



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
Regulatory Scrutiny Board

Brussels,  
Ares(2017)

## **Opinion**

**Title: Evaluation / Erasmus+**

**Overall opinion: POSITIVE**

### **(A) Context**

The 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme supports education, training, youth and sport and includes an international dimension. It places several earlier EU programmes in these areas under one umbrella. The total EU-28 budget for Erasmus+ is €16.45 bn. This is a 40% real increase over funding for earlier programmes 2007-2013. The funding supports learning mobility abroad, transnational cooperation projects and policy support. Separately, the Jean Monnet activities support teaching and research on European integration, while the Sport chapter supports transnational activities focused on grassroots level sport. Several activities in Erasmus+ extend to other countries in addition to EU Member States.

The Commission must conduct a mid-term evaluation of Erasmus+ by the end of 2017. This report looks at the current programme through to the end of 2016. It also includes an evaluation of long-term effects from the Erasmus+ predecessor programmes. The results of the evaluation are to help improve the current programme. They will also feed into an impact assessment for a successor programme.

### **(B) Main considerations**

**The Board acknowledges the significant efforts of data and evidence collection. It also notes the good methodology.**

**The Board gives a positive opinion, but considers that the report should be improved with respect to the following key aspects:**

- (1) The conclusions are not sufficiently balanced and precise. They do not accurately reflect some of the programme strengths and weaknesses that the evaluation and its supporting study identified. They also do not provide enough guidance for future decisions about the programme.**
- (2) The report does not clearly define the scope of the evaluation and the baseline/benchmarks against which it assesses the programme.**
- (3) The report does not adequately address simplification and efficiency improvement.**

### **(C) Further considerations and recommendations for improvement**

**(1) Conclusions.** The conclusions downplay some weaknesses of Erasmus+ and its predecessor programmes, such as limited effectiveness of projects and challenges in relation to simplification and efficiency as set out in the supporting study (see points 2 and

3). The conclusions also omit relevant qualifiers when stating that the programme has achieved and exceeded objectives. The conclusions should do more to draw operational lessons for current programme implementation, and identify key areas for attention in the forthcoming impact assessment that will support a successor programme.

**(2) Efficiency.** The analysis of the efficiency question needs further elaboration. The report needs to accurately reflect and either endorse or take issue with the support study's results on modest efficiency gains. It should explain the support study's findings with regard to e.g. relative stability of management costs of national agencies and a missed objective of a 40% cost reduction expected from the consolidation of different programmes. These and other findings should be interpreted and explained against the background of the earlier impact assessment (SEC (2011) 1402). The report could also helpfully identify potential efficiency enhancing measures for the future.

**(3) Simplification.** The report should do more to analyse successes and obstacles with regard to programme simplification as the predecessor programmes were merged into Erasmus+. This might include discussions about programme architecture, application forms, financing rules, etc. The report should transparently report current concerns in this area and identify possible suggestions to drive forward simplification.

**(4) Scope and baseline.** The report should provide a clear and non-technical description of the programme that is being evaluated and its functioning. It should explain how the first period of Erasmus+ (2014-2016) and the predecessor programmes (2007-2013) are part of this evaluation. Against this background, the different benchmarks for the assessment of the results of the programme should be highlighted where necessary.

**(5) Intervention logic.** The use of a rather abstract and general intervention logic needs to be further explained (possibly drawing on more detailed material from annex 5A). In particular the use of one overarching intervention logic covering both Erasmus+ programme and the predecessor programmes needs to be qualified or substantiated.

**(6) Monitoring arrangements.** The new monitoring arrangements under Erasmus+ could be better described. The evaluation might clarify whether additional changes are needed to ensure that necessary data will be available to successfully conduct the next evaluation of Erasmus+.

*Some more technical comments have been transmitted directly to the author DG.*

**(D) RSB scrutiny process**

**The lead DG is advised to ensure that the recommendations of the Board are taken into account in the report prior to launching the interservice consultation.**

Full title	Mid-term evaluation of Erasmus+ Programme
Reference number	2015/EAC/014
Date of RSB meeting	15 November 2017