



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
 Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture
 Directorate-General Migration and Home Affairs

Brussels,
 EAC/C3/Ares (2018)

NOTE TO THE HEADS OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIONS AND MISSIONS TO THE EU OF "ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME COUNTRIES"

Subject: Facilitating the access of beneficiaries of Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps coming from Partner Countries to the territory of Programme Countries¹

Your Excellency,

Since the opening of new activities of the Erasmus+ programme to Partner Countries² around the world in 2014, more than 82,000 participants from these Partner Countries have accessed the territory of the 33 European Programme Countries to do part of their studies, teach, train or participate in a youth project. In spite of this success, **issues related to the issuance of visas and residence permits remain one of the main difficulties** encountered by universities, academic staff, students, youth organisations, volunteers, young people and youth workers coming from Partner Countries.

In the field of higher education, this year the popular **Erasmus+ higher education internship scheme** has been opened to Partner Countries around the world. From now on, Erasmus+ will fund work placements for university students from Partner to Programme Countries and vice versa³. A work placement can last between 2 and 12 months and may take place in any public or private organisation, such as a company, public body, NGO, research institute or university. During their placement, trainees will receive an Erasmus+ grant, which may be topped up by the host organisation.

In the field of youth, the legal framework of the **European Solidarity Corps**, as agreed by the European Parliament and the Council in June 2018, foresees the participation of third countries in the volunteering activities to the same extent as in the former European Voluntary Service⁴.

¹ EU28, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

² Partner Countries are all countries which are not Programme Countries.

³ All trainees must be registered at a participating higher education institution; unlike the intra-European scheme, the programme is not open to recent graduates.

⁴ The Regulation laying down the legal framework of the European Solidarity Corps stipulates that references to the European Voluntary Service in the Union legislation shall be read as including volunteering activities under the European Solidarity Corps.

We would be grateful if you could transmit this information to your national authorities in charge of issuing visas and residence permits to students, staff of higher education institutions, volunteers, young people and youth workers from third countries. Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps should reach as many young people as possible in an inclusive way. This will only happen if national authorities are aware of and supportive to its aims, **allowing selected students, staff, volunteers and young people to reach their hosting institutions in due time and stay for the period agreed in their mobility agreement**, while of course ensuring that the appropriate checks are carried out.

We take this opportunity to remind those Member States implementing the EU acquis on legal migration that the deadline for transposing the Directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes or educational projects and au pairing (Directive (EU) 2016/801) expired on 23 May 2018. The Directive provides that, where all the general and relevant specific conditions are fulfilled, the third-country national is entitled to a residence permit or visa. Furthermore, the Directive states that, where a Member State issues residence permits only on its territory and all the conditions laid down in the Directive are fulfilled, the Member State concerned shall issue the third-country national with the requisite visa. We encourage Member States which have not yet transposed the Directive to do so as quickly as possible so as to ensure that its objective of improving and simplifying the conditions for entry and residence of those wishing to come to the Union for the purposes of the Directive can be achieved.

Further information about the practical implementation of Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps can be provided by your Erasmus+ National Agency responsible for the mobility projects in higher education and non-formal education in the field of youth. The European Commission, and especially Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, remains at your disposal to answer more general questions on European Solidarity Corps and Erasmus+.

Yours sincerely,

Themis CHRISTOPHIDOU

Director-General for Education,
Youth, Sport and Culture

Paraskevi MICHOU

Director-General for Migration and Home
Affairs

[E-signed by delegation by

Simon MORDUE]