobility for sports staff;
- Synergies: use of the ‘Seal of Excellence’ to allow for alternative funding under the Cohesion Policy Funds;
- International cooperation: deletion of the references to the type of third countries taking part in the programme; addition under Key Action 2 (cooperation) of references to capacity-building in the field of higher education in third countries; specific focus on developing counties;
- Indicators: annex replaced with a more detailed list of indicators.

The European Parliament also adopted a political statement accompanying its first reading position, reserving the European Parliament’s right to re-examine its position to ensure that the programme’s core activities and the inclusion dimension are effectively delivered in case the budget is not tripled. The statement also stressed that the European Parliament’s support for the European Universities, the Centres of Vocational Excellence and DiscoverEU will be contingent on the evaluation of their pilot phases and the further definition of each initiative.

As part of the agreement reached in the trilogues, the Commission accepted:

- The programme name Erasmus+ instead of Erasmus;
- The financial envelope of the programme set at €24.574 billion in current prices and an additional top-up of €1.7 billion in 2018 prices, resulting from the Programme-specific adjustment provided for in Article 5 and Annex II of the Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 (i.e. MFF regulation); slightly adapted sectorial budget allocations;
- A new Annex broadly describing the progarmme actions amendable by a delegated act;
- A reinforced inclusion dimension;
- Addition of a new article on the European added value;
- Mobility of adult learners under Key Action 1 (learning mobility);
- Extending the scope of sport mobility to cover international actions;
- The explicit mention of the Seal of excellence;
- Clarification of the article refering to the participation of the organisations in third countries not associated to the programme;
- Extended and restructured list of indicators.

The Commission also agreed to issue the following statement regarding an indicative budget for the platforms of Centres of vocational excellence:

“Without prejudice to the powers of the legislative and budgetary authority, the Commission commits to allocating an indicative amount of EUR 400 million in current prices to support platforms of Centres for vocational excellence over the whole duration of the programme, provided that the interim evaluation of the programme confirms a positive assessment of the results of the action.”

Following the Council's adoption of its first reading position, the European Parliament is expected to formally endorse the agreement reached in the trilogues.

4. COMMENTS ON THE POSITION OF THE COUNCIL

The Council's position reflects the agreement reached in the trilogues. The most important changes introduced compared to the Commission's proposal include:

- The progarmme name Erasmus+ instead of Erasmus;
- The financial envelope of the programme set at €24.574 billion in current prices and an additional top-up of €1.7 billion in 2018 prices , resulting from the Programme-specific adjustment provided for in Article 5 and Annex II of the Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 (i.e. MFF regulation);

– Budget distribution modified as follows:

- Overall envelope:
  - Education and Training share decreased from 83.1 to 83%
  - Sport increased from 1.8% to 1.9%
  - National Agencies management fees increased from 3.2 to 3.3%;
- Shares within the Education and Training budget:
  - Mobility of adult learners increased from 4.8 to 5.8%;
  - Vocational education and training increased from 21% to 21.5%;
  - "At least" 1.8% dedicated to Jean Monnet action;
  - "At least" 17% share for horizontal activities and centrally managed actions, including the indicative amount of EUR 400 million for the Centres of vocational excellence outlined in the Commission statement;
  - Flexibility margin decreased from 5.5% to 4.1%.

– Mobility of adult learners under Key Action 1 (learning mobility);

– A reinforced inclusion dimension (stand alone chapter with two new articles);

– A new Annex broadly describing the programme actions, preserving the necessary flexibility for programme implementation and amendable by a delegated act;

– Revised and restructured list of indicators;

– A fixed programme duration aligned with the duration of the Multiannual Financial Framework;

– Addition of retroactivity provisions;

– Revised provisions concerning the conditions for the participation of third countries associated and not associated to the porgramme.

In general, the agreement reached preserves the objectives of the Commission's original proposal, maintaining the level of ambition and allowing the flexibility required for the implementation of the programme.

5. Conclusion

The Commission accepts the position taken by the Council.

6. Declaration from the Commission

The Commission has made one declaration which can be found in the annex.

ANNEX

Statement by the European Commission on the specific allocations for the platforms of Centres of vocational excellence

Without prejudice to the powers of the legislative and budgetary authority, the Commission commits to allocating an indicative amount of EUR 400 million in current prices to support platforms of Centres for vocational excellence over the whole duration of the programme, provided that the interim evaluation of the programme confirms a positive assessment of the results of the action.