

Brussels, 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2020

**TO:** ZVER Milan (EPP)  
KAMMEREVERT Petra (S&D)  
FARRENG Laurence (Renew Europe)  
YENBOU Salima (Greens)  
BALDASSARRE Simona (I&D)  
KRUK Elżbieta (ECR)  
KIZILYÜREK Niyazi (Nordic Greens)  
CHRISTOPHIDOU Themis (DG EAC)  
WATERSCHOOT Sophia Eriksson (DG EAC)  
VAN HOUDT Florencia van (DG EAC)

**Request for Amendments to the Requirements, Application and Award Process of Erasmus+ Traineeship Grants**

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are writing to you on behalf of BETTER FINANCE – The European Federation of Investors and Financial Services Users, AEGEE–Europe (the European Students’ Forum) and EUROCHAMBRES – the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry – regarding several difficulties that European students face applying for the Erasmus+ Traineeship Grant.

**The signatories strongly support the Erasmus and Erasmus+ EU Program, as one of the most effective and efficient tools to promote and develop peace and cooperation between European countries and between European citizens.** The signatories greatly appreciate the importance of the Erasmus+ Traineeship Grants in ensuring that recent graduates have the necessary financial support for a decent living situation while gaining valuable, and for many their first, work experience. As great supporters of Erasmus+, we find it necessary to bring to your attention several challenges facing recent graduates in attaining the benefits available through the Erasmus+ scheme that were raised by applicants.

First, we would like to bring to your attention that information on the application process for Erasmus+ Traineeship Grants differs substantially amongst academic institutions, is often unclear and not necessarily in line with the information provided by the European Commission. This leads to confusion and in the worst cases to individuals not being able to access the benefits provided through the Erasmus+ scheme. **We would therefore recommend a streamlining of information provided by academic institutions on the Erasmus+ scheme, ensuring clear and intelligible information in line with that presented by the European Commission.**

Second, according to the information provided by the European Commission, individuals have to apply to be enrolled in the Erasmus+ scheme whilst still enrolled at an academic institution, which in our view can lead to several issues. As companies and organisations offering internships often operate within short timeframes between application deadlines and internship start dates, many current

students are forced to apply for internships whilst at the very last few months of their studies – adding additional stress to a period filled with important deadlines and exams. **We, therefore recommend offering recent graduates an extended period of 3-6 months following graduation to send applications for Erasmus+ Traineeship Grants.** This will provide them with not only the time necessary to successfully complete their academic studies but also increase their chances of gaining valuable work experience following graduation, in turn reducing youth unemployment - a stated aim of the Erasmus+ Grant Programme<sup>1</sup>.

Third, the signatories have been made aware that there is a tendency to prioritise current students over recent graduates by academic institutions. This is due to difficulties in obtaining the supportive documents necessary to have the costs reimbursed from recent graduates as opposed to current students. In the worst-case scenario, this leaves the academic institution in question footing the bill for Erasmus+. **We therefore recommend setting up specific contracts with recent graduates eligible for Erasmus+ outlining that the final payment is not to be received until the necessary documentation has been submitted to the academic institution in question.**

The signatories acknowledge that inclusive access to opportunities for students is crucial for their career development, but also ensures that companies and institutions have access to the best-qualified candidates. Every year, excellent graduates either miss out on or postpone gaining valuable experience in their desired field due to funding-related issues or over-bureaucratised procedures. Cumulatively, this has a broader socio-economic impact. We believe that the proposed amendments to the Erasmus+ grants will have a significant positive effect on the program and will increase its recognition among students and graduates, but also companies and non-governmental organisations.

We look forward to further dialogue aimed at ensuring an easier transition for current students and recent graduates' transition to the European workforce – providing them with what is most needed: a stepping stone for their future career upon successfully completing their studies.

Yours faithfully,



Guillaume Prache  
Managing Director  
BETTER FINANCE



Diederik de Wit  
President  
AEGEE-Europe



Ben Butters  
Chief Executive Officer  
EUROCHAMBRES

<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_en)