



## The Erasmus + Project Strategy

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### Abstract

*The Erasmus + Project Initiative began for the first time in 2014, but this was not the first time that the Erasmus project strategy came into being. This publication aims to understand its origins and the reasoning behind this particular initiative. It analyses the fundamental steps taken towards the creation of the Erasmus + Project Strategy and how it has helped shape a European Identity.*

**Key Words:** *European Identity, Erasmus, Adonnino, Programme*

### 1. Introduction

In the early 1980s: the process of European integration reached a standstill. ‘Eurosclerosis’ (Cairns, Feyen, Krzaklewska, 2014), is the term that would later be coined to describe the period of economic stagnation in which the European Communities (EC) had been stuck since the middle of the 1970s. But, as if this wasn’t enough, the EC also had to combat a crisis of political legitimation, symbolised by a low turnout of voters in the second direct elections to the European Parliament in 1984. The EC increasingly lacked support, especially among younger people – a generation that had been born two decades after the end of the Second World War. European citizens might sooner or later have started questioning the EC’s existence and maybe even the whole process of European integration. In order to avoid a fragmented Europe, initiatives were made to try and create a “European identity” (Aradau, Huysmans & Squire, 2010).

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## 2. Literature Review

At the European Council meeting at Fontainebleau in 1984, the European Council realised it was time for European leaders to rediscover their common interests concerning the further development of the European Community and to set up new goals for the future, taking their citizens with them by involving them in the process of European integration. The European Council stated that it was of the utmost importance to respond to Europeans' expectations and adopt measures that would be able to strengthen the identity and image of both in the eyes of their citizens and that of the rest of the world. (Krupnik, Krzaklewska, 2013).

A Committee ad hoc was thus created by Heads of State or Government along with the European Committee members. The Committee was composed of composed of Member States' representatives and chaired by the Italian MEP Pietro Adonnino with the task of examining certain suggestions dealing with the above-mentioned issue and ultimate aim of creating "A People's Europe" (Adonnino 1985:5; CEC 1988b: 1).

Within a year the Adonnino report was submitted to the Milan European Council which contained several ideas for political and symbolic measures aimed at bringing the European Community closer to its citizens. Many of the ideas proposed referred to the field of higher education. Generally, as written in the introduction, Pietro Adonnino and his team considered their proposals as "meaningful to the citizen in various aspects of his daily life and [...] a substantial contribution to the realization of an even closer union among the peoples of Europe" (Tobias, T., 2005 [Adonnino Report, chapter 1.2.]). Getting more specific, and being aware of the fact that the further development of Europe required the involvement of young people, the Committee came up with several proposals dealing with issues related to European youth. These included the field of university cooperation and mobility in higher education, which was "obviously of paramount importance" (Adonnino Report, 5.6., 1985). In the chapter dealing with higher education (Adonnino Report, 5.6., 1985), the Adonnino Committee stated that between the Member States "an embryonic form" (Cairns, Feyen, Krzaklewska, 2014), of university cooperation already existed "which should be developed and built upon, including the Community Joint Study Programme Scheme" (Bertoncini, Fernandes, 2017). The Committee therefore proposed to the European Council "to establish cross-frontier cooperation aimed at enabling students, and in particular those who are concerned with a knowledge of languages and European studies, to pursue part of their studies in a Member State other than their own". Moreover, it requested the relevant authorities to "implement [...] a comprehensive European inter-university programme of exchanges and studies aimed at giving this opportunity to a significant section of the Community's student population" and to "examine the possibility of introducing a European system of academic credits transferable throughout the

Community (European Academic Credit Transfer System)” (Cairns, Feyen, Krzaklewska, 2014). As future steps towards the promotion of student mobility, the Committee also suggested the introduction of a European Award, “based on achievement in higher-education establishments in different Member States” (Jongsma, 2016), as well as for the Europe wide recognition of certificates and diplomas obtained in the EC.

These recommendations that were made were exactly what built the framework for the development of the Erasmus programme. According to the Adonnino Reports as a whole, proposals on the ‘People’s Europe’ would lead to many EC actions and indeed achieve its goal to foster closer proximity of the European Communities and their citizens. If one studies the 1987 Council decision, one will recognise the Adonnino’s recommendations in the four actions of the programme. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the Committee considered exchanges of young people between the Member States as highly valuable regarding the promotion of the identity of Europe among young Europeans (Adonnino Report, 5.8., 1985), thus it can be assumed that, from the very beginning, Erasmus was in fact meant to become a tool for this purpose as well.

Although the Adonnino report can be considered to be the official initiative of the Erasmus Programme, there was already a strong political will among the supranational bodies of the European Community to improve the rather poor intra-European student mobility in the middle of the 1980s. Before the European Council meeting at Fontainebleau in 1984, the Commission had already begun internal preparations for such student exchange programmes (Schink 1993:128). In fact, in 1984 the European Parliament had called for closer cooperation between the Member States in the educational sector, including the demand for better funding of student mobility (Feyen 2008: 40). The European Court of Justice (ECJ) performed a real pioneer job by providing a proper legal base for the EC’s education policy with its ruling in the so-called “Gravier” case from February 1985 (ECJ 1985; cf. De Witte 1993: 199; Corbett 2005: 123f.; Popin 2006: 101ff.; Feyen 2008: 21f.). With this judgement, a “genuine EC policy on higher education” (De Witte 1993: 199) became possible for the first time, enabling the European Commission to apply the EEC Treaty to intra-European student exchange as well. The final aspect was at a political level, when Jacques Delors became president of the European Commission in 1985. Up until then Delors played an important role in the enhancement of the Community’s activities in the field of higher education. The then Commissioner in charge of education policy, Peter Sutherland, and his staff soon realised that these political and juridical developments offered opportunities for supranational activities in the field of education (Corbett 2005: 118f.). Delors, Sutherland and their Commission stated that it takes the “right people in the right place at the right time” to take the initiative to transform an idea into reality. They felt that they were at the right stage to be able to “push” the Erasmus programme ahead. The time was ripe for something like ERASMUS. In June 1985, only one week after the Adonnino Report had been presented, the European Council in Milan

requested the Commission to draft a proposal for an inter-university exchange programme that would enable a large number of European students to spend some time in another Member State (Feyen 2008: 25ff.). The Erasmus programme was launched in the same period as the Comett and Lingua programmes for technology and language education, respectively. It was, Beukel (2001: 130) who commented, “adopted ... following long and, at times, bitter negotiations during the 17 months after the Commission had submitted its first proposal” (Cairns, Feyen, Krzaklewska, 2014), and was supposed to “increase substantially the number of students spending an integrated part of their study period at an institution of higher education in another member country” (ibid.), and thus to “improve the quality of education and training, ensuring the development of a pool of trained personnel with direct experience of intra-Community cooperation and thereby contribute to a strengthening of a ‘People’s Europe’”(ibid.).

President Delors commented that these initiatives strive to make “education and lifelong learning” (Bertoncini, Fernandes, 2017), the pillar of a Europe in which qualified and mobile citizens can be fulfilled. This allows them the possibility to conduct a mobility experience which also helps them to grow through the personal, professional and cultural exchanges it provokes, thereby promoting a real feeling of belonging to the European community. This has therefore made the Erasmus “the European Union’s ‘flagship’ educational programme” (Vossensteyn et al., 2010) as it reached 3 million participants in the year 2013, just considering higher education students. Based on this legacy, Erasmus+ will offer opportunities for 4 million people to study, train, teach and volunteer abroad by 2020 (European Commission, 2013b).

Although the Erasmus programme was a consequence of the above Adonnino report and Jaques Delors’s implementation, the name was chosen as respect for a Dutch humanist and philosopher named Erasmus Desiderius (1465-1536) better known as the Erasmus of Rotterdam (Cairns, Feyen, Krzaklewska, 2014). Erasmus Desiderius lived in several parts of Europe on the quest for knowledge, experience and insights which he could achieve only through an international perspective and contact with other countries. Erasmus is at the same time, an acronym that states EuRoPean community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students. With reference to the Erasmus Programme, the European Commission aims to contribute to enriching students’ academic knowledge and professional competencies, support personal development, forge a European identity and help increase the mobility of people during their lifetime.

### **3. Analysis Result**

The initial numbers involved in the Erasmus + programme were 3244 students from 11 different countries (European Commission Publication, 2014). The 2017 statistics reveal that this number has grown to 797000 students, 84700 organisations

and 33 participating countries, in which 28 are the European Union member States and the other 5, Norway, Iceland, Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Liechtenstein.

The European Union firmly believes that there is a connection between the Erasmus programme and young people's perceptions of the European Union integration process. The Erasmus program touches different categories, although it is most well-known for its exchange programme allowing students to spend one or two semesters abroad at one of the universities participating in the EU Programme. The Programme also offers other mobility activities such as university staff exchange, student mobility placements on teaching opportunities for business staff at higher education activities. In fact, the studies by (Szmolka 1999, Ros 2003) show that people with a higher education level tend to be more positive towards European identity (Ciaglia, Fuest, Heinemann, Sept. 2018, vol.2). It can thus be assumed that university students participating in mobility programmes may feel even more European after their stay abroad and might be willing to promote European integration.

Although the Erasmus +'s main objective is increasing the knowledge of European citizens, the programme simultaneously allows for the students that travel abroad for their semesters in the partner universities, to become familiar with different cultures, ways of life, new languages, sports activities, foods, religions etc. This in a way contributes to these generations of students accepting that the way of life that they grew up with and are familiar with in their home towns, cities or countries, is not the only and most of all correct way. This cultural awareness is what contributes to one of the other fundamental objectives of the Erasmus + programme which is social inclusion and acceptance.

There have also been studies that prove that this Erasmus programme experience is a powerful tool to encourage interculturality and pluricultural competence (King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003; Mitchel, 2012; Molhi et al, 2014; Papatsiba, 2006; Van Mal, 2014). The Erasmus experience enhances intercultural dialogue by making student more open-minded and mobile citizens, who set up wider social networks abroad (Krazaklewska & Krupnik, 2008) and improve their language skills (Fombona et al 2013; King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003; Meara, 1994). As noted before it is in fact acknowledged that Erasmus sojourners have a stronger identification with Europe than sedentary or non-mobile students (Ambrosi, 2013). Spanish Erasmus students portray strong European identity than other nationalities (Mitchel, 2012). Statistics prove that over 80% of more than 70 000 subjects feel that their European attitude has strengthened by going abroad.

#### **4. Research**

In 2007 a political magazine declared that the Erasmus Programme "has contributed greatly to a sense of citizenship and European identity in its participants" (Cairns,

Feyen, Krzaklewska, Foreign Policy 2007). The International Herald Tribune also reported a comment from Prof. Stefan Wolff, specialist in political science in which he stated that the “Erasmus generation” has a greater sense of European identity and, over the years, will take over the reins of power in Europe, which will translate into more pro-European policies. (International Herald Tribune, 2007).

A practical example of this European identity can be seen in the example of the Italian National fencing athlete, Elisa di Francisca, who on August 11<sup>th</sup> 2016 at the Olympic Games in Brazil, when she opted to wave the flag of the European Union instead of her national red, white and green Italian flag, whilst on the Olympic medal podium. The reason for this gesture, Elise explained, was one of European identity and for all European to be “united”. The President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz called it a “powerful message of unity” (Shulz, 2016). This of course can’t be accredited to the Erasmus + program in the sense of exchange student in another European universities but it does follow a very similar principal. Being an international athlete, Elise has had the opportunity through racing competitions and training camps to spend time in other European and non-European countries and therefore having had a similar experience to the exchange students abroad, the possibility to learn about different culture, languages, ways of life etc, thus opening her ideas up to the sense of a strong European identity, so strong that it took prevalence on the Olympic podium with her choice of flag. Elise is not the only national to have experienced this national identification with Europe, but the majority of Italian mobility students when interviewed also felt this European identification, in fact in the interviews with Austrian, Belgian and Italian students, the stayers reported being more attached to their country than the movers, and a certain degree of Euroscepticism could be found in the discourses of the non-mobile students in these countries. Conversely, mobile students were more supportive of the European project, and more critical towards their national government – especially in Italy. Mobile students in these countries often referred to their stay abroad and the fact that their idea of Europe was broadened throughout their experience.

This project strategy to increase the European identity has evolved to the point where former and current Erasmus students identify themselves as “I am/was Erasmus” (Cairns, Feyen, Krzaklewska, 2014). This emphasises their ties with the EU Programme and can undoubtedly be considered to be one of the greatest successes and most efficient programme strategy of the European Union. A new term is in fact being coined, known as the ‘Erasmus Generation’ which tends to describe these students as not only physically mobile, but as a result of this mobility the interaction and relationships created with other people that do not live in the same country to be virtually mobile and therefore use technology to maintain these international relationships which are born during the Erasmus experience and consequently cultivated once the physical mobility experience has been concluded. As (Krzaklewska, Skórska) states, this experience of movement and cultural encounters can equip students with a particular set of intercultural skills. Adaptation

to new cultural settings, but even to different communication styles, is a very deep learning process which can result in certain intercultural competences.

In 2007 a decision was taken to put Erasmus under the umbrella of the new lifelong learning programme which can be considered both technical and symbolic, especially with regards to what has been stated about the European Identity. It is important to remember that although a European identity is being created the first and foremost priority of the programme was not that of creating a European identity but the acquirement of knowledge and skills that would become important assets in the envisaged “knowledge-based” (Constanze, 2010), economy and society and bring an economic advantage which is supposed to bring about a highly skilled and internationally experienced workforce. When the programme was put under the “umbrella”, it basically remained the same except that the major focus of the programme changed from the outset. The main emphasis of Erasmus was the cultural exchange which fostered mutual understanding by enhancing soft skills and knowledge about the host country where new language skills also offered the opportunity to gain additional knowledge in the host country which was not available in the home country, whereas under the new ERASMUS these priorities have been swapped. As part of the lifelong learning programme, the goal is now explicitly to acquire knowledge in the form of courses taken in the host country, language skills, soft skills and factual knowledge about the host country. The difference is subtle but significant.

The Programme not only helps increase a forged identity that, through the mobility process, indeed contributes to European at an economic and professional level. This programme aims at promoting the European labour market to boost the competitiveness of Europe in the world. To achieve this, the European Commission has structured the Erasmus + Programme in such a way that these objectives would be implemented in Partner countries through five different Actions (European Commission, 2018), which are better known as Key Actions (1,2,3), Jean Monnet Activities and Sport. The three Key Actions present concrete Actions that are designed to achieve the Programme objectives in the field of education and training.

The objectives of these key Actions regarding education and training are to improve the level of key competences and skills, foster quality improvements, promote and raise awareness of a lifelong European learning area. It also aims to enhance the international dimension of education and training and promote and better the knowledge of linguistic diversity and intercultural awareness in the EU. The Key Action 1 refers to the mobility of individuals and supports the Mobility of learners and staff. This allows students, trainees, young people, professors, teachers, trainers, youth workers, staff of education institutions and civil society organisations the possibility to undertake a learning and/or professional experience in another country. This key action also focuses on another programme called Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees. This is a high-level integrated international study programme which has been delivered by consortia of higher education institutions.

These institutions award full degree scholarships to the best master students worldwide. Included in this action is the Erasmus + Master Loans which supports higher education students from programme countries that have the possibility to apply for a loan backed up by the Programme to go abroad for a full Master Degree. In order to participate, students should address themselves to national banks or student loan agencies participating in the scheme. The Key Action 2 instead refers to the cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices which supports Transnational Strategic Partnerships aimed at developing initiatives addressing one or more fields of education training, youth and promote innovation. It is also aimed at the exchange of knowledge and experience between different kinds of organisations involved in education, training and youth or in other relevant fields. The mobility activities that fulfil the criteria of the project's objectives are subsequently supported. This action also supports Knowledge Alliances between institutions of higher education and companies which seek to foster entrepreneurship, creativity, innovation, employability, knowledge exchange and/or multidisciplinary teaching and learning. They also support Sector Skills Alliances which support the design and delivery of joint vocational training syllabuses, programmes and teaching and training methodologies, along with capacity-building projects that are aimed at supporting cooperation with Partner Countries in the fields of higher education and youth. IT support platforms, such as the School Education Gateway, eTwinning, the European Platform for Adult Learning (EPALE) and the European Youth Portal all offer databases of opportunities, virtual collaboration spaces and online services for teachers, trainers, practitioners, young people, volunteers and youth workers in the field of school and adult education across Europe and worldwide. The Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange initiative has, since 2018, offered intercultural learning experiences between young people in Europe and the Southern Mediterranean countries.

This Key Action Support for Policy Reform supports the Knowledge in the fields of education, training and youth for evidence-based (European Commission, 2018) policy making and monitoring such as country specific and thematic analysis as well as initiatives to stimulate innovative policy development among various stakeholders. It provides support to European policy tools by facilitating transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications, foster quality assurance, the transfer of credits, support validation of non-formal and informal learning, skills management and guidance. Cross-European exchanges are also supported with regards to networks, learning and working mobility of citizens. In order to strengthen the impact and added value of policies in the fields of education, training and youth., this action provides cooperation with international organisations such as the OECD and the Council of Europe which are highly recognised for their expertise and analytical capacity. Finally, it supports Stakeholder dialogue, policy and Programme promotion involving public authorities, providers and stakeholders in the fields of training, education, and youth for raising awareness about the European policy agendas such as Europe 2020, Education and Training 2020, the European



Youth Strategy and the external dimension of European education, training and youth policies, essential to develop the capacity of stakeholders that actively support the implementation of policies. The Key Action 3 section provides information about Erasmus+ activities which support training policies and education. It involves policy analysis and peer learning, initiatives for tools, networks, cooperation with international organisations, policy innovation and exchanges of information between policy makers and stakeholder organisations. These activities are implemented every year through specific calls for proposals which are managed either directly by the European Commission or by its Executive Agency. Many mobility projects are connected with the field of education and training. These actions include projects for learners and staff in higher education and vocational education and training (VET), Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees, mobility projects for staff in school education and adult education, knowledge alliances-European universities, Erasmus+ Master Loans, strategic partnerships, sector skills alliances and capacity building in the field of higher education.

These actions are not the only three that the European Union has envisaged to ensure its success, but its Programme also includes what is known as the Jean Monnet Activities. These activities support many modules, university chairs, networks, projects, centres of excellence and associations taking place in 30 European Programme Countries and 69 countries inside and outside Europe. These provide operating grants to designated institutions with the objective of European interest and organisation of studies and conferences to provide (Cairns, Feyen, Krzaklewska, 2014) policy makers with new insights and concrete suggestions. The Activities support Chairs, Academic Modules, Centres of Excellence in order to promote the teaching of European integration studies within an official curriculum of a higher education institution. This also helps to monitor, conduct, and supervise research on EU content for other educational levels such as teacher training and compulsory education so to enhance the teaching on European integration matters for future professionals in the labour market fields where demand is increasing whilst simultaneously mentoring the young generation of teachers and researchers in European integration areas. The activities also support Policy debate with the academic world through networks enhancing the cooperation between different universities throughout Europe and around the world and creating a high knowledge exchange platform with public actors. The third and final activity is supporting associations to organise statutory activities of associations dealing with EU issues and studies publicising these EU facts among a wider public enhancing active European citizenship.

## **5. Discussion**

As a former athlete, I appreciate the EU's initiatives towards creating a space within the Erasmus + Programme dedicated to the field of sport. These actions are support through Collaborative Partnerships, Not-for-profit European sport events,

strengthening of the evidence base for policy making through studies and dialogue with relevant European stakeholders. The collaborative partnerships are aimed at promoting the integrity of Sport (European Commission, 2018), (anti-doping, avoid match fixing, protection of minors); supporting innovative approaches to implement EU principles on EU strategies in the area of social inclusion and equal opportunities, good governance, encouraging participation in sport and physical activity and supporting the implementation of the EU guidelines on dual careers of athletes. These partnerships also include Small Collaborative Partnerships. These are aimed at promoting European traditional sports and games, encouraging social inclusion and equal opportunities in sport, “supporting the mobility of volunteers, coaches, managers and staff of non-profit sport organisations along with protecting athletes, especially the youngest, from health and safety hazards by improving training and competition conditions. The not-for-profit European sport events grant individual organisations in charge of the preparation, organisation and follow-up to a given event” (Erasmus Guide 2019, <https://ec.europa.eu/>). The activities involved are the setting up and running of opening and closing ceremonies, the organisation of training activities for athletes and volunteers in the run-up to the event, competitions, side activities to the sporting event (meeting, multiplier events, conferences and seminars), as well as the implementation of legacy activities, such as evaluations or follow-up activities. For policy making purposes, evidence must be strengthened through studies; data gathering, surveys; networks; conferences and seminars which spread good practices. These best practices are initiated by the Programme Countries and sport organisations in order to reinforce networks at EU level so that national members of those networks benefit from synergies and exchanges with their partners. The annual EU Sport Forum is generally the location for the Dialogue with relevant European stakeholders and gives support to Sport Presidency events organised by the EU Member States holding the Presidency of the EU. Extra ad hoc meetings and seminars that are considered relevant to ensure optimal dialogue with the sport stakeholders may also be organised as appropriate. These Programmes created between 1987 and 2014 were created with a view of promoting mobility for apprentices (Leonardo), adult learners (Grundtvig), exchanges between schools (Comenius), and to promote more cross-cutting actions or initiatives connected to European integration (Transversal and Jean Monnet programmes) with the objectives of training citizens and workers in the market without internal frontiers which was being consolidated across the Union (Bertoncini, Fernandes, 2017). Thirty years on, article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) stated that: “The Union shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity” (TFEU art165, 2012).

## 6. Conclusion

The Erasmus+ programme currently represents 8% of the entire budget dedicated to the European Union programmes, which for the period from 2014 to 2020 was equal to 265 million Euro (European Parliament, Directorate General, 2014). In these first seven years the budget increased from 22,3 million Euro in 2014 to 56,5 million Euro in 2019. The number of projects also increased dramatically from 45 projects approved in 2014 to 180 projects in 2019. The budget expected for the next seven years 2021-2028 is 550 million Euro.

It needs to be stressed again that it is impossible to make a clear-cut distinction between these two aspects and that, even more importantly, it is not the case that either of them is or has ever been completely absent. Obviously, the expectation to gain knowledge that might prove an asset in future jobs might always have been as important as a reason for mobile students to take the decision to go abroad as has the desire to ‘get to know another culture’; and both aspects were equally fundamental considerations for the launch of the ERASMUS programme. In fact, this effect might even have been stronger in the early stages of the ERASMUS programme. Teichler and Janson (2007: 489) found that, amongst the formerly mobile students who went abroad in the academic year 1988/1989, the number of those who considered their year abroad to have been beneficial to them while seeking their first job (71%) was considerably higher than the respective percentage of former ERASMUS students in 1994/1995 (66%) and in 2000/2001 (54%). Nevertheless, the shift of the major emphasis and goal of the programme reflects the global movement towards the “modern” way of governance by building a knowledge-based “learning” society, and also shows how the former federalist desire to build a European demo tends to be abandoned.

Education policy has been, and still remains, a difficult matter to address on a European level. It took more than twenty years after the Treaty of Rome for education policy to first become an issue in the Community (Cairns, Feyen, Krzaklewska, 2014), and another 16 years before the best-known feature of the Community’s education policy – the ERASMUS programme – took off in 1987. Subsequently, starting from about the time of the Maastricht Treaty, the Community’s approach to education policy underwent a fundamental change. The culture-based concept of “Europeanising” education and thus helping the emergence of a European identity and demos was largely replaced by a more pragmatic approach which focused on the economic competitiveness of the EU, and which introduced the concepts of a “knowledge-based society” and of “lifelong learning” into EU policy.

ERASMUS was subsequently integrated into this new approach to education policy and became a part of the Commission’s “Lifelong Learning” programme in 2007. However, its purpose and its use still remain largely based upon cultural knowledge and soft skills rather than on innovation and “hard”, academic knowledge. Former

ERASMUS students are most likely to hold jobs with an international perspective, but do not tend to enjoy a significant advantage over their non-mobile colleagues in jobs without an international component. Instead, <sup>1</sup>the intercultural and personal skills acquired during a period spent abroad with ERASMUS, such as improved language skills, cultural knowledge and the improved understanding for other countries and cultures, are the major assets which a former ERASMUS student gains for his or her future career. Arguably, however, these are factors that belong to the “old”, cultural approach rather than to the “modern”, knowledge focused one. ERASMUS, thus, seems to remain located between the two worlds: retaining its cultural features while now intended to serve the knowledge-based society<sup>2</sup>. It remains to be seen how and to what extent the programme will be affected by this development, and how well it will fit into its new context. The following statistics highlight the progress that the European Union has made through its’ Erasmus + projects from 2014 to 2018, and what is interesting to notice through the years, is the increase in countries (even non-Member States) to which the European Union has extended its Programmes. By looking at the statistics one can also note that the country that has performed most since 2014 is Italy as it constitutes 16% of the total amount of the grant dedicated to Erasmus + Sport.

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