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Six ways to improve the Erasmus programme

With 4000 students being involved at any one time, it's clear that the Erasmus programme has been a massive success in bringing students from all over Europe together and in allowing them to experience totally different environments. However, like any system, there are always ways to make it better. Here are six ways that the Greens/EFA feel the EU can develop the Erasmus programme:

1. Increase the budget:

First and foremost, what we really need is for the Member States to come out strongly for a budgetary increase for Erasmus+. By increasing the budget of the programme, those States will reap more of its benefits, which in turn will give them a more positive, trusting attitude towards the programme. At a time when anti-EU populism still on the rise all across the continent, programmes like Erasmus+ are more important than ever for bringing people together.

2. Make the programme more user-friendly:

Application processes need to be simpler to use for both sides. We don't want to see applicants miss out because they don't understand the procedure. In the same way, organisations should be able to process online applications efficiently and easily. This need for simplification would also apply to accounting and reporting.

3. Involve the Non-Formal Sector:

We need to strengthen the position of those in the non-formal sector, including many of those who are self-employed. So far there has not been enough focus on developing mobility programmes for this sector. At the moment, the formal sector is still primarily associated with Erasmus+.

4. Give more info on the selection procedure:

The selection process of National Agencies has to be made more transparent. As Greens we believe that when people have knowledge they are empowered. Allowing applicants to understand how selection works will only improve the quality of Erasmus+.

5. Rebalance project funding:

There needs to be a better balance established between the programme's selected projects. We must put an end to only seriously financing projects that are organized on a large scale. Smaller projects can often better reach to more marginalised or vulnerable people.

6. Embrace inclusivity:

We need Erasmus+ to be an inclusive programme. Therefore, there is a definite need for better accessibility for people with special needs or other vulnerable people. Extending the program structure for this target group will ensure that Erasmus+ is unapologetically a programme for all Europeans.

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