



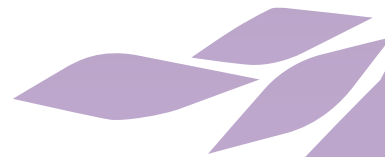
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## **Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee**

**Comataidh Turasachd, Eòrpach agus Dàimhean Taobh a-  
muigh**

# **Erasmus+**



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# Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee

To consider and report on the following (and any additional matter added under Rule 6.1.5A)—

- (a) proposals for European Union legislation;
- (b) the implementation of European Communities and European Union legislation;
- (c) any European Communities or European Union issue;
- (d) the development and implementation of the Scottish Administration's links with countries and territories outside Scotland, the European Union (and its institutions) and other international organisations; and
- (e) co-ordination of the international activities of the Scottish Administration.
- (f) culture and tourism matters falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Relations



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# Introduction

1. The Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee launched a short and focused inquiry into Scotland's participation in the Erasmus+ programme in November 2017. The purpose of the inquiry was to learn more about the opportunities currently available under Erasmus+ and to consider the implications of Scotland no longer participating in the programme after the UK withdraws from the European Union (EU).
2. We visited the Jack Kane Community Centre in Edinburgh to see first-hand how the programme is being used to fund projects in Scotland. The Committee also held an evidence session with a range of stakeholders, including the British Council Scotland, National Union of Students (NUS) Scotland, YouthLink Scotland, the University Council for Modern Languages Scotland and West Lothian College on 11 January 2018. We thank all those who engaged with us for their valuable contribution to our inquiry.

# Summary of conclusions and recommendations

3. The Committee welcomes Scotland's success in obtaining its highest-ever allocation of Erasmus+ funding in the past year. We also recognise the excellent work being done by Scottish institutions and organisations to use Erasmus+ funding to raise attainment. In particular, we were impressed by the experience of some disadvantaged young people who have been motivated by their Erasmus+ experience to "look beyond Friday and consider what they might be doing next year or in their future lives".
4. Erasmus+ is the most significant source of funding in Scotland for providing opportunities for cultural exchange and embedding an international outlook in our young people. The Committee recognises in this regard that Erasmus+ is playing an important role in developing the skills and experience of volunteers and professionals who support young people, such as youth workers, teachers and staff in further and higher education.
5. The Committee is concerned that professionals and organisations in some sectors are particularly reliant on Erasmus+ funding and opportunities and that they may be severely affected by any risk of the UK losing its ability to participate in the programme. The Committee notes in this regard that the Department for Exiting the European Union's (DExEU) sectoral report on higher education does not include Erasmus+ and that DExEU does not appear to have produced an analysis of the value of Erasmus+ to those sectors participating in the scheme, such as youth work, voluntary, or school, further and higher education.
6. The Committee considers it is imperative that such an analysis is carried out ahead of the UK leaving the EU given the significant role Erasmus+ plays in providing funding and opportunities in these sectors. The Committee therefore urges the Scottish Government to conduct an analysis of the benefit of Erasmus+ to relevant sectors to support the case for the UK's continued membership of the programme.
7. The Committee welcomes the statement in the Joint Report on Phase 1 of the negotiations that the UK will continue its participation in programmes financed by the Multiannual Financial Framework until the end of the budget cycle in 2020.
8. The Committee notes, however, that uncertainty about the UK's participation in the programme beyond 2020 is creating an additional strain on some stakeholders in the current programme period. The Committee therefore urges the UK Government to offer additional support to stakeholders to manage their programme participation in the current period.
9. The Committee also considers that it is important that the UK Government's support and assurances regarding the current programme period pertain to the full breadth of eligible participants. We urge the UK Government to give consideration to this in its future statements and negotiations regarding Erasmus+.
10. The Committee notes that the European Commission has begun the process of developing the Multiannual Financial Framework for the period commencing in 2021, which will have consequences for the future design and budget of the

Erasmus+ programme. In this regard, the Committee understands that the UK Government is likely to have reduced influence over the EU's funding priorities for the next budget cycle due to its intention to withdraw from the EU in 2019.

11. The Committee considers it is therefore imperative that the UK seeks to negotiate programme country status for the next programming period of the Erasmus+ programme. This position is necessary to ensure that the UK can participate in all aspects of the programme and maintain as much influence as possible over the programme's design and implementation. The Committee therefore calls on the UK Government to commit itself in the framework agreement it concludes with EU to its continued right of participation in Erasmus+ as a programme country beyond 2020.
12. The Committee also considers it is important that the next iteration of the programme continues to be relevant and responsive to Scotland's needs. The Committee therefore urges the Scottish Government to call for Scotland's continuing programme participation and to clearly set out its priorities for Erasmus+ in the next programme period.
13. If the UK Government is not willing or able to negotiate the UK's continued participation in Erasmus+ as a programme country, the Committee urges the Scottish Government to explore whether it would be possible to use existing institutional structures, such as Education Scotland and/or British Council Scotland, to develop the framework for a national authority and managing agency for Scotland that could support Scotland's continued participation as a programme country beyond 2020.



# Background

## Programme design

14. Erasmus+ is an EU programme that aims to promote and modernise education, training, youth work and sport across Europe. The programme brings together seven EU initiatives that operated during the 2007-2013 programme period, including the Lifelong Learning Programme (Erasmus, Leonardo, Comenius, Grundtvig), Youth in Action Programme, and five international cooperation programmes (Erasmus Mundus, Tempus, Alfa, Edulink and the programme for co-operation with industrialised countries).<sup>1</sup>
15. The current programme is designed to contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy for growth, jobs, social equity and inclusion, as well as the aims of the EU's strategic framework for education and training, known as ET2020.<sup>2</sup> The Erasmus+ programme has three key actions which underpin it—
  - Key Action 1: Learning Mobility of Individuals;
  - Key Action 2: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices; and
  - Key Action 3: Support for policy reform.
16. Projects supported under Key Action 1 are intended to promote transnational mobility activities targeting learners (students, trainees, apprentices, young people and volunteers) and staff (professors, teachers, trainers, youth workers and people working in organisations active in the education, training and youth fields).<sup>3</sup>
17. Projects supported under Key Action 2 are intended to enable organisations to work together in order to improve their provision for learners and sharing, developing and transferring innovative practices in education, training and youth provision between participating countries.
18. Projects supported under Key Action 3 are intended to promote the active participation of young people in democratic life and to foster dialogue around selected themes and priorities. This involves discussions between young people and youth policy-makers that intend to produce useful results for policy-making.
19. The programme also includes two additional actions: Jean Monnet activities (designed to promote excellence in teaching and research in the field of European Union studies worldwide); and sport.<sup>4</sup>

## Programme participation

20. The EU Member States enjoy full rights to participate in Erasmus+ funded activities as “programme countries”. Certain other non-member state countries, including members of the European Economic Area and countries acceding to the EU, are

able to negotiate “programme country” status in bilateral agreements with the EU.<sup>5</sup> Other countries are able to participate in the programme in a more limited way as “partner countries”.<sup>6</sup> The terms of partner countries’ participation are agreed with the EU in bilateral agreements. All participating countries contribute financially to the programme, either through their bilateral agreements or, in the case of Member States, through the Multiannual Financial Framework.

## **Programme oversight and management**

21. The European Commission has responsibility for the overall management of the programme. The EU’s budget for Erasmus+ is currently €14.7 billion and an additional €1.68 billion is available through the EU’s external action budget for funding actions with partner countries.<sup>7</sup>
22. National agencies manage the delivery of the programme within the Member States. The Department for Education manages the Erasmus+ programme in the UK and is supported jointly by the British Council and Ecorys as the national agency.<sup>8</sup> In all other participating countries that are not members of the EU, the programme is managed by national Erasmus+ offices.<sup>i 9</sup>
23. The Erasmus+ programme period will come to an end in 2020, at which point a new iteration of the programme will be launched for the duration of the next Multiannual Financial Framework.

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i The British Council takes responsibility for schools and higher education, whilst Ecorys is responsible for adult education and vocational education and training.

# **Scotland's current participation in Erasmus+**

## **Overview of Scotland's programme participation**

24. The British Council Scotland summarised Scotland's current level of programme participation in its written submission to the Committee—

” In 2017 Scotland received its highest-ever allocation of Erasmus+ funding. Nearly €21m was awarded compared to €16m in the previous year. The funds benefited 159 Scottish organisations in the higher and adult education, schools, youth, and vocational education and training sectors. From the overall €21m figure:

- €11.4m was received by Scotland's universities;
- €2.3m was received by Scotland's schools;
- €4.75m was received by Scottish organisations working in vocational education and training;
- €1.6m was received by Scottish organisations working in adult education;
- €756k was received by Scottish youth work organisations.

Taking these figures into account, at the halfway stage of the current Erasmus+ programme, Scotland has benefited from €60m of funding across 700 individual projects since 2014.<sup>10</sup>

25. Director of the British Council Scotland, Jackie Killeen, explained to the Committee that she is "delighted" with uptake over the past year.<sup>11</sup> When asked what may account for Scotland's success in securing the highest-ever allocation of Erasmus+ funding to date, Ms Killeen noted—

” It is the 30th anniversary of the Erasmus programme, so it has had a bigger profile overall and an increased budget, which has enabled us to get the message out more widely. There is also a continuing and growing appetite for international exchange in all its forms throughout the country.

Source: Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Jackie Killeen, contrib. 13<sup>12</sup>

## **Initiatives to raise attainment in Scotland**

26. It was clear to the Committee that many of the opportunities afforded by the Erasmus+ programme aim to broaden the opportunities that may not otherwise be available to young people and those who support them, such as teachers. Emily Beever, Senior Development Officer for YouthLink Scotland, explained in this regard that—

” The focus of the current seven-year programme has been diversity and inclusion. Research has shown that young people with fewer opportunities rate the programme more strongly than well-off young people do, so that focus has been successful.

Source: Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Emily Beaver, contrib. 101<sup>13</sup>

27. The British Council Scotland explained in its written submission that “55% of UK young people awarded funding for volunteering or youth exchanges and 30% of UK vocational learners awarded funding for training abroad in 2014-15 were from disadvantaged backgrounds or had additional needs.”<sup>10</sup> In this regard, Ms Killeen noted that Scottish institutions have developed many different approaches to designing Erasmus+ funded projects with a focus on inclusivity and diversity.<sup>14</sup>

28. Daniel Evans, Centre Head of Commercial and Marketing at West Lothian College told the Committee, for example, how his college designed an Erasmus+ funded project, which aimed to “...benefit marginalised learners but also to feed into the College’s plans to improve performance and increase life chances for those most at risk of disengagement.”<sup>15</sup> Mr Evans outlined what the project involved in his written submission to the Committee—

” This provided the opportunity for 72 learners and 18 members of staff to spend 2 weeks in an overseas environment over two years in 9 separate flows. The first week was spent in an overseas learning environment (College or Vocational High School) and the second week was spent in a workplace. The learners completed a work experience qualification while they were away and this was certified by SQA and then mapped to the European Qualification framework through a Europass Mobility Document.<sup>15</sup>

29. The project was successful in raising student attainment and retention, as Mr Evans explained—

” In 2015-16 there were 54 mobilities (individual learners travelling) in 7 separate groups to partners in Sweden, France (3 destinations), Germany, Italy and Spain. They were drawn from sectors across College including Hospitality, Travel and Tourism, Business, Engineering, Children’s Care, Health Care and Motor Vehicle Maintenance. Attendance rates improved in every single class over the application period (Sept – Nov 2015) by an average of 11% on the previous year. Of the 54 learners who travelled, all successfully completed their mobility and 47 went on to pass and complete their course. All learners studied at FE level (SCQF Level 6 and below). This equated to a 87% successful completion (pass) rate. The general successful completion rate across FE that year for West Lothian College was 64% so the impact was stark. 75% of learners came from SIMD50 postcodes and 50% from SIMD20.<sup>15</sup>

30. The Committee was particularly interested to learn about the project’s wider impact on the participants, as Mr Evans explained in his written submission—

” The feedback from the staff and learners on mobility has been phenomenally positive. It has been life changing and learners’ horizons have been lifted beyond their wildest dreams.<sup>15</sup>

31. Mr Evans also highlighted the significant impact that participating in a mobility programme can have on students when he gave evidence to the Committee—

” Our students are getting a completely different experience from the one that they had at school. Many of our learners did not have a great school experience and when they come to our college their horizons are lifted. They look beyond Friday and consider what they might be doing next year or in their future lives. When they come back from their mobility, it is as if they are different young people.

Source: Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Daniel Evans, contrib. 35<sup>16</sup>

## **Wider impact on curriculum delivery**

32. Emily Beever of YouthLink Scotland agreed that Erasmus+ enables organisations to develop projects that deliver a holistic approach to educational attainment and wider achievement for young people who may otherwise have fewer opportunities than their peers. Ms Beever noted, for example, that Erasmus+ funding is playing an important role in schools to support the delivery of Scottish Government programmes and initiatives—

” Erasmus+ contributes to achieving a lot of the frameworks that we have in Scotland, such as developing the young workforce or curriculum for excellence. Erasmus+ touches on all those areas and helps to achieve their aims.

Source: Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Emily Beever, contrib. 23<sup>17</sup>

33. Marion Spöring, Chair of the University Council for Modern Languages Scotland, explained to the Committee that Erasmus+ also plays an important role in supporting the Scottish Government’s 1+2 (mother tongue + 2 additional languages) approach to language learning.<sup>18</sup> Ms Spöring emphasised to the Committee why language policy is an important component of Scotland’s curriculum and international outlook—

” That belief that everybody speaks English is an obstacle in the mindset of society, which permeates many different areas, as people say that they do not need to learn other languages. Especially if you look at the employment market—not only for graduates but more widely—it is highly important that people have flexibility of mind or a global mindset.

Source: Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Marion Spöring, contrib. 76<sup>19</sup>

34. The British Council Scotland reiterated this point, noting that, according to a study it conducted, employers highly value language skills and mobility experience: “70% of UK employers believe intercultural skills to be ‘very important’ but only 16% of UK employers were happy that formal education alone met their intercultural skills needs.”<sup>10</sup>

35. Ms Spöring explained that ambitious work is underway in the Curriculum for Excellence to enable “...the teaching of other subjects through the medium of other

languages”.<sup>18</sup> Jackie Killeen, Director of British Council Scotland, also highlighted how Erasmus+ is supporting curriculum delivery when she noted—

” Many schools are involved in exchange or co-operation programmes through projects on, for example, climate change, innovation or science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects. Erasmus+ enables them to have partnerships, co-operation and some mobility with partner schools—in the main, those are schools from across Europe.

Source: Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Jackie Killeen, contrib. 26<sup>20</sup>

36. In supplementary written evidence to the Committee, the British Council Scotland indicated that approximately 500 Scottish schools have been involved in an Erasmus+ project in the period 2014-2017, which includes 365 projects where a Scottish school was the lead partner.<sup>21</sup>

## **Specialist language teacher training and professional development**

37. Jackie Killeen noted, however, that the ability of schools to deliver language learning is dependent on teacher training and development. In this regard, Ms Killeen explained to the Committee the role Erasmus+ plays in supporting the Scottish teaching profession—

” Through Erasmus+, a lot of language teachers improve their pedagogy, their professional development and their networks across Europe and, indeed, beyond. The Erasmus programme is a main source of funding for that work, which is possibly not well understood.

Source: Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Jackie Killeen, contrib. 26<sup>20</sup>

38. Ms Spöring agreed that Erasmus+ offers significant opportunities for teachers’ professional development—

” Erasmus+ has been important for teacher development—in particular, to support the one-plus-two language policy in schools. Erasmus+ programmes support training of teachers not only through first degree and initial teacher training, but through professional development of language teachers. There has been some growth in programmes to support and facilitate the one-plus-two policy.

As linguists, we see Erasmus+ as being essential not only for universities but for all education sectors.

Source: Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Marion Spöring, contrib. 17<sup>22</sup>

39. Ms Spöring explained that mobility opportunities need to be available at every stage of language specialists’ professional progression from school and higher education through to continuous professional development. She noted in this regard how

withdrawing from Erasmus+ could impact on specialist language students' ability to fulfil their professional training requirements—

” The year abroad is compulsory, so they have to do a four-year degree, which is fully funded. It is also a requirement for entrance into teacher training. If the opportunity was taken away, it would be very difficult for the students because they would not be able to fulfil the requirement for entrance into teacher training, and it would also have a major impact on their results.

Source: Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Marion Spöring, contrib. 82<sup>23</sup>

40. Ms Spöring also highlighted the extent to which Erasmus+ is supporting the mobility of specialist language students—

” According to Universities UK International, 33% of students who go abroad are language students and most of these go to EU countries via Erasmus exchanges, (France 23.8%, Spain 16.5%, Germany 9.3%, Italy 4.9% and Netherlands 2%).<sup>18</sup>

41. The need for language learning and teaching in Scotland, as well as the significant role that Erasmus+ plays in facilitating mobility for learners and teachers, led Ms Spöring to conclude that urgent action to support the sector is required.<sup>18</sup>

## **Third sector organisations' professional development and project delivery**

42. The Committee heard from YouthLink Scotland that Erasmus+ supports professional networking and development in other sectors, such as youth work. In this regard, Erasmus+ includes three components that specifically support the youth work sector—

- Key Action 1: Funding to run youth worker mobility activities, such as training, study, visits and job shadowing;
- Key Action 2: Strategic Partnership for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practice and Capacity Building; and
- SALTO (Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities): a network of resource centres providing training events and toolkits for youth workers.<sup>24</sup>

43. The youth work sector successfully secured €756k in Erasmus+ funding to support its work in Scotland in 2017. YouthLink Scotland explained in its written submission that this funding goes a long way to support the sector, as many youth work organisations are led by small teams of staff with limited resources.<sup>24</sup> The professionals who deliver Erasmus+ funded projects benefit in a number of ways, as YouthLink Scotland explained—

” For youth work organisations, participation in Erasmus+ means increased project management competences; increased knowledge transfer and implementation of good practices within the organisation; increased participation of young people in the organisation; more international projects; and an increased commitment to include young people with fewer opportunities. It also supports the achievement of a key pillar of the National Youth Work Strategy 2014-19 to build workforce capacity.<sup>24</sup>

44. YouthLink Scotland expressed concerns that “any loss of investment due to leaving the EU would present extreme challenges across a [youth work] sector that is already struggling to sustain the minimum level of services and project management.”<sup>25</sup>

## **Sectoral reports and analyses**

45. On 27 December 2017, the House of Commons Select Committee on Exiting the European Union published material from 39 documents provided by the Department for Exiting the European Union (DExEU).<sup>26</sup> The sectoral report on higher education does not cover Erasmus+. The other 38 reports produced by DExEU do not include sectors relevant to Erasmus+, such as the school education, further education, voluntary or youth work sectors.<sup>27</sup>

46. The Scottish Government’s latest position paper on membership of the EU, *Scotland’s Place in Europe*, notes in relation to Erasmus+—

” “The Erasmus+ programme has played a significant role in broadening the educational experience, developing cultural awareness and increasing employment prospects for Scottish students. Since 2014 more than 15,000 people have been involved in nearly 500 Erasmus+ projects across Scotland. The programme is evolving to include vocational education and training, adult education, schools education and youth work. This significantly increases the number of people who can benefit. This flow of people to and from Scotland supports the development of the skills, experience and global outlook necessary for Scotland’s society and economy to thrive.”<sup>28</sup>

47. The Committee is not aware of any work being done by the Scottish Government to investigate the impact of EU withdrawal on Scotland’s participation in Erasmus+, particularly at a sectoral level.

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

48. The Committee welcomes Scotland’s success in obtaining its highest-ever allocation of Erasmus+ funding in the past year. We also recognise the excellent work being done by Scottish institutions and organisations to use Erasmus+ funding to raise attainment. In particular, we were impressed by the experience of some disadvantaged young people who have been motivated by their Erasmus+



experience to “look beyond Friday and consider what they might be doing next year or in their future lives”.

49. Erasmus+ is the most significant source of funding in Scotland for providing opportunities for cultural exchange and embedding an international outlook in our young people. The Committee recognises in this regard that Erasmus+ is playing an important role in developing the skills and experience of volunteers and professionals who support young people, such as youth workers, teachers and staff in further and higher education.
50. The Committee is concerned that professionals and organisations in some sectors are particularly reliant on Erasmus+ funding and opportunities and that they may be severely affected by any risk of the UK losing its ability to participate in the programme. The Committee notes in this regard that DExEU’s sectoral report on higher education does not include Erasmus+ and that DExEU does not appear to have produced an analysis of the value of Erasmus+ to those sectors participating in the scheme, such as youth work; voluntary; or school, further and higher education.
51. The Committee considers it is imperative that such an analysis is carried out ahead of the UK leaving the EU given the significant role Erasmus+ plays in providing funding and opportunities in these sectors. The Committee therefore urges the Scottish Government to conduct an analysis of the benefit of Erasmus+ to relevant sectors to support the case for the UK’s continued membership of the programme.

## **Programme participation in 2019–2020**

52. A key issue for the Committee’s inquiry was whether the withdrawal process will have an impact on Scotland’s participation in Erasmus+ for the remainder of the programme period. Since the Committee took evidence in early January, the negotiations on transitional arrangements for the period from April 2017 to December 2020 have started. According to the British Council Scotland, the early positions held by the European Parliament and the UK towards the UK’s continued participation in Erasmus+ appear to favour its continued participation—

” The UK Government has indicated that the UK could continue to participate in certain EU programmes after exit, and the European Parliament has indicated that it would welcome the UK’s continued participation in programmes such as Erasmus+. The British Council and the UK National Agency, alongside dozens of sector partners across Europe, strongly recommend this option. <sup>10</sup>

53. Joseph Johnson MP, then Minister of State (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) (Universities and Science), noted on 25 October 2017—

” The Government has stated publicly that the United Kingdom (UK) is committed to continuing full participation in the Erasmus+ Programme up until we leave the European Union. We will underwrite successful bids for Erasmus+ that are submitted while the UK is still a member state, even if they are not approved until after we leave, and/or payments continue beyond the point of exit.

Bids for higher education study periods submitted before the exit date will include mobility in the 2018/19 and 2019/20 academic years. The underwrite will cover funding for those successful bids which are submitted before exit and we are encouraging participants to continue to apply for funding until we leave.  
29

54. When the Prime Minister updated the House of Commons on the outcome of the latest talks at the European Council in December 2017, she explained that: “Erasmus is exactly the sort of programme that we will be discussing in the second phase of these talks.” <sup>30</sup> As to what had already been discussed in relation to Erasmus+, the Prime Minister stated—

” On education, our world-leading universities remain a highly attractive destination for students from across the EU, while UK students also benefit from studying overseas. UK and EU universities will still want to work together after we leave the EU and, indeed, to co-operate with other universities around the world. We will discuss how to achieve that in the long term as part of the negotiations on our future deep and special partnership, but in the meantime I was pleased to confirm at the Council that UK students will continue to be able to participate in the Erasmus student exchange programme for at least another three years, until the end of this budget period. <sup>30</sup>

55. The Prime Minister focused her comments on the position of higher education students and did not comment on how withdrawal will impact on the full breadth of individuals that participate in the Erasmus+ programme, such as pupils, volunteers,

teachers, and youth workers. This issue is, however, addressed in the Joint Report, published on 8 December, which confirmed that: “following withdrawal from the Union, the UK will continue to participate in the Union programmes financed by the MFF [Multiannual Financial Framework] 2014-2020 until their closure...”<sup>31</sup> In this regard, the EU’s Supplementary Directives on phase 2 of the negotiations also state that the status quo should be maintained in relation to observing the full *acquis* and budgetary commitments until the end of the transition period (i.e. no later than 31 December 2020).<sup>32</sup>

56. In its written submission to the Committee, NUS Scotland emphasised the importance of recognising the full breadth of the Erasmus+ programme and the benefits it brings to a number of sectors—

” The Erasmus+ scheme is not just restricted to university education, it also provides funding support for colleges, volunteer groups, sports initiatives, apprenticeships, training and development throughout Europe, so it is important to note that the impact of withdrawal is not restricted to higher education alone.<sup>33</sup>

57. NUS Scotland also expressed concern about the scope of the Prime Minister’s commitment, stating: “While this short-term commitment is welcome, NUS will continue to call for long-term commitment to student mobility.” Luke Humberstone, NUS Scotland President, elaborated further on this point in his oral evidence to the Committee—

” We are concerned that there would be a lag in our ability to negotiate a new arrangement, which could mean that students would lose an opportunity to travel to other countries.

Source: Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Luke Humberstone, contrib. 55<sup>34</sup>

58. Other stakeholders noted their support for continued participation in the programme, and explained to the Committee that continuing uncertainty over the UK’s future participation in the Erasmus+ programme is leading to an increased workload. For example, Daniel Evans, Centre Head of Commercial and Marketing at West Lothian College, noted—

” We are in the middle of a two-year programme that is due to finish in 2019. Normally, we would not apply again in 2018. However, we are going to apply for another two-year programme in January because this year is the last in which the UK Government will guarantee funding for Erasmus+. We will back load all the mobilities to 2019-20 so that we can continue the programme until 2020. That means a lot of extra work that we had not planned for in a period when we are in the middle of organising mobilities. It is a strain on us.

Source: Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Daniel Evans, contrib. 14<sup>35</sup>

## Conclusions and recommendations

59. The Committee welcomes the statement in the Joint Report on Phase 1 of the negotiations that the UK will continue its participation in programmes financed by the Multiannual Financial Framework until the end of the budget cycle in 2020.
60. The Committee notes, however, that uncertainty about the UK's participation in the programme beyond 2020 is creating an additional strain on some stakeholders in the current programme period. The Committee therefore urges the UK Government to offer additional support to stakeholders to manage their programme participation in the current period.
61. The Committee also considers that it is important that the UK Government's support and assurances regarding the current programme period pertain to the full breadth of eligible participants. We urge the UK Government to give consideration to this in its future statements and negotiations regarding Erasmus+.

## **Future programme participation, design and negotiation**

62. The budget review process for the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework cycle will commence in 2018. To mark the start of the review process, the European Commission has launched the first of a series of planned public consultations on the priorities that should be reflected in the next Multiannual Financial Framework.  
<sup>36</sup> This review will consider the total funds that should be allocated to programmes, such as Erasmus+, as well as how those funds should be spent.

63. Emily Beever, Senior Development Officer for YouthLink Scotland, reflected on the commentary surrounding the current budget review process in her evidence to the Committee—

” Other EU countries wish to increase the Erasmus+ budget tenfold, which is a big movement. While we are scrabbling to try to keep the programme, they are trying to raise the budget tenfold. That other EU countries see such value and benefit from the programme and want to grow it even more highlights its significance.

Source: Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Emily Beever, contrib. 101<sup>13</sup>

64. Jackie Killeen, Director of British Council Scotland, explained that one of the key benefits of participating in Erasmus+ is the ability to use it with our nearest neighbours as a 'soft power' tool—

” We are talking broadly about the soft power of the UK's cultural relations. The UK as a whole and Scotland in particular are renowned for the strength of their education systems. The fact that people have had a positive experience when they have come here creates an on-going positive association with Scotland and the wider UK throughout their careers. We hope that, if we are able to continue to participate in programmes such as the Erasmus scheme, the intake of foreign students and young people at different stages in their lives will continue. Such mutuality of exchange is extremely important for our success as a country overall.

Source: Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Jackie Killeen, contrib. 69<sup>37</sup>

65. The British Council Scotland explained that a key output of this influence is an increased likelihood that participants will develop an “...interest in doing business with the UK, visiting the UK as a tourist and studying in the UK.”<sup>10</sup>

66. The Committee considered the extent to which the UK will be able to influence EU decisions about its spending priorities for Erasmus+ within the next Multiannual Financial Framework. Ms Killeen noted in this regard—

” The programme for 2021 onwards has begun to be developed. The national authority in the UK is the Department for Education. In our national agency role as the administrator of Erasmus+, the British Council has fed into the early stages of development on the kind of themes that the next programme might want to take on board. We will continue to do that as the programme is developed for as long as we are able to.

Source: Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Jackie Killeen, contrib. 39<sup>38</sup>

67. Ms Killeen further reflected on the extent to which the type of participation the UK is afforded in the future iteration of the programme will impact on its ability to influence the EU’s programme priorities. She explained—

” I suppose that the headline way of describing the difference is that it is about having the ability to shape and influence the programme—priorities, eligibility and what the programme will look like—as opposed to being on the fringes and participating from the outside in. That is the main consideration for us in thinking about the issue for the future.

Source: Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Jackie Killeen, contrib. 44<sup>39</sup>

68. The UK Government expressed its interest in participating in future funding programmes in the Joint Report on Phase 1 of the negotiations, which states—

” The UK states that it may wish to participate in some Union budgetary programmes of the new MFF post-2020 as a non-Member State.<sup>40</sup>

69. Whilst this statement does not specifically mention Erasmus+, the Prime Minister has made clear to the House of Commons that the UK’s participation in the programme will likely be raised during Phase 2 of the negotiations.<sup>41</sup>

## **Programme membership status**

70. If the UK were to participate in the Erasmus+ programme after 2020, it is possible it could participate as a programme country, partner country, or develop its own mobility programme, such as the Swiss-European Mobility Programme.<sup>42</sup> A number of factors may influence the type of participation that would be available to the UK, including the content of the regulations governing the next Erasmus+ programme (beginning in 2021) and the nature of the UK’s future relationship with the EU.

71. Programme country status is open to some non-member states, such as countries acceding to the EU and European Free Trade Association countries that are members of the European Economic Area.<sup>43</sup> There are currently five countries that enjoy programme country status in the Erasmus+ programme in this regard.<sup>ii</sup>

72. Acceding countries are eligible for programme country status even though they are not members of the Single Market, which enables the free movement of people.

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ii Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Turkey and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The Committee noted, however, that the two acceding countries that participate in Erasmus+ have made undertakings to promote the free movement of programme participants within the bilateral agreements that they have concluded with the EU. For example, the bilateral agreement with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia states in the terms and conditions—

” The European Union and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will make every effort, within the framework of existing provisions, to facilitate the free movement and residence of students, teachers, trainees, trainers, university administrators, young people and other eligible persons moving between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Member States of the European Union for the purpose of participating in activities covered by this Agreement. <sup>44</sup>

73. The bilateral agreements concluded with Turkey and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are evidence that membership of the Single Market is not a requirement for participation as a programme country in Erasmus+. Nonetheless, these examples illustrate that facilitating the free movement of programme participants is a key principle contained in the bilateral agreements for programme countries.

74. The situation of acceding countries may be contrasted with Switzerland’s participation in Erasmus+ as a partner country. <sup>45</sup> Although Switzerland is technically eligible to become a programme country under the EU regulation on Erasmus+, <sup>43</sup> it has not concluded a bilateral agreement with the EU to secure programme country status. This is because the European Commission suspended its negotiations with Switzerland regarding its participation in EU programmes, such as Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020, following Switzerland’s decision to introduce immigration restrictions in 2014. <sup>46</sup> The effect has been that Switzerland’s programme participation has been downgraded to that of a partner country, <sup>47</sup> which means it is not able to participate in the full suite of programme activities, particularly relating to sport. <sup>43</sup> Switzerland has responded to the situation by establishing and financing the Swiss-European Mobility Programme to allow incoming and outgoing European mobility with Higher Education Institutions that participate in the Erasmus+ programme. <sup>48</sup>

75. Emily Beever, Senior Development Officer for YouthLink Scotland, commented on the Swiss model of programme membership—

” When we reached out to Movetia, which is the Swiss national agency for exchange and mobility, it stated clearly that it did not wish to remain part of the interim programme in the longer term and that it wished to be part of the wider Erasmus+ programme. I believe that that is what the Swiss Government hopes to achieve in the next seven years of the Erasmus programme.

Source: Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Emily Beever, contrib. 67<sup>49</sup>

76. YouthLink Scotland commented further on the Swiss model in its written submission, outlining a number of its limitations—

” There are specific challenges experienced in this model, for example negotiating complex bilateral agreements in order to maintain European programmes and being excluded from the international network and further development of the EU Programme for Education.<sup>24</sup>

77. Jackie Killeen, Director of British Council Scotland, agreed that the Swiss model is not desirable and noted the impact it has had on Swiss participants—

” My understanding is that the interim arrangement will have acted as a disincentive for application, because it made things more cumbersome and increased the timescales for people who wanted to apply and the number of stages that they had to go through.

Source: Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Jackie Killeen, contrib. 65<sup>50</sup>

78. In this regard, all witnesses explained to the Committee that their preference would be for the UK to maintain its status as a programme country after withdrawal and beyond 2020. In particular, Marion Spöring noted that some sectors have made long-term strategic plans that are predicated on maintaining the status quo—

” As I said in my paper, universities in the UK and in Scotland have signed up to double the number of students participating in exchanges. Most of our students go through Erasmus+. If we do not have freedom of movement, it would be a disaster for academic and social reasons, for the internationalisation of the country, for the experience of our students and staff and for research.

Source: Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Marion Spöring, contrib. 57<sup>51</sup>

79. Daniel Evans of West Lothian College explained to the Committee that smaller institutions are dependent upon full access to the Erasmus+ programme to build the networks necessary to support their mobility programmes. For example, West Lothian College has used Erasmus+ to partner with 8 institutions across 10 sectors all of which are located in the EU.<sup>15</sup> In Mr Evans' view—

” If the UK becomes a partner country, organisations such as West Lothian College would be excluded from participation, because we would no longer be able to do bilateral exchanges with the partners with whom we have built up relationships. We would be excluded from that aspect of the programme.

Source: Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Daniel Evans, contrib. 45<sup>52</sup>

## Scotland's infrastructure to support continued participation

80. In light of the concerns raised by stakeholders, the Committee explored with witnesses the extent to which Scotland could continue participating in Erasmus+ if the UK Government is not able or willing to negotiate the UK's continued participation beyond 2020. The Committee noted, in this regard, that Scotland has



devolved powers over education and is already supported by the British Council Scotland to deliver the programme in Scotland.

81. Jackie Killeen, Director of British Council Scotland, noted in this regard—

” If Scotland were able to participate in the programme in any way, either as part of the UK or in another form, we would work to ensure that we serviced that and met those needs.

Source: Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Jackie Killeen, contrib. 52<sup>53</sup>

## Conclusions and recommendations

82. The Committee notes that the European Commission has begun the process of developing the Multiannual Financial Framework for the period commencing in 2021, which will have consequences for the future design and budget of the Erasmus+ programme. In this regard, the Committee understands that the UK Government is likely to have reduced influence over the EU's funding priorities for the next budget cycle due to its intention to withdraw from the EU in 2019.
83. The Committee considers it is therefore imperative that the UK seeks to negotiate programme country status for the next programming period of the Erasmus+ programme. This position is necessary to ensure that the UK can participate in all aspects of the programme and maintain as much influence as possible over the programme's design and implementation. The Committee therefore calls on the UK Government to commit itself in the framework agreement it concludes with EU to its continued right of participation in Erasmus+ as a programme country beyond 2020.
84. The Committee also considers it is important that the next iteration of the programme continues to be relevant and responsive to Scotland's needs. The Committee therefore urges the Scottish Government to call for Scotland's continuing programme participation and to clearly set out its priorities for Erasmus+ in the next programme period.
85. If the UK Government is not willing or able to negotiate the UK's continued participation in Erasmus+ as a programme country, the Committee urges the Scottish Government to explore whether it would be possible to use existing institutional structures, such as Education Scotland and/or the British Council Scotland, to develop the framework for a national authority and managing agency for Scotland that could support Scotland's continued participation as a programme country beyond 2020.

# Annexe A

## 86. Minutes of meetings

### [1st Meeting, Thursday 11 January 2018](#)

6. Erasmus+ (in private): The Committee considered the evidence heard earlier in the meeting and agreed to bring the evidence that it had gathered to date together and highlight the Committee's conclusions to the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, as well as other key stakeholders.

# Annexe B

## 87. Official reports

[Thursday, 11 January 2018](#) - Evidence from stakeholders.

## 88. Written evidence

A copy of the written evidence received can be found in the meeting papers for [Thursday, 11 January 2018](#).

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- [2] European Commission. (2018, January). What is Erasmus+?. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_en)
- [3] Erasmus+ UK Programme: Key Action 1&3 Outputs Funded: Placements (estimates). (2017, September). Retrieved from [www.erasmusplus.org.uk/file/4034/download](http://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/file/4034/download)
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- [12] Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Jackie Killeen, contrib. 13, <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11300&c=2054831>
- [13] Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Emily Beaver, contrib. 101, <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11300&c=2054919>
- [14] Killeen, J. (2018, January 11). Official Report, Col 6. Retrieved from <http://parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11300&mode=pdf>
- [15] West Lothian College. (2018, January 11). Written submission.
- [16] Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Daniel Evans, contrib. 35, <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11300&c=2054853>

- [17] Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Emily Beever, contrib. 23, <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11300&c=2054841>
- [18] Marion Spöring. (2018, January 11). Written submission.
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- [33] NUS Scotland. (2018, January 11). Written submission.
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- [35] Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee 11 January 2018, Daniel Evans, contrib. 14, <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11300&c=2054832>
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