



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Erasmus+ to boost student exchanges and partnerships between EU and Latin America

Students and academic staff from Latin America will have more opportunities to study or train in European universities thanks to increased support from Erasmus+, the new European funding programme for education, training, sport and youth. This is the message that Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, will deliver at the 9th International Congress of Higher Education which takes place in Havana, Cuba, from 10-14 February. European students and staff will similarly have the opportunity to experience Latin American universities. During her visit to the island, the Commissioner will also hold talks with senior government figures including the Ministers for Foreign Affairs (Bruno Rodriguez), Higher Education (Rodolfo Alarcon Ortiz), Education (Elsa Velazquez), Culture (Rafael Bernal) and Foreign Trade and Investment (Rodrigo Malmierca).

Speaking ahead of her visit, Commissioner Vassiliou said: *"Erasmus+ is proof of Europe's commitment to strengthening academic cooperation with Latin America, building on the links which already exist between our higher education institutions. As well as providing more individual grants for students from Latin America wishing to study in the EU, we will also provide more support to increase the international reach of universities on both sides of the Atlantic and to invest in capacity building."*

Since 2004, more than 8 000 students and staff from Latin America have benefitted from grant support from the EU to study or train in European universities through the Erasmus Mundus programme, which is now integrated into Erasmus+.

Students wishing to study in Europe for a few months can apply through their university for a 'credit mobility' grant. EU scholarships are also available for students on a full-time, two-year joint Master's programme, delivered by two or more universities: 25 000 grants will be available worldwide. Similarly, doctoral candidates from Latin America can apply for three-year fellowships funded by the EU's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (15 000 in total worldwide). Over 3 000 Latin American researchers have received funding from this scheme since 2004.

Erasmus+ will also continue to support projects aimed at modernising universities in Latin America through partnerships with institutions in Europe. This objective was previously funded under the EU's ALFA (América Latina Formación Académica) programme, which has invested €160 million on capacity building in the Latin America higher education sector since 2004. Institutions from more than 18 countries in Latin America have been involved in over a thousand different projects

Background

Nearly 3 000 representatives from universities and Ministries worldwide are expected to attend the 9th International Congress of Higher Education at the Palacio de Convenciones in Havana, with the theme: "For a Socially Responsible University".

During her trip to Cuba, Commissioner Vassiliou will visit the EU-funded project to restore 'El Palacio del Segundo Cabo', a historical palace in Old Havana, and a workshop for adolescents which is part of an EU-funded project with Havana city's historian office as the Cuban partner.

Since 2008, the EU has provided more than €86 million for cooperation programmes in Cuba and at present there are 50 EU-funded projects ongoing or about to start. The main objective of EU cooperation is to contribute to the sustainable economic and social development of the island. Priorities include food security, environment, adaptation to climate change and exchange of expertise, training and studies. Another key area for cooperation is culture and heritage.

Commissioner Vassiliou will also visit the National Ballet School, and meet Gladys Bécquer Díaz, acting President of the national Sports and Recreation Institute.

Proposed EU-Cuba Co-operation Agreement

The European Commission adopted a proposal to the Council for negotiating directives on a bilateral political dialogue and co-operation agreement with Cuba in April 2013. The proposed negotiation directives have been discussed by EU Member States in Council working groups.

Ministers will consider whether to adopt the negotiating directives at the next Foreign Affairs Council, which takes place in Brussels on 10 February.

For more information

European Commission: [Education and training](#)

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