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COVER NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
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 (COM(2025) 549 final – 2025/0222(COD)) - Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions

Delegations will find attached a copy of the above-mentioned opinion. Other language versions are available on the following website:

[Erasmus+ Programme for the period 2028-2034 | European Committee of the Regions](#)



**European Committee
of the Regions**

SEDEC-VIII/008

171st plenary session, 6-7 May 2026

DRAFT OPINION

Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028-2034

Rapporteur: **Roberto PELLA (IT/EPP)**

Mayor of Valdengo (BI) and Vice-President of the National Association of Italian Municipalities
(ANCI)

Deadline for tabling amendments:

15:00 (Brussels time) **on 20 April 2026**. Amendments must be submitted using the online tool for tabling amendments (available through the Members' Portal at <https://mempportal.cor.europa.eu/>).

Number of signatures required: 32

Reference document:

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
COM(2025) 549 final

Draft opinion of the European Committee of the Regions – Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028-2034

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS

Amendment 1

COM(2025) 549 final – Recital 10

<i>Text proposed by the European Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
The Programme should support the implementation of the Union of Skills and the overall strategic frameworks for Union policy cooperation in the fields of education and training, including the policy agendas for school education, higher education, vocational education and training and adult learning, including up-skilling and re-skilling, to allow citizens to develop competences and skills at all stages of their life to thrive in society.	The Programme should support the implementation of the Union of Skills and the overall strategic frameworks for Union policy cooperation in the fields of education and training, including the policy agendas for school education, higher education, vocational education and training and adult learning, including up-skilling and re-skilling, to allow citizens to develop competences and skills at all stages of their life to thrive in society. <i>The Programme should also work to reduce socio economic, geographic and other structural barriers that hinder participation, ensuring that learners with fewer opportunities can access and benefit from Erasmus+ on an equal footing with others.</i>

<i>Reason</i>
All young Europeans must be given the same opportunities in order to be able to develop the necessary skills and knowledge. The Erasmus programme is the best known EU initiative and so all young people must be in a position to enjoy its benefits. By emphasising the need to reduce socio economic, geographic and other structural barriers, the proposed addition helps ensure that the end beneficiaries – in particular those with fewer opportunities – have fair and effective access to these opportunities. This strengthens the Programme’s inclusive nature and supports equal access in practice..

Amendment 2

COM(2025) 549 final – Recital 30

<i>Text proposed by the European Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
The Programme should support the core education mission of the European Universities Alliances to enable systemic impact achieved more efficiently through long-term Union level action, notably to reinforce excellence, reduce fragmentation and increase the attractiveness and inclusiveness of EU higher education systems, develop innovative	The Programme should support the core education mission of the European Universities Alliances to enable systemic impact achieved more efficiently through long-term Union level action, notably to reinforce excellence, reduce fragmentation and increase the attractiveness, <i>accessibility</i> and inclusiveness of EU higher education systems,

<p>instruments to increase quality of learning and teaching, develop future oriented skills and competences (such as AI, cybersecurity, sustainability, STEM), including the sectors already identified in the Union of Skills, through relevant and future-proof curricula, pedagogical innovation, joint degrees, lifelong learning, micro-credentials, to nurture and attract talent and facilitate transnational cooperation in education, including with business and industry.</p>	<p>develop innovative instruments to increase quality of learning and teaching, develop future oriented skills and competences (such as AI, cybersecurity, sustainability, STEM), including the sectors already identified in the Union of Skills, through relevant and future-proof curricula, pedagogical innovation, joint degrees, lifelong learning, micro-credentials, to nurture and attract talent and facilitate transnational cooperation in education, including with business and industry.</p> <p><i>Ensuring equal and inclusive opportunities for higher education institutions across all Member States to participate in the European Universities Alliances is essential to enable them to benefit from European and international cooperation. Special attention should be given to the participation of institutions from less-represented regions and those serving students with fewer opportunities. To complement this, the Programme should also foster civic education, cultural and linguistic learning, the arts and academic freedom, helping students to develop the democratic, creative and social skills needed to engage fully in European society.</i></p>
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<p><i>Reason</i></p>
<p>All young Europeans must be given the same opportunities in order to be able to develop the necessary skills and knowledge. The Erasmus programme is the best known EU initiative and so all young people must be in a position to enjoy its benefits without restriction. Furthermore, every effort must be made to prevent and remedy situations in which higher education institutions are excluded from European cooperation in the field of education, particularly the Erasmus programme, as a result of political or budgetary decisions to which they were not party, by more clearly articulating the need to reduce the socio-economic, geographic and other structural barriers that prevent these cooperation initiatives being fully accessible.</p>

Amendment 3

COM(2025) 549 final – Article 5

<i>Text proposed by the European Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
(a) Erasmus+ scholarships in strategic educational fields, including in joint study programmes;	(a) Erasmus+ scholarships in strategic educational <i>and training</i> fields, including in joint study programmes <i>and vocational education and training</i> ;

Reason
<p>If it is to meet its goals on a large scale, Erasmus+ needs simpler procedures, flexible mobility formats that can adapt to real world training programmes and practical support for businesses. For instance, by supporting mobility in the field of vocational education and training, the programme will help local authorities to equip young people with practical skills which are a match for local labour market needs. This will help boost regional competitiveness and reduce brain drain from less developed areas, and ensure a rapid, effective response to the changing economic and social needs of local communities. Further integrating vocational education and training students into the Erasmus+ programme will also contribute to a real Union of Skills.</p>

Amendment 4

COM(2025) 549 final – Article 7

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The Programme shall support:</p> <p>(a) Experimentation, preparation and implementation of the Union’s policy agendas and tools covering skills, education and training, youth and sport;</p> <p>(b) Programme implementation including synergies with, and support to other Union policies and programmes, online platforms, tools for virtual cooperation and tools to facilitate learning mobility;</p> <p>(c) Dissemination and communication.</p>	<p>The Programme shall support:</p> <p>(a) Experimentation, preparation and implementation of the Union’s policy agendas and tools covering skills, education and training, youth and sport;</p> <p>(b) Programme implementation including synergies with, and support to other Union policies and programmes, online platforms, tools for virtual cooperation and tools to facilitate learning mobility;</p> <p>(c) Dissemination and communication, <i>with attention given to inclusive outreach and accessibility for all stakeholders, including those with fewer resources;</i></p> <p><i>(d) Implementation, at regional level, of pilot projects providing technical assistance and capacity building for municipalities and smaller organisation in rural, mountainous, remote and disadvantaged areas, including regional Erasmus+ contact points acting as accessible first-entry interfaces, training and seed funding for partnership building.</i></p>

Reason
<p>Clearer reference should be made to shaping regional policies, and regional and local authorities should be systematically involved in peer learning, policy dialogues and working groups at EU level. This could be done partly by means of a specific focus on communication efforts and on pilot projects providing support, technical assistance and capacity building for municipalities in inland areas.</p>

Regional authorities should be acknowledged as genuine laboratories for innovations in education and training policies and as strategic partners in implementing the Union of Skills through Erasmus+ at regional level.

Amendment 5

COM(2025) 549 final – Article 9

<i>Text proposed by the European Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
1. The indicative financial envelope for the implementation of the Programme for the period 2028-2034 is set at EUR 40 827 000 000 in current prices.	1. The indicative financial envelope for the implementation of the Programme for the period 2028-2034 is set at EUR 40 827 000 000 in current prices. <i>Given inflation and the Programme’s expanded objectives, Erasmus+ must be financed at a level that at least preserves its purchasing power over 2028-2034 and is commensurate with the Union’s ambitions for inclusion, skills, youth participation and social cohesion; any upward adjustment of the Programme’s financial envelope and of the corresponding MFF heading ceilings should be addressed in a coherent manner at the level of the overall post-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework, with a view to ensuring that Erasmus+ is protected at least in real terms and strengthened through adequate overall MFF resources and a reinforced system of own resources, and not through reallocations from cohesion policy or other social investment programmes.</i>

<i>Reason</i>
Demand for Erasmus+ actions in the field of sport has increased in the last few years and this has made it increasingly difficult to get funding. This applies particularly to less expert sports organisations, especially those for beginners, which are a key target group for the Programme but which are generally run by volunteers. 2 390 applications were submitted for the Erasmus+ 2025 calls – a record number and a 34% increase over the previous year. Despite this huge interest, only around 330 projects are expected to receive funding. This means that the success rate is only 14%. At the same time, sports organisations are increasingly involved in fundamental social and economic matters and contribute to European policy priorities in the area of health promotion and primary prevention. It is therefore crucial to earmark at least 5% of the 2028-2034 Erasmus+ budget to sport, instead of the 1.9% earmarked under the current programme. This will make it possible to meet the growing demand and maximise sport’s contribution to society.

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS (CoR)

1. reiterates its support for the Erasmus+ programme, considering that it is a fundamental instrument that enables the EU to offer vital support to beneficiaries. This support is all the more important at this time of heightened global socio-economic and geopolitical uncertainty and should be converted into an instrument for peacekeeping and conflict prevention; and stresses in this context the role of Erasmus+ in fostering dialogue, social inclusion and democratic resilience at local and regional level and in supporting learning mobility, skills development and people-to-people connections across the EU;
2. welcomes the European Commission's proposal to amend the programme's budget, but considers that this budget does not match the level of ambition of the programme for the objectives it set out. Given that the Programme is a success story for the EU and young people¹, and given the current levels of disaffection of and participation in civil and political life by younger Europeans², the Committee recommends that the resources allocated be increased significantly in order to meet the objectives of a more competitive, more resilient and more united European Union; underlines that any increase should prioritise widening access for learners with fewer opportunities and territories facing structural disadvantages, ensuring that Erasmus+ functions as a social elevator and not only as a mobility programme for the already advantaged;
3. regrets that the proposal does not provide sufficient clarity on how resources will be allocated across the Programme's priorities and actions, and emphasises that its future effectiveness will depend on transparent and coherent implementation choices that avoid duplication and overlap between objectives. which could undermine flexibility, inclusion and the Programme's ability to respond to emerging social and territorial needs;
4. argues that Erasmus+ priorities must continue to be fully aligned with the founding requirements and synergies developed with the European Education Area, in order to contribute to strengthening the European dimension of vocational education and training and reinforce European citizenship;
5. underscores the importance of maximising synergies with multiannual structural instruments and cohesion instruments in order to foster flexibility and increase the impact of this cooperation on competitiveness and cohesion. Stresses that such synergies should be guided by territorial and demographic realities, including population ageing, depopulation, urban-rural disparities and skills gaps, ensuring that the resources allocated have a sustainable and long term impact.

¹ According to the Flash EuroBarometer 556, young people see 'education and skills development' as the second most important sector in which the EU should invest more resources (Flash EuroBarometer 556, *EU challenges and priorities: young Europeans' views*, <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/3373>).

² A. Karimli, R. Pella, *The new European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life* (2025).

Involvement of regional and local authorities

6. points out that the current programme contributes to social cohesion at all levels and complies with the subsidiarity principle, and, to ensure respect for subsidiarity, calls for the potential stakeholders at local and regional level to be directly or indirectly involved in shaping the programme;
7. emphasises that local and regional authorities play a fundamental role in the implementation and success of Erasmus+, and supports maintaining and strengthening its decentralised management system to better respond to local educational, social and economic realities; calls for adequate resourcing of decentralised bodies to strengthen outreach, guidance and capacity building, in particular for first-time applicants, small organisations, youth-led initiatives and beneficiaries in disadvantaged territories;
8. recommends that equal access to the programme be guaranteed for all potential beneficiaries, without political or any other form of discrimination.

Efficiency and effectiveness

9. agrees that further efforts are needed to simplify the implementation process (which has already been evaluated in positive terms by the European Commission³), involving local and regional authorities on a systematic and systemic basis. The Committee supports the adoption of mechanisms to facilitate the provision of information and the application process and guarantee that measures are implemented efficiently and effectively. This could involve pilot schemes providing the most vulnerable and disadvantaged inland or remote/outermost regions and areas with support, technical assistance and capacity building;
10. proposes that a new public awareness campaign be launched in close cooperation with local and regional authorities, the social partners and businesses, geared to optimising the programme's impact and encouraging more people to take part, and recommends that this campaign explicitly targets underrepresented groups, disadvantaged regions and young people with fewer opportunities. Notes that vocational education and training equips young people with skills matching regional labour market needs. The Programme must strengthen VET mobility, dual training and enterprise cooperation, especially in regions with youth unemployment, skills shortages and demographic decline, and with a lesser capacity to participate in the Programme. The Programme should give them enhanced support, including a higher level of travel support, regional contact points, simplified procedures and targeted capacity building.

Brussels,

³ Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the interim evaluation of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme and the final evaluation of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme (2025).

III. PROCEDURE

Title	Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028-2034
Reference	Mandatory referral (Articles 165(4) and 166(4) of the TFEU)
Legal basis	Article 307 TFEU, first paragraph
Procedural basis	Rule 41(a) of the Rules of Procedure
Date of Council/EP referral/Date of Commission letter	(to be confirmed)
Date of Bureau/President's decision	11 and 17 July 2025
Commission responsible	Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture
Rapporteur	Roberto PELLA (IT/EPP)
Discussed in commission	28 November 2025
Date adopted by commission	2 February 2026
Result of the vote in commission (majority, unanimity)	Unanimity
Date adopted in plenary	6-7 May 2026
Previous Committee opinions	-
Subsidiarity reference	-