ERASMUS+ FOR AFRICA: Enabling more exchanges between the continents

What is the Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs?
President Jean-Claude Juncker launched the new Africa–Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs - in his State of the Union Address in September 2018. The aim of the Alliance is to build a true partnership among equals and deepen the EU's economic and trade relationship with Africa, through strategic investment and job creation. Investment in education and matching skills and jobs are a key component of the Alliance, with a clear target of reaching 35,000 Erasmus+ mobilities between Europe and Africa by 2020.

What is Erasmus+?
Erasmus+ is the EU programme for education, training, youth and sport for the period 2014-2020. Erasmus+ funds co-operation and exchanges of students, academic staff and young people between Europe and other regions in the world, including Africa, where it supports activities that are closely matched with the EU’s policy cooperation priorities for the continent.

Erasmus+: university exchanges
This type of short-term mobility between Africa and Europe is for students, researchers, and staff. It provides grants for students and researchers to study in a foreign higher education institution for 3-12 months and obtain credits, which are then recognised at the sending institution as part of their degree. A grant for staff mobility is also possible from 5 to 60 days.

Since the start of this Erasmus+ action in 2015, European institutions have been able to form bilateral partnerships with universities across the continent of Africa.

President Juncker’s announcement resulted in more mobility, but also in new partnerships between universities in Europe and in Africa, sometimes for the first time.

By 2019 the programme had already provided mobility for over 26,000 African students and staff to come to Europe.

The EU is committed to have supported 35,000 African students and researchers with Erasmus+ by 2020.

In his 2018 speech on the State of the Union, Commission’s President Jean-Claude Juncker announced that this figure will increase to 105,000 by 2027.
Impact of extra funding in 2018 + 2019: More scholarships for African students/staff to Europe (Western Africa & Horn of Africa)

Erasmus+: Capacity Building in Higher Education

Next to its main focus on exchanges, Erasmus+ also supports capacity building projects in higher education.

Through these projects, Erasmus+ supports knowledge creation and innovation in universities, enabling them to play a greater role in driving economic development. Projects focus on the quality and relevance of higher education too, promoting cooperation with the world of work to ensure that young people acquire the skills needed for their working life.

Since 2015, 146 projects have focused on Africa. The 35 projects involving African institutions selected in 2019 are helping to:

- Boost innovative learning and develop teaching methodologies that supports greater entrepreneurship in food and agribusiness in six universities in Kenya, Uganda and Zambia, with Finland and Italy.
- Develop Laboratories of Innovation and Business for Young Actors of Start-ups in 11 Libyan universities with Italy, Malta and Slovenia.
- Set up teaching programmes on using new sources of energy in universities in Mauritius, Madagascar and the Comoros, which are working alongside Belgium and the outermost regions of France, Spain and Portugal.
- Improve prospects for South African graduates in the field of renewable energies, through closer collaboration between universities and industry with Germany, Hungary, Austria and Cyprus.
- Develop new study programmes on climate change-induced disaster management for universities from Mozambique, working with Sweden, Portugal and Italy.

Location of organisations in 146 Capacity Building for Higher Education projects in Africa

source: EAC / September 2019

with additional funding

with original funding
Erasmus+: Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees

Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees award full-degree scholarships to Master students from around the world covering tuition, travel, and a living allowance. Most programmes last two years, during which students study in at least two different European countries. Upon graduation, they are awarded a joint or double degree, or multiple degrees.

So far, almost 1,200 Erasmus Mundus scholarships have been awarded to African students:

Erasmus Mundus scholarships for African nationals, 2014-2019

1,197 Africa
1,402 Europe
6,759 Rest of the world

Erasmus+: Capacity Building for young people

Capacity Building projects in the field of youth cover a range of activities that encourage cooperation between organisations active in youth empowerment, education, youth training, and other socioeconomic sectors from different regions of the world. The projects aim to recognise and improve youth work, non-formal learning and volunteering, while linking them to education systems and the labour market.

Between 2014 and 2018, 206 projects in Africa have been approved, covering 39 African countries from Benin to Zimbabwe. 8,500 young people and youth workers from European and African countries are involved. Projects cover topics from human rights to inter-cultural dialogue, migration, rural entrepreneurship, digital empowerment and innovative learning platforms.

Mobility in vocational education and training (VET)

A new three-year VET mobility pilot project with Africa has been launched, and selection is ongoing. Technical skills are of utmost importance for the continent and vocational education urgently needs to be revitalised. This pilot project will offer an Erasmus-type cooperation between VET providers in the EU Member States and all regions of Africa, combining capacity building and learner and staff exchange programmes in the priority fields of engineering, manufacturing and construction, agriculture and tourism/catering.

Working with alumni

In late 2019, former and current beneficiaries (alumni, students and university staff) of international mobility scholarships funded by the European Union will be able to join the African Students and Alumni Forum. This platform will support exchanges, collaboration and capacity building, young people’s skills and competences relevant for the labour market, as well as their participatory, leadership and innovation abilities.

It aims at enhancing student and alumni participation in educational processes by acting as a platform for dialogue and networking and for promoting EU-funded mobility programmes across the African continent.
Joint Africa-EU higher education harmonisation initiatives

Two interlinked initiatives – the Harmonisation and Tuning initiative (Tuning Africa), involving 107 universities across 42 African countries, regional bodies and students, and the Harmonisation, Quality and Accreditation project – are examples of the excellent collaboration between the European Union and the African Union in higher education.

Tuning Africa is a collaborative process reviewing, through consultation with students, academics, graduates and the labour market, the competences and skills required for a given discipline and revising study programmes. The Harmonisation, Quality and Accreditation project supports the Pan African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework and in particular the development of standards covering the entire continent and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education, capacity building in the regional and national bodies in charge of higher education, as well as building up expertise in the field of institutional evaluation and quality.

More information:

- Erasmus+ website: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node_en
- Projects & results: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/
- Tuning Africa: http://tuningafrica.org/en/
- Harmonisation, Quality and Accreditation Initiative: https://haqaa.aau.org/