

## **EU POLICIES/ EDUCATION, YOUTH AND CULTURE**

### **HIGHER EDUCATION**

#### **Reform and Modernisation of European Universities**

Higher education plays a central role in the social and economic development of knowledge-based societies as providers of tertiary education and training, contributors to culture, and through the production of new knowledge and scientific research.

The Presidency wishes to contribute to the process of the modernization of higher education in Europe. Following the footsteps of the fifth Ministerial Bologna meeting (May 2007), it is important that Member States acknowledge the reforms in each country so as to share experiences and to design ways fostering the internationalisation of higher education in Europe.

The Commission has delivered several communications “The role of the universities in the Europe of knowledge” (2003), “Mobilising the brainpower of Europe: enabling universities to make their full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy” (2005), and “Delivering on the modernisation agenda for universities: education, research and innovation” (2006) that have characterised the landscape and highlighted the need for change, while also presenting recommendations.

Establishing new and ambitious targets for Universities at the European level should be part of a new public service contract with European higher education institutions, while respecting the diversity of institutions, the demand for quality and increased international competition for qualified human resources, and the promotion and generalisation of effective lifelong learning methods.

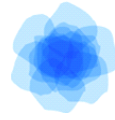
#### **Reinforcing the mobility of higher education students and teachers- celebrate and re launch the ERASMUS programme**

During the last two decades, the international mobility of higher education students has been one of the most important foundations for the construction of Europe by its citizens. The celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Erasmus Programme (1987-2007) highlights and acknowledges the extraordinary contribution provided by higher education institutions, teachers, staff, and students in particular, to the European construction process.

The Portuguese Presidency organises in conjunction with the European Commission, the closing ceremony of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ERASMUS programme.

At this occasion, the Presidency will promote the debate on the new challenges faced by the Erasmus programme, in particular the importance of widening the social base for the mobility of students in Europe. To further build upon the success of the ERASMUS programme will require active social policies to enable lower income students to access the opportunities for international mobility. To achieve such an objective it is necessary to engage national policies with Community objectives and to engage the public and private sector. The Presidency aims to stimulate this combination of efforts within the framework of the first 20 years of success of the Erasmus program.

The Presidency will also promote the discussion of the legislative proposal for the second edition of the Erasmus Mundus programme. This programme aims to strengthen European



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cooperation with third countries in the field of higher education, allowing students and teachers from third countries to continue their post graduate studies in European Universities, while promoting the mobility of European students and teachers to Universities in third countries.