Switzerland’s participation in Erasmus+

Information dated 15 May 2020

The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation SERI updates its information on Erasmus+ on an ongoing basis:

- Switzerland has third-country status in the current Erasmus+ (2014–2020). From 2018 to 2020, a Swiss solution provides legal and planning certainty for Swiss participants. Parliament approved funding for this programme on 27 November 2017.
- To continue this participation, the Federal Council put the Dispatch on the Promotion of Education, Research and Innovation for 2021–2024 before Parliament, requesting Parliament to approve the necessary funding.
- The Swiss solution makes mobility activities in Europe possible in all educational areas.
- Swiss institutions can still act as project partners with third-country status (partner country) in Erasmus+ cooperation projects. However, they do not enjoy full participation rights.
- The Federal Council is closely following the ongoing discussions in the EU on the follow-up programme to Erasmus+ (2021–2027). Once the programme parameters are known, it will consider the question of association, carefully taking into account the costs and benefits involved.
- The UK’s departure from the EU does not have any immediate effect on mobility between Switzerland and the UK.
- In view of Switzerland’s possible association to the Erasmus+ follow-up programme, the Swiss government has begun technical talks with the EU Commission.

A. Facts

Erasmus+ (2014–2020)

- An overview of the structure of Erasmus+ and its different programme areas can be found on the [SERI website](http://www.sbfi.admin.ch).
- Full information can be found on the website of the European Commission, including all ongoing calls for tenders and proposals and an overview of the various ways in which institutions from partner countries can participate ([programme guide](http://www.sbfi.admin.ch)).

B. Conditions and recommendations for the applicant

B.1 Mobility projects (Key Action 1)

Applications for Swiss participation should be submitted to Movetia, the organisation responsible for implementing the interim solution for exchange and mobility. The exact conditions and application procedure for mobility projects at all educational levels are published on the Movetia website.
B.2 Cooperation projects and support for policy reform (Key Actions 2 / 3)

Swiss institutions can take part in these actions either as an EU-funded full partner or as a self-funded associated partner.

- **Full partner:** Swiss institutions can continue to participate under the regular Erasmus+ call procedure and are funded directly from the EU budget. However, special conditions apply. For example, institutions in Switzerland cannot assume the coordination of a project and applications must respect the necessary minimum number of partners and programme countries (which does not include Switzerland). These project participations do not receive any further financial support from SERI.

- **Associated partner:** alternatively, Swiss institutions can participate in a project as an associated partner. In this case, EU funding is not available, but institutions can apply for financial support from Movetia. Swiss applicants must show that their project has been accepted by the relevant EU agencies and that their participation contributes to joint federal and cantonal educational objectives. Details of how to apply for project funding can be found on the Movetia website.

Unlike under Erasmus+, all activities in the Jean Monnet programme area are open to partners and coordinators from partner countries including Switzerland.

C. Funding

- The Federal Assembly approved funding for the Swiss solution for Erasmus 2018–2020 on 27 November 2017. Priority has been given to mobility. The part of the budget allocated to institutional cooperation projects has been considerably curtailed compared to the situation when Switzerland had full association in the programme.

- In order to extend the Swiss solution for 2021–2024, the Federal Council put the Dispatch on the Promotion of Education, Research and Innovation for 2021-2024 before Parliament, requesting Parliament to approve funding for this four-year period. This would secure the funding for the international exchange and mobility in education from 2021, regardless of whether or not Switzerland's association is possible. Negotiations with the EU can only begin once the EU has defined the parameters of its EU education programme, and the conditions for association.

- The amount of funding is determined by the provisions of the Ordinance on International Cooperation in Education, Professional Education and Training, Youth Affairs and Mobility (ICEMO; SR 414.513).

D. Impact on mobility of the UK’s withdrawal from the EU

SERI has launched a total revision of the Federal Act on International Cooperation in Education, Professional Education and Training, Youth Affairs and Mobility (ICEMA, RS 414.51), in part in view of the upcoming changes resulting from Brexit. The draft law creates scope for funding mobility with countries that are not associated to the EU education programmes. The revised law will is expected to come into force on 1 January 2021.

The UK and the EU have agreed on a transition period to run until the end of 2020. Funding for mobility between the EU and the UK is thus assured until this date without the need for any further measures. Funding for mobility exchanges between Switzerland and the UK approved before Brexit and carried out in the academic years 2020/21 is therefore unaffected. However, there may be changes to the rules regarding entering and staying in the UK.

E. Switzerland’s participation in the follow-up programme to Erasmus+

Neither the Erasmus 2021-27 draft programme nor the multi-year financial framework for this period have been finally approved. It will probably not be possible to conduct official negotiations until end of 2020, when clear decisions will have been made about the programme and the financial framework.
In the second half of 2020, the Federal Council will carry out a comprehensive assessment and, if necessary, define the parameters of a negotiating mandate for a possible future association to Erasmus 2021–2027. Switzerland’s participation as an associated state in this programme – which will be the follow-up programme to Erasmus+ – would necessitate commitments and credits until 2027. This goes beyond the scope of the current dispatch and would require the Federal Council to present a separate decision to Parliament.

SERI has informally met with the EU Commission’s Education and Culture Directorate-General (DG EAC) several times since May 2019 in order to gather as much information as possible on the conditions of future association:

- The Commission has confirmed that it is not currently possible to hold detailed discussions on the budget or the exact nature association might take, as the EU’s own consultations are still ongoing. However, it has been possible to outline the conditions of a possible future Swiss association to the Erasmus+ follow-up programme, and the form this might take.
- The DG EAC has stated that from 2021 there will be no essential changes to the currently applicable regulatory and financial conditions for association by third countries.

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