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INFORMATION NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Council

Subject: Erasmus+ bringing European people together for 30 years
- *Information from the Commission*

Delegations will find attached an information note from the Commission on the above subject, which has been put on the agenda under 'Any other business' for the next Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting on 22-23 May 2017.

Erasmus+ bringing European people together for 30 years

2017 marks two important milestone events: the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome and the 30th anniversary of the Erasmus programme. This is a unique opportunity to shape a positive EU agenda and tell the story of what Europe delivers to tackle Europeans' key concerns.

The Erasmus programme began with 11 countries in 1987. At first, just 3,000 students went abroad to study. But since then it has grown significantly. In 2014 it changed its name to Erasmus+ to combine all initiatives in the field of education, training, youth and sport under the same label. Today, about 640,000 European citizens from all backgrounds - such as students in vocational training and apprentices, volunteers and youth workers, teachers, youth trainers and other education staff - participate every year in 33 participating countries (the 28 Member States of the European Union plus the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey) but also beyond and Erasmus+ is widely recognised as one of the most successful programmes of the European Union.

Erasmus has contributed to generating a European identity and fostering the idea of the European Union as a space of co-existence, forging common values among young people for several generations. According to some surveys carried out among the participants, 83% of mobile higher education students report a heightened sense of European citizenship after going abroad.

International mobility brings people from different backgrounds together and boosts intercultural exchange. But Erasmus+ is not only about openness to other cultures, it is also a great opportunity to increase employability. In times of high youth unemployment, an experience abroad can be the springboard for a successful career. Mobile higher education students are twice as likely to have found a job one year after graduation compared to their non-mobile peers. 85% of vocational education and training learners in mobility considered the experience important for their career, with 58% of unemployed having received a job after their training abroad. Moreover, 64% of employers think international experience is important when they recruit employees, and the same percentage say graduates with an international background are given greater professional responsibility.

Throughout its three decades of history, more than 9 million people have benefited from the learning opportunities of Erasmus+: 4.4 million of them higher education students, 1.8 million education staff and youth workers, 1.4 million participants in youth exchanges, 1.5 million vocational training learners, 100,000 European Volunteers and 100,000 Erasmus Mundus students and staff. The budget of the programme for the period 2014-2020 is €14.7 billion.

To celebrate the 30 years of this iconic programme, conferences, forums, dialogues, celebrations, debates, and exhibitions are organised all over Europe and even beyond throughout 2017. During events that have already taken place, some high level politicians have already expressed publicly their wish to multiply by a factor of 10 the number of opportunities to study or train in another Member State as today it only reaches 5% of EU's young people.

The success of this campaign depends heavily on the strong support at national level hence the need to timely inform Ministers of Education, Youth and Sport on the recent and upcoming developments.