



## **CALL FOR ACCREDITATION**

**Erasmus Charter for Higher Education**

**EACEA/03/2020**

**2021-2027**

**Selection year 2021**

**GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS**

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# 1. WHAT IS THE ERASMUS CHARTER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION?<sup>1</sup>

The Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) sets out the fundamental principles and the minimum requirements with which higher education institutions (HEIs) must comply when applying for and implementing activities under the next Programme (2021-2027). Holding an ECHE is a pre-requisite for all Higher Education Institutions located in an eligible country and willing to participate in the learning mobility of individuals and/or cooperation for innovation and good practices in the next Programme.

By signing the ECHE, the HEI confirms that its participation in Erasmus+ is part of its strategy for modernisation and internationalisation. This strategy acknowledges the key contribution of student and staff mobility and of participation in transnational cooperation projects, to the quality of its higher education programmes and student experience. The Charter aims to reinforce the quality of student and staff mobility, as well as of cooperation projects.

The Charter is valid for the entire duration of the next Programme, subject to satisfactory performance of and compliance with the Charter principles.

Please note that the award of the Erasmus Charter does not automatically imply any direct funding under the next Programme.

All applicants have to fill in the application form providing accurate and detailed information, as it will be used not only for selection purposes but also for monitoring how the HEI implements the ECHE principles.

## ***Monitoring of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) principles***

The ECHE holders will be subject to regular monitoring on the activities performed under the next Programme. Compliance with the ECHE principles will be monitored by the Erasmus+ National Agencies who will have the possibility to propose a withdrawal of the Charter to the European Commission, in case of unsatisfactory fulfilment of the

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### <sup>1</sup> Reserve Clause

The 2021-2027 EU Programme for education, training, youth and sport proposed by the European Commission on 30 May 2018<sup>1</sup> (hereafter the Programme) has not yet been adopted by the European legislators. However, the EACEA has decided to publish this Call for accreditation to facilitate the application of potential beneficiaries of Union grants as soon as the legal basis is adopted by the European legislators.

This Call for accreditation does not legally bind the Commission. In case of a substantial modification of the legal basis by the European legislators, the present call might be cancelled and other calls for accreditation with different content and appropriate deadlines for reply may be launched.

More generally, any action flowing from this call for accreditation is subject to the following conditions, whose implementation is beyond the Commission's control:

- the adoption by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union of the final text of the legal basis establishing the Programme;
- the adoption of the 2021 and subsequent annual work programmes and the general implementation guidelines, criteria and procedures of selection, after referral of the committee of the Programme and
- the adoption of the 2021 and subsequent budgets of the European Union by the budgetary authority.

principles. The Erasmus Policy Statement will be a fundamental document for this monitoring and HEIs are advised to carefully reflect on this document when completing the application for the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education.

When non-compliance is identified, an action plan will be agreed between the HEI and the National Agency to solve any problems. If the action plan is not satisfactorily implemented by the HEI within the agreed timeline, this will be reported to the European Commission and may lead to the charter's withdrawal.

More information about the monitoring of the ECHE principles can be found in the ECHE monitoring guide for Erasmus+ National Agencies.

## **2. Objective of this Call**

This Call aims at accrediting those HEIs located in eligible countries which have operational capacity to take part in the next Programme's activities, such as learning mobility of individuals and/or cooperation for innovation and good practices.

## **3. Selection Procedure**

Exceptionally, two separate application procedures will be put in place for this Call.

Prior to the publication of this Call, the European Commission and the Erasmus+ National Agencies will have analysed the activity and past performance of ECHE holders under the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ Programme. The following elements were taken into account:

- whether the higher education institution had participated in an Erasmus+ activities from call 2017 onwards;
- whether the higher education institution respected the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education principles;
- whether the higher education institution obtained their ECHE under the 2020 call.

According to this information, two separate application procedures will be in place:

- Former ECHE holders that were active and compliant with the Charter principles from call 2017 of the Erasmus+ Programme onwards, as well as HEIs that obtained their ECHE under the 2020 ECHE Call are invited to apply via the following link: Topic 1
- Former ECHE holders that were inactive or non-compliant with the Charter principles from call 2017 of the Erasmus+ Programme onwards, as well as new applicants, are invited to apply via the following link: Topic 2

The Erasmus+ National Agencies have informed all current ECHE Holders (2014-2020) which application procedure they should go through. In case the applicant is not sure of which procedure to go through, it is invited to consult its National Agency according to the contact information found on the following webpage: [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/contact/national-agencies\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/contact/national-agencies_en).

An Evaluation Committee, composed of officials from EACEA and the European Commission, will evaluate the applications against admissibility and eligibility criteria to award the Charter, based on feedback received from independent external experts.

These applications will be put at the disposal of the Erasmus+ National Agencies to perform the monitoring of the Charter principles. Failure to comply with these principles may lead to the withdrawal of the Erasmus Charter and the exclusion of the HEI from participating in the Programme.

## 4. Indicative dates for the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education Selection 2021

Stages	Indicative dates
Publication of the Call	18/02/2020
Deadline for submitting eForm applications	21/04/2020 – 17:00 (Brussels time - CET)
Evaluation period	April-September 2020
Award Decision	Beginning of October 2020
Written result notification to applicants & sending of the Charter to successful applicants	15 October 2020

## 5. Admissibility Requirements

Applications must comply with the following:

- ✓ Applications must be submitted before the deadline (see time-table section 4).
- ✓ Applications (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted electronically via the Portal Electronic Submission System. Paper submissions are no longer possible.
- ✓ Applications must be readable, accessible and printable and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting documents (see section 11).
- ✓ Applications should be drafted in one of the EU official languages.
- ✓ Current ECHE Holders (2014-2021) must apply to the right topic, as indicated by their Erasmus+ National Agency through individual communication and using the appropriate attachment (part B).

Failure to comply with those requirements will lead to the rejection of the application.

## 6. Eligibility Criteria

Applications which comply with the following criteria will be subject of an in-depth evaluation.

Eligible applicants:

1. HEIs established in one of the following countries are eligible to apply for an Erasmus Charter for Higher Education:
  - a) the Member States of the European Union;
  - b) third countries associated to the Programme, as set out in the legal basis.<sup>2</sup>
2. Applicants must be recognised as higher education institution by the national authorities of the country of the applicant.

'Higher education institution' means any institution which, in accordance with national law or practice, offers recognised degrees or other recognised tertiary level qualifications, whatever such establishment may be called as well as any other comparable institution at tertiary level which is considered by the national authorities as eligible to participate in the Programme, in their respective territories.

After the closure of the Call, National Authorities shall confirm which Higher Education Institutions are eligible to participate in learning mobility of individuals and/or cooperation for innovation and good practices under Erasmus+, in their respective territories.

For further information on the eligibility of institutions, please contact your National Agency for Erasmus+.

## 7. Exclusion Criteria

### 7.1. Exclusion

The authorising officer shall exclude an applicant from participating in this call for accreditation where:

- (a) the applicant is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, it is in an arrangement with creditors, its business activities are suspended, or it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under EU or national laws or regulations;
- (b) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the applicant is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the applicable law;
- (c) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the applicant is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the applicant

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<sup>2</sup> Pending adoption of the legal basis. In the Erasmus+ 2014-2020 Programme, this list includes: Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein, Turkey, North Macedonia and Serbia.

- belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:
- (i) fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of eligibility or selection criteria or in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision;
  - (ii) entering into agreement with other applicants with the aim of distorting competition;
  - (iii) violating intellectual property rights;
  - (iv) attempting to influence the decision-making process of the Agency during the award procedure;
  - (v) attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the award procedure;
- (d) it has been established by a final judgment that the applicant is guilty of any of the following:
- (i) fraud, within the meaning of Article 3 of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 July 1995;
  - (ii) corruption, as defined in Article 4(2) of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 or Article 3 of the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of Member States of the European Union, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 May 1997, or conduct referred to in Article 2(1) of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA, or corruption as defined in the applicable law;
  - (iii) conduct related to a criminal organisation, as referred to in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA;
  - (iv) money laundering or terrorist financing within the meaning of Article 1(3), (4) and (5) of Directive (EU) 2015/849 of the European Parliament and of the Council;
  - (v) terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, as defined in Articles 1 and 3 of Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA, respectively, or inciting, aiding, abetting or attempting to commit such offences, as referred to in Article 4 of that Decision;
  - (vi) child labour or other offences concerning trafficking in human beings as referred to in Article 2 of Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council;
- (e) the applicant has shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision financed by the Union's budget, which has led to its early termination or to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties, or which has been discovered following checks, audits or investigations by an authorising officer, OLAF or the Court of Auditors;
- (f) it has been established by a final judgment or final administrative decision that the applicant has committed an irregularity within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95;
- (g) It has been established by a final judgement or final administrative decision that the applicant has created an entity in a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or any other legal obligations of mandatory application in the

jurisdiction of its registered office, central administration or principal place of business;

- (h) it has been established by a final judgement or final administrative decision that an entity has been created with the intent referred to in point (g);
- (i) for the situations referred to in points (c) to (h) above, the applicant is subject to:
  - (i) facts established in the context of audits or investigations carried out by European Public Prosecutor's Office after its establishment, the Court of Auditors, the European Anti-Fraud Office or the internal auditor, or any other check, audit or control performed under the responsibility of an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body;
  - (ii) non-final judgments or non-final administrative decisions which may include disciplinary measures taken by the competent supervisory body responsible for the verification of the application of standards of professional ethics;
  - (iii) facts referred to in decisions of persons or entities being entrusted with EU budget implementation tasks;
  - (iv) information transmitted by Member States implementing Union funds;
  - (v) decisions of the Commission relating to the infringement of Union competition law or of a national competent authority relating to the infringement of Union or national competition law; or
  - (vi) decisions of exclusion by an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body.

## **7.2. Remedial measures**

If an applicant declares one of the situations of exclusion listed above (see section 7.1), it must indicate the measures it has taken to remedy the exclusion situation, thus demonstrating its reliability. This may include e.g. technical, organisational and personnel measures to correct the conduct and prevent further occurrence, compensation of damage or payment of fines or of any taxes or social security contributions. The relevant documentary evidence which illustrates the remedial measures taken must be provided in annex to the declaration of honour. This does not apply for situations referred in point (d) of section 7.1.

## **7.3. Rejection from the call for accreditation**

The authorising officer shall not award a grant to an applicant who:

- (a) is in an exclusion situation established in accordance with section 7.1; or
- (b) has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or has failed to supply that information; or
- (c) was previously involved in the preparation of documents used in the award procedure where this entails a breach of the principle of equal treatment, including distortion of competition, that cannot be remedied otherwise.

Administrative sanctions (exclusion)<sup>3</sup> may be imposed on applicants, if any of the declarations or information provided as a condition for participating in this procedure prove to be false.

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<sup>3</sup> *Article 138 FR*



## 8. Criteria for awarding the Charter

The final decision on awarding the Charter will be taken by the European Commission on the basis of the recommendations of the ECHE Evaluation Committee, composed of a panel of European Commission and Executive Agency officials.

Formally eligible applications will be evaluated by the Evaluation Committee against the following criteria:

<p><b>Relevance of the Erasmus Policy Statement:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The Erasmus Policy Statement is clear, consistent and relevant;</li> <li>✓ The Erasmus Policy Statement reflects on the relevance of the Erasmus+ Programme within the applicant's institutional internationalisation and modernisation strategy</li> <li>✓ The Erasmus Policy Statement reflects on the planned implementation of the Erasmus+ actions and how these will contribute to achieving the objectives of the applicant's institutional strategy.</li> <li>✓ The targets and indicators are described when explaining the envisaged impact of the participation in the Erasmus+ Programme.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Adherence to the ECHE principles and practical implementation in the Higher Education Institution</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The application reflects on adequate procedures for full automatic recognition of all credits gained for learning outcomes achieved during a mobility period abroad/ a blended mobility. The application should reflect on the necessary measures to achieve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a correct use of learning agreements, including online learning agreements;</li> <li>○ the inclusion of appropriate information on learning outcomes, volume of workload (credits) and grades in the transcripts of records;</li> <li>○ achieving full automatic recognition of credits and the recognition of grades (if appropriate) after outgoing mobility;</li> <li>○ a clear and easy path for students to appeal in case full automatic recognition is not achieved.</li> <li>○ The provision of full information on the grading system in the inter-institutional agreements;</li> <li>○ the provision of grade distribution tables, together with transcripts of records (whenever grades are used)</li> <li>○ The transparency of the course catalogue (following the rules of the ECTS Users' Guide, explaining how the information will be provided in a timely manner and providing a link to the course-catalogue.</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ The application reflects on adequate procedures for staff recognition when it comes to participation in</li> </ul>

	<p>mobility and in European and international cooperation projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The application reflects how the Higher Education Institution will adhere to the ECHE principles (cf. the ECHE guidelines) and details the procedures in place to participate in the Programme activities.</li> <li>✓ The applicant institution demonstrates a commitment to further develop the implementation of the new ECHE principles, notably: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring full and equitable access to participants from all backgrounds, paying particular attention to those with fewer opportunities;</li> <li>• Having in place a well-explained methodology for allocating ECTS credits. If this is not the case, it must be explained why the applicant is not yet using ECTS credits and how they plan to implement it in the future;</li> <li>• Putting measures in place to implement the European Student Card Initiative;</li> <li>• Promoting the programme’s Erasmus+ mobile App to students;</li> <li>• Implementing and promoting environmentally-friendly practices in the context of the Erasmus+ Programme;</li> <li>• Promoting civic engagement and active citizenship amongst outgoing and incoming students before, after and during mobility.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Quality of the management structure</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The applicant institution shows qualitative levels of general management, including internal management structure, human resources and mobility/project organisation from preparation through to recognition, dissemination and evaluation; The institution has the capacity to implement the activities in place and ensure their sustainability</li> <li>✓ The applicant institution demonstrates its commitment to quality management, with emphasis on human resources and sustainable structures of cooperation and communication;</li> </ul>

## 9. Publicity

Beneficiaries should continuously promote the Programme activities and their results.

Beneficiaries are required to display the Charter and their Erasmus Policy Statement prominently on their website.

## 10. Data Protection

The reply to any call for proposals/Invitation to submit a proposal involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC<sup>4</sup>.

Unless indicated otherwise, the questions and any personal data requested that are required to evaluate the application in accordance with the call for proposal/Invitation to submit a proposal will be processed solely for that purpose by EACEA.

Personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System by the Commission, should the beneficiary be in one of the situations mentioned in Articles 136 and 141 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046<sup>5</sup>. For more information, see the Privacy Statement on: [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/privacy\\_statement-eacea\\_grants.pdf](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/privacy_statement-eacea_grants.pdf)

## 11. Procedure for the Submission of Proposals

### 11.1 Publication

The call for accreditation is being published in the Official Journal of the European Union and on the Funding and Tenders Portal of the European Commission.

### 11.2 Registration in the Funding and Tenders Portal

#### **For Charter holders in Erasmus+ (2014-2021)**

Consult the following list to use the Participant Identification Code (PIC) which is attached to your current Charter (2014-2021): [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/erasmus-charter\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/erasmus-charter_en)

This PIC will need to be introduced in the application form.

Please refer to the communication sent by your Erasmus+ National Agency to select the topic:

- Topic 1: light procedure
- Topic 2: full procedure

#### **For new applicants (which do not have a Charter in the current Programme) (Topic 2: full procedure)**

Before submitting an electronic application, new applicants will have to register their organisation in the Participant register hosted in the Funding and tender opportunities

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<sup>4</sup> OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39–98, date of entry into force 11/12/2018

<sup>5</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R1046>

portal and receive a Participant Identification Code (PIC, 9-digit number), as the unique identifier of their organisation in the Participant Register. The PIC will be requested in the application form.

The Funding and Tenders Portal is the tool through which all legal and financial information related to organisations will be managed. Information on how to register can be found in the portal under the following address: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/participant-register>

The tool also allows applicants to upload all relevant documents related to their organisation when they will receive funding at central level. These documents have to be uploaded once and will not be requested again for subsequent applications by the same organisation.

### **11.3 Submitting the Application**

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the admissibility requirements set out under Section 5 and by the deadline set out under Section 4: 21 April 2020 before 17:00 CET (Brussels time)

Applicants should note that no applications submitted after 17.00 CET on the deadline will be accepted. You are strongly encouraged not to wait until the final day to submit your application.

Applicants will have to make sure that they have officially submitted their electronic application form and that they have received an e-mail acknowledging receipt of their submission, including a project reference number.

### **11.4 Rules applicable**

Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 PE/13/2018/REV/1 (OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1–222).

### **11.5 Contacts**

In case of questions, please contact:

Ms Alba Prieto González  
Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency  
Unit A2 – Erasmus+: Higher education – Knowledge Alliances, Bologna support, Jean Monnet  
Avenue du Bourget 1  
B-1049 Brussels  
Email: EACEA-ECHE@ec.europa.eu

## **ANNEX. GUIDELINES TO APPLICANTS FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS**

The section offers guidance on the Part B of the application package.

Please note that these instructions should be read together with the specific User Guide that gives guidance on the technical aspects of completing and submitting the eForm.

You will need to input the following information:

## **1. Part A: Applicant organisation, Legal representative and Coordinator**

Information on the organisation is automatically provided through the PIC code. The applicant is requested to provide names and contact details of the legal representative and of the Erasmus+ coordinator.

## **2. Part B: Description of the adherence to the Erasmus Charter principles**

### **2.1. Endorsing the Erasmus Charter principles**

The organisation has to read through this section to understand the Charter principles. The name of the legal representative needs to be introduced at the end of the text.

### **2.2 Erasmus Policy statement**

In order to help evaluate the application, applicants have to declare which activities will be undertaken by the institution and which are part of the current Erasmus Policy Statement. To this end, please fill in the first part of the section by clicking on the relevant boxes.

The Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS) sets out the institution's overall modernisation and internationalisation strategy. In particular, the applicant organisation is expected to:

Reflect on the objectives of your participation to the Programme. Please explain how you expect the participation to contribute towards modernising your institution, as well as on the goal of building a European Education Area and explain the policy objectives you intend to pursue

- ✓ Describe which types of cooperation projects for innovation and good practices it intends to implement, if any.

The following types of cooperation projects relevant for higher education can be funded:

- Erasmus+ Key Action 1 (KA1) - Learning mobility:
    - The mobility of higher education students and staff
  - Erasmus+ Key Action 2 (KA2) - Cooperation among organisations and institutions:
    - Partnerships for Cooperation and exchanges of practices
    - Partnerships for Excellence – European Universities
    - Partnerships for Excellence - Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees
    - Partnerships for Innovation
  - Erasmus+ Key Action 3 (KA3) - Support to policy development and cooperation.
- ✓ Reflect on targets, as well as qualitative and quantitative indicators in monitoring the impact such as:
    - mobility targets for student/staff mobility,
    - quality of the implementation,
    - support for participants on mobility,
    - increased involvement in cooperation projects (under Key Action 2),

- sustainability/long-term impact of projects etc.)

- ✓ Provide an indicative timeline for achieving the targets related to the Programme actions.
- ✓ The Erasmus Policy Statement has to be published on the HEI's website within one month of the ECHE being awarded by the European Commission. If the organisation decides to update the Erasmus Policy Statement during the Erasmus+ Programme lifecycle to reflect its evolved involvement in Erasmus+, it has to amend the Erasmus Policy Statement on its website and inform its National Agency for Erasmus+.

The "Erasmus Policy Statement" must be written in the language of the HEI and must be translated into English, French or German, if it is not written in one of these three languages.

### 2.3. Statistics

The purpose of these statistics is to put into context the actions and strategies the institution is asked to present in the application. The statistics will help to estimate whether what is planned in other sections is realistic considering the institution's profile and its operational capacity.

The information required concerns higher education only. The applicant should not include data on any other levels of education provided by the institution.

### 2.4. General organisation of Programme activities

The applicant must describe the administrative and academic structures in place for European and international mobility.

This section should also describe how tasks and responsibilities for international mobility are divided among staff, and explain workflows and communication channels.

On award of the ECHE, the institution commits to adhere to all ECHE principles regardless of the types of activities the institution will actually apply for under the next Programme. Since the ECHE is necessary in order to participate in the Programme activities, the applicant organisation must explain how they will fulfil all the principles, whether or not it plans on undertaking the specific activities listed

It is compulsory to answer all questions in this section. A clear justification has to be provided in case a question is not relevant to the applicant organisation. Information provided has to be in line with the Erasmus Policy Statement.

For detailed information on the principles and objectives of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education, see the Annotated Guidelines of the ECHE.