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NOTE

From: Presidency

To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

Subject: Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028-2034, and repealing Regulations (EU) 2021/817 and (EU) 2021/888
- Progress report

I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 16 July 2025, the Commission adopted a proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028-2034, and repealing Regulations (EU) 2021/817 and (EU) 2021/888. The proposed Regulation aims to establish the successor to the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme, while merging two Union programmes: Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps.

The general objective of the new programme, as identified by the Commission, is to contribute to a resilient, competitive, and cohesive Europe by promoting high quality lifelong learning, enhancing skills and competences for life and for jobs for all, while fostering Union values, democratic and societal participation, solidarity, social inclusion and equal opportunities, in the EU and beyond. The new programme is announced as a key instrument for building the Union of Skills, developing the European Education Area and supporting the implementation of European strategic cooperation in the fields of education and training, including its underlying sectoral agendas.

2. Delegations welcomed the proposal and expressed their overall support for the new programme. They stressed the need for considerable time to assess the impact and consequences of the proposed Regulation and the new initiatives that it puts forward. Under the Danish Presidency, the Education Committee discussed the proposal on six occasions (17 July, 8 September, 17-18 September, 8-9 October, 20 October and 29 October 2025). The progress achieved is summarised in section II below.
3. In accordance with the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Articles 165(4), 166(4) and 214(5) thereof, the Council is required to act together with the European Parliament, in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure.
4. The European Parliament has appointed Bogdan Andrzej ZDROJEWSKI (EPP, PL) as rapporteur for the file.
5. The opinions of the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions are pending at this stage.

II. THE COUNCIL'S WORK UNDER THE DANISH PRESIDENCY

The Commission presented the proposal to the Education Committee on 17 July 2025 – the day of its official transmission to the Council. On that occasion, delegations had the opportunity to raise preliminary comments and questions.

The Impact Assessment accompanying the proposal was presented by the Commission to delegations on 8 September 2025. On the same occasion, delegations analysed and discussed it in depth, using the indicative checklist provided to them in preparation for the meeting. A summary of the evaluation and responses of the Member States to the Impact Assessment is set out in the Annex to this document.

Since the proposed Regulation is part of the package of proposals linked to the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), a number of provisions in the text corresponding to the elements that will form part of horizontal negotiations on the MFF have been bracketed and have therefore been excluded from the discussions in the Education Committee. These provisions concern recitals 36 and 44, the duration of the programme as referred to in Article 1 (*Subject matter*), Article 9 (*Budget*) and Article 16.3 (*Information, communication and dissemination*).

On 17-18 September and 8-9 October 2025, the Education Committee examined the proposed Regulation in its entirety (first the articles and then the recitals). The aim of the discussions was to ensure a better understanding of the proposal, which puts forward a redesigned architecture for the Erasmus +programme (two pillars focused on ‘Learning opportunities for all’ and ‘Capacity-building support’, moving away from the structure of the current Erasmus+ Regulation¹, which consists of chapters dedicated to each sector covered by the programme, namely education and training, youth and sport, with each chapter listing elements grouped under the three key actions). On these occasions, delegations raised their comments and questions, in particular as regards the scope of the new programme structure, comitology and new initiatives, such as Sport Collaborative Alliances, learning mobility for athletes and Erasmus+ scholarships in strategic educational fields. The questions were addressed by the Commission, but delegations requested additional information and written answers, which have not yet been provided. A list of the actions covered by the programme, with indications of the type of management provided for (direct or indirect), has also been requested.

A first compromise text² was drafted by the Presidency with a view to the Education Committee meeting on 20 October 2025, and a second compromise text³ was produced for the Education Committee meeting on 29 October 2025.

¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing Erasmus+: the Union Programme for education and training, youth and sport and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 (OJ L 189, p. 1).

² 12607/25.

³ 14252/25.

III. MAIN ISSUES DISCUSSED AT WORKING PARTY LEVEL

Programme objectives

Most Member States stressed the importance of having a general programme objective that promotes high-quality lifelong learning and individual, professional and personal development and further development of the European Education Area (EEA). Most delegations insisted on the need for the EEA to be the primary focus of the programme, rather than building a Union of Skills and contributing to a resilient, competitive and cohesive Europe. Building a Union of Skills was still considered important, but was seen as secondary to the development of the EEA. Prioritising the EEA is also in line with the legal basis of the proposal.

Committee procedure

Most delegations were critical of the absence of a programme committee in the proposal. Therefore, the Presidency proposed to reinstate the Committee procedure article from the current programme in the text (Article 22a in the latest Presidency compromise). One delegation requested a discussion on an expanded procedure for governance based on a proposal that placed the focus on the programme committee meeting in sectoral formations and the annual work programme being adopted through two separate implementing acts. The proposal was presented to the working party and discussed in depth. While some delegations welcomed a new procedure with two implementing acts, other delegations were in favour of preserving the status quo or of making better use of existing structures.

Visibility of all sectors covered by the programme

Delegations' request to enhance the prominence of the youth and sport sectors has been addressed by the decision to include two new articles in the text tabled by the Presidency (Article 4a on Youth and Article 4b on Sport). Discussions on how best to reflect the actions taken over from the European Solidarity Corps programme and its legacy are still ongoing.

Relationship between the Commission and the national authorities and national agencies

Delegations have had many questions about changes to the current Erasmus+ Regulation regarding the relationship between national authorities and national agencies on the one hand and the Commission on the other. New responsibilities suggested for national authorities in the proposal have also raised issues.

The proposal gives the Commission the option to request that the selection procedure for the head of a national agency be repeated in a situation where there are serious concerns about compliance with certain principles (appointments of persons responsible for the management of the national agency should be justified by the nature of the action, should follow fair and transparent rules and procedures and should not give rise to a conflict of interest). The proposal also provides for new tasks for national authorities (namely supporting the national agencies in exploiting the results of projects with high potential for impact and providing co-financing for the operations of the national agency that is at least equivalent to the contribution provided by the Commission to support the national agency's programme management tasks). Delegations were critical of these provisions and also requested an explicit indication in the text on the option for national authorities to designate more than one national agency. In response to all of these concerns, the Presidency proposed a text that includes a clearer description of roles and a return to the responsibilities provided for in the current Regulation.

Erasmus+ scholarships in strategic educational fields

Numerous delegations raised concerns and questions regarding this new action mentioned in the proposal: how the strategic educational fields will be determined, the static or dynamic nature of the action, its impact on the programme budget, its scope (joint degrees or national programmes) and implementation (direct or indirect management) and the educational levels concerned (European Qualifications Framework (EQF) levels 6, 7 and/or 8). One delegation also raised concerns about whether such an initiative would be in compliance with the Treaties. The Commission has explained that all of these elements have yet to be decided. While some delegations acknowledged the need for actions targeting skills shortages, most delegations continued to remain sceptical of the proposed new action following the explanations given by the Commission. They also found the framework provided by the Commission unclear and questioned the European added value and the potential impact on the overall budget when introducing full-programme scholarships.

Athletes

Several delegations are sceptical regarding the expansion of the scope of the programme with regard to this new category of beneficiaries. While some delegations are in favour of including athletes but stress the importance of defining and limiting the group of potential beneficiaries, a handful of delegations oppose this expansion of the programme's scope at this stage.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The Presidency managed to undertake an in-depth examination of the proposed Regulation and provide two compromise texts. The discussions contributed significantly to enhancing the shared understanding of the proposal and towards solving the main issues in the proposed Regulation.

While the Commission has provided a number of explanations and clarifications on the points raised by delegations, written information on the actions envisaged under each pillar is still very much awaited. Furthermore, many delegations have stated the need for additional information to ensure management predictability and have expressed serious concerns about the new concept of partial association for third countries.

The Presidency has made efforts to provide the level of detail requested by delegations in the proposed Regulation, while still respecting the horizontal approach to programmes as presented by the Commission. Each compromise text has been welcomed by delegations as a step on the way to shaping a Council mandate with a view to the upcoming interinstitutional negotiations. Further work and detailed technical discussions are nevertheless needed until that stage is reached.



Summary of the evaluation of the Impact Assessment (IA)

Delegations' opinions on the **policy context** were divided: some considered it was clearly explained, while others underlined that the IA **focused too much on budget** and too little on EU policy and values. None of the delegations voiced concerns about the **legal basis** being unclear and inappropriate.

Many delegations raised objections to the **problem definition**, arguing that the IA puts too much focus on skills and the labour market, and too little on holistic education goals. One delegation underlined that even though the assessment is precise and confirmed by public consultations, the problems are not prioritised in the text and elements of different relevance are treated equally.

Some delegations concurred that the **gap in evidence** is partly acknowledged in the IA. Many delegations underlined the need for more clarity on **synergies** with other EU programmes, such as the European Social Fund+, Horizon Europe, the European Competitiveness Fund, Digital Europe or the European Regional Development Fund.

A significant number of delegations expressed doubts about the clarity of **methodology**. A few delegations added that the IA appears to focus primarily on option 2 (objective-based consolidation) considered as the priority. Although providing a general overview, the cost analysis of this option lacks detailed quantitative data and risk assessment, reducing transparency and comparability. It would be advisable to include numerical values and a risk analysis. A delegation underlined that the existence of a methodologically robust information framework, capable of adapting flexibly to the measurement requirements of policies, constitutes a necessary condition for designing interventions on a solid foundation of information and empirical evidence.

Many delegations noticed that future **monitoring** and **evaluation** were not sufficiently addressed, and the text lacks a clear and comprehensive list of precise quantitative efficiency indicators associated with each objective. Standardised metrics and defined numerical targets are often missing to measure the actual long-term impact of policies.

Regarding **policy objectives**, all delegations agreed on the added value of EU action and expressed collective satisfaction with Erasmus+ being preserved as an autonomous programme. The announced **merge of Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps** elicited mixed reactions: some delegations welcomed the change, while others supported preserving the status quo or asked for a dedicated discussion on the subject. A vast majority of delegations expressed concerns about the objective of **simplification**, arguing that an excessive focus was put on the financial architecture without explaining the impact on the beneficiaries. **Budget shifts** mean that simplification at EU level generates huge costs at national level due to management, coordination and monitoring efforts. To sum up, a number of delegations noted that the IA does not present a holistic overview of costs, but presents them only from an EU-level perspective, without sufficiently taking the national level into consideration. Some delegations underlined that **continuity** in financial planning is missing and needs to be more visible.

An overwhelming majority of delegations raised the issue of **governance** as being not entirely clear and not specifically addressed. The issues of financing and co-financing were raised in particular. The majority of delegations pointed to the absence of a programme committee and asked for its reinstatement.

Other comments made by one or few delegations concern shortcomings in addressing the **environmental impacts**, a need for greater attention to **territorial effects** to allow for a better assessment of the distribution of benefits and local adaptation needs, and argue that the analysis is less robust on the quantitative side in the analyses of **impacts on competitiveness** and the **social impacts**.

Some delegations indicated that the Commission's reaction to the **opinion of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board (RSB)** was not robust enough, and asked the Commission to explain why it did not sufficiently process the RSB's comments. Other delegations agreed with the RSB that the excessive focus on the financial architecture did not take into account the content of the policies and the specificities of the different programmes.

Several delegations indicated that their position was only preliminary.
