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MEPs back improvements to flagship Erasmus+ scheme

Press Release from EFA MEP Ernest Maragall (Catalonia)

In a key report by Greens/EFA MEP **Ernest Maragall** voted today by the European Parliament, MEPs have called for the EU's flagship Erasmus+ programme to do more to promote mobility through vocational training in Europe.

But MEPs rejected an amendment calling for the documentation about the programme to be made available in the languages of the school systems in the countries in which Erasmus+ operates. It was hoped that making documents available in languages of education such as Catalan, Basque and others would help improve access to the scheme.



MEP Ernest Maragall

Erasmus+ was launched in 2014 and brings together all of the EU's education, training, youth and sport schemes, enabling students and many young people to study in another European country. More than 3 million Europeans have taken part since the inception of the original Erasmus programme in 1987.

The rapporteur Mr Maragall said that whilst he regretted the 'missed opportunity' on languages, he was confident that the recommendations approved in his report would help improve mobility for young apprentices and students in vocational education.

Mr Maragall believes that improving mobility in vocational training can make a major contribution to tackling youth unemployment in Europe.

Ernest Maragall said:

"Whilst Erasmus+ has been a great success up to now, it hasn't yet been able to realise the full potential of improving mobility in vocational training, especially in helping tackle youth unemployment."

"Greater mobility means greater employability, and that is the real promise of Erasmus+.

"There is much in this report that will help improve mobility, including building partnerships across sectors to build professional training schemes for apprentices abroad.

"Improving access is also vitally important, and making information available in applicants' own languages is critical to this. That's why it was such a missed opportunity to reject an amendment that would require information about Erasmus+ to be available in the school languages of individual countries.

"There is no better way to improve access to a scheme like Erasmus+ than to make information available in the native languages of the applicants. It is a matter of regret that other MEP chose to vote this amendment down, apparently for narrow party political reasons.

"Nonetheless, we must not let that distract us from working together to unlock the potential of Erasmus+ for a new generation of young Europeans."

Specific innovations in the report include simplifying the Erasmus+ application process, strengthening the role of the intermediary institutions, both territorial and sectorial, involved in the preparation, management and follow-up of mobility, validation and recognition of skills and competences, promoting longer-term mobility periods, facilitating complementary financial measures, providing teachers with adequate training and professional development.

The report says that Erasmus+ can be part of the answer to the current economic and social situation in the different European countries and reduce rates of, especially, youth unemployment by building strong links between education and training and employment.

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Ernest Maragall

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