



Strategic recommendations for the future of Erasmus Mundus

Reinforcing the EU's global position through Erasmus Mundus

The **Erasmus+** programme embodies the vision of an open, united, and globally attractive Europe—standing in clear contrast to rising trends of national retreat.

Erasmus Mundus is a unique programme that offers joint degrees to students from across the globe, selected on the basis of academic excellence. In the current geopolitical context, it serves as a key instrument of attractiveness, capturing the interest of top international talents who might once have chosen to study in the United States but are now turning to Europe. This shift reinforces the European Union's position as a leading academic and geopolitical power, enhancing its strategic autonomy.

As a strategic instrument of European influence, **Erasmus Mundus** reinforces the EU's leadership on the global stage by shaping talent equipped to address major contemporary challenges: climate change, energy transition, global health (One Health), ethical artificial intelligence, sustainable food systems, European culture, and more.

By training over 50,000 highly employable graduates from more than 100 countries — professionals ready to deliver impact across socio-economic sectors — Erasmus Mundus serves as a cornerstone of the EU's global education and soft power strategy. Through innovative, internationally co-designed curricula, the programme positions Europe as a central actor in building global solutions. Aligned with the EU's strategic priorities — such as the European Green Deal, the Clean Industrial Deal, and the Digital Europe Programme — Erasmus Mundus contributes to the development of advanced skills for green, digital, and industrial transitions. It strengthens international cooperation and leadership, including with future EU member states and neighbouring regions.

Thanks to its unique model — combining attractive scholarships with institutional funding to support academic excellence, innovative pedagogies, and intercultural immersion — Erasmus Mundus is a strategic instrument for positioning Europe at the forefront of global talent attraction. It draws top-tier international students and contributes to shaping a new generation of professionals and researchers who are globally connected, deeply engaged in key sectors linked to competitiveness and major societal transitions. These graduates embody and promote European values, while also driving forward ambitious policies in areas such as climate action, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion.

Despite its proven effectiveness, Erasmus+ accounts for just 2% of the EU budget (€190 billions). Strengthening Erasmus Mundus is a strategic investment in the EU's long-term competitiveness, skills agenda, scientific and cultural leadership, and geopolitical autonomy.

1. Align Erasmus Mundus with the EU's strategic agenda

- Erasmus Mundus must be explicitly positioned as a key lever for delivering the EU's strategic objectives, including competitiveness, the green and digital transitions, and strategic autonomy.
- Erasmus+ and Erasmus Mundus are not only flagship programmes for education and mobility—they are also strategic instruments for fostering European citizenship worldwide and attracting the talent essential to the EU's strategic autonomy.



2. Foster synergies with FP10 and the EU competitiveness agenda

- The programme's excellence in delivering cutting-edge, interdisciplinary skills must serve as a benchmark for reskilling and upskilling strategies in key sectors and Erasmus Mundus must be strategically linked with Horizon Europe's successor (FP10) and EU Competitiveness Funds, particularly in the field of advanced skills development.
- Erasmus Mundus should be a key lever to train and retain more talents, especially STEM graduates and women in Europe.
- The governance of the EU Competitiveness Fund should systematically integrate Erasmus+ and Erasmus Mundus as part of its talent development architecture.

3. Boost employability and research careers for EU strategic autonomy

- Erasmus Mundus should be integrated into the broader "Choose Europe for Science" attractiveness strategy, as a first step to attract talented students to study in Europe and subsequently engage them in other excellence schemes such as MSCA and ERC. This is all the more critical in the current scenario where the EU still faces technological dependence from foreign countries and is working to foster its strategic autonomy in critical sectors. Moreover, in this context, a growing number of international students are turning away from the United States and increasingly choosing Europe as their preferred destination for higher education.
- It can serve as a gateway to research careers, with tailored pathways to Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), particularly Doctoral Networks.
- Erasmus Mundus should remain a label of excellence for highly skilled talents, recognised by employers and research institutions worldwide.
- Erasmus Mundus should take a leading role in promoting and implementing the European Degree Label — and, in a later phase, the European Degree itself — positioning it as a mark of excellence, particularly in the eyes of employers.

4. Position Erasmus Mundus as a flagship of the Global Gateway

- Erasmus Mundus must be fully integrated into the EU Global Gateway strategy as a key instrument of science diplomacy and cooperation.
- EU Delegations worldwide should actively promote Erasmus Mundus as part of their external engagement strategies.
- A revitalised and visible Erasmus Mundus Alumni platform (50,000+ alumni) should be leveraged to strengthen people-to-people ties, enhance scientific cooperation, and reinforce EU strategic partnerships abroad.
- The high level of expertise developed through the Erasmus Mundus programme should be leveraged to support the internationalisation of European University Alliances as well as all Higher Education institutions in EU

5. Connect Erasmus Mundus with EU skills academies

- Erasmus Mundus programmes can play a key role in strengthening the EU Skills Academies by providing high-quality, flexible training formats, thereby addressing evolving skill needs across Europe.
- The European Commission should map synergies between Erasmus Mundus and Skills Academies.



6. Strengthen Cooperation with Socio-Economic Stakeholders

- Conditions should be established for Erasmus Mundus to reinforce its cooperation with industrial sectors, public authorities, and civil society, in order to co-design demand-driven and future-oriented curricula.
- Such cooperation is well positioned to bridge local and global dimensions by integrating highly skilled graduates into strategic sectors and facilitating their successful professional inclusion.
- Erasmus Mundus graduates are uniquely equipped with a multidisciplinary mindset and the capacity to collaborate across a wide spectrum of socio-economic actors. This positions them to become impactful decision-makers at multiple levels — from local ecosystems to global arenas — contributing to strategic transitions and international cooperation.

7. Secure a budget proportionate to strategic ambitions

- Maintaining highly attractive scholarships — competitive with those offered by the US, UK, and leading Asian institutions — is essential to attract and retain top global talents. This is fully aligned with the objectives of the “Choose Europe for Science” initiative and plays a key role in redirecting students who would have traditionally chosen to study in the United States.
- Institutions must be supported through the funding of institutional costs to deliver excellence training for multicultural cohorts of students enrolled in multidisciplinary and intersectoral programmes, fostering problem-solving excellence and preparing graduates who are ready to deliver impact
- Erasmus Mundus plays a pivotal role in the internationalisation of European higher education by supporting consortia of institutions in attracting top-tier students from around the world, selected on the basis of academic excellence. It strengthens Europe’s position as a global hub for high-quality, collaborative, and inclusive education. It also serves as a powerful vector for integrating future EU members, such as those from the Western Balkans.
- The Erasmus+ budget currently stands at €25 billion for the 2021–2027 period. To fully realise the programme’s potential and align with the EU’s strategic ambitions, a substantial increase is needed — with a proposed threefold scaling — to reflect its growing objectives and expected impact. Within Erasmus+, the Erasmus Mundus component receives approximately €1 billion. This budget, too, must be increased proportionally to maintain its transformative capacity in attracting global talent, fostering academic excellence, and supporting Europe’s global leadership. This ambition is reinforced by growing political momentum: both the Draghi and Letta reports, as well as the 2024 European Parliament resolution, explicitly advocate for a significant reinforcement of the Erasmus+ budget — potentially tripling or even quintupling it — in the 2028–2034 programming period.