



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 11.7.2013
C(2013) 4301 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Assembleia da República for its Opinion on the interim evaluation of the Erasmus Mundus II programme (2009–2013), {COM(2012) 515 final} and apologises for the delay in replying.

The Commission agrees that this report is an important assessment of the current state of one of the key initiatives to support the internationalisation of European Higher Education. It also shares the Assembleia da República's view that it will be essential to continue monitoring the second phase of the Erasmus Mundus programme.

Regarding the Assembleia da República's suggestions to be more incisive in identifying the Programme's future financial resources, the Commission has proposed to increase the financial support for joint programmes under the Erasmus for All programme proposal. In its proposal the Commission suggests maintaining the joint Master and doctoral degrees with increased financial resources.

Concerning the reporting requirements imposed on Programme participants, the Commission would like to underline that an effective monitoring system is essential to guarantee the quality of a flagship programme like Erasmus Mundus. Reporting requirements should guarantee the correct treatment of scholarship recipients and be proportional to the overall value of the grant (3 to 5 M€ per agreement).

With regard to the limited grants offered to EU students, the Commission would draw the Assembleia da República's attention to the fact that Erasmus Mundus was originally designed as an instrument to enhance the attractiveness of EU higher education to the wider world. The Commission is currently reflecting on ways to ensure that under the future programme the participation of EU students in joint degrees becomes more attractive.

As for simplification, the Commission would like to point out that some measures have already been introduced at application stage (through the use of eForms), at contracting stage (by reducing the time to contract) and at reporting stage (by reducing the number of reports and providing reporting facilities through an online mobility tool).

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The finding that the impact of Erasmus Mundus has been more visible and positive in the EU's neighbourhood countries can be explained by the fact that some of these countries are members of the Bologna Process and have been participating in the Tempus programme for many years.

Finally, as regards the impact of the programme on the achievement of the Bologna objectives, action 1 of Erasmus Mundus has certainly made a contribution by supporting the convergence of the study programmes at masters level, strengthening the joint recognition of degrees and stimulating the adoption of good practices (increased use of transparency tools, adoption of internal and external quality assurance mechanisms, etc.).

The new Erasmus for All programme proposal is based on the assessments of current programmes and an impact assessment of the future programme. The Commission has thus tried to design the future programme by building on the strengths of current programmes while improving them where possible.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the concerns raised by the Assembleia da República in its Opinion and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*