

# Erasmus+: EU boosts participation of African students and staff in 2019

The EU has invested an additional €17.6 million to support over 8,500 newly selected African students and staff to participate in Erasmus+ in 2019. This increase in Erasmus+ funding is one more step towards the commitment announced by President Jean-Claude **Juncker** in his [State of the Union speech](#) in September 2018 to have supported 35,000 African students and researchers by 2020.

Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, said: *“Empowering young people in Africa is key in building a better future. This means promoting education, and this year, we have focused in particular on boosting cooperation with businesses to ensure that young people in Africa acquire all the skills they need for their professional life. Projects supporting innovative learning methods, entrepreneurship and opening up chances to find jobs in key areas such as food, agribusiness and energy transformation are key features of this year’s selection. This is the plus that Erasmus+ offers.”*

Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica**, said: *“Our Africa-Europe Alliance is first and foremost about people. We want to invest in quality education in Africa. We want to strengthen the connections between European and African students and higher education institutions. Giving them the chance to exchange know-how and inspire one another will boost inclusive socio-economic growth, and reduce poverty and inequality. On top of this, it will equip African students with the skills they need to find decent jobs”.*

The results of the 2019 Erasmus+ call bring the total number of exchanges between Africa and Europe to 26,247 since the beginning of the programme in 2014 and well on track to meeting the 2020 target of supporting 35,000 people as announced in the [Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs](#). This year, 8,555 African and 4,649 European university students and staff will benefit from exchanges in 53 African countries and the 34 European countries that participate in the Erasmus+ programme. Students will be able to stay abroad for up to one year, while staff exchanges last up to two months.

The additional funding of €17.6 million – coming from the Commission’s external financial instruments and the EU Trust Fund for Africa –has boosted participation by African nationals by 40% overall. For countries in Western Africa and the Horn of Africa, the number of scholarships has more than doubled thanks to the additional money. It has also made it possible to include more countries in the programme, such as Eritrea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Congo and Burundi, and to increase the number of exchanges, in particular for Benin, Cape Verde, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Somalia.

In addition, competing against the best students worldwide, 313 young

students from 33 African countries were awarded scholarships for the [Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree programmes](#). This is up from 239 scholarships from 27 African countries in last year's selection. African institutions are increasingly involved in teaching the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master programmes, with 46 institutions from the continent collaborating in running the 44 programmes selected this year. They range from specialised universities to research institutes active in areas such as infectious diseases, biodiversity and ecosystems, or harnessing the power of cloud computing to benefit the environment.

35 projects promoting capacity building in higher education that are designed to improve the quality and innovation of programmes in African universities have been chosen for support. This year's selection covers a wider range of countries than ever before, with Madagascar, the Comoros, Mauritania and Guinea participating in addition to the more traditional partners, which is a sign that Erasmus+ is successfully reaching out to new institutions on the continent.

Moreover, 39 small-scale projects have been selected for funding that help build capacity in the youth sector with African partners. These projects, involving youth organisations and the non-profit sector (NGOs and social businesses for example), promote informal learning and help young people start their own businesses and play an active part in their local communities.

## Background

Investing in inclusive and equitable quality education for all is a key priority for the EU, in line with the [United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals](#). Education at all levels and investment in young people are vital for improvements in skills and employment, for sustainable growth, and for active citizenship.

Investing in people by investing in education and skills is one of the cornerstones of the [Africa-Europe Alliance](#), which aims to take the EU's partnership with Africa to the next level. To do so, the Commission proposes to boost investment, to further attract private investors, to support education and skills development for employability, as well as to boost trade and improve the business climate.

Besides setting up new areas and new channels for cooperation, the Africa-Europe Alliance also seeks to leverage the potential of the EU's existing programmes for international cooperation. Channelling additional funding into Erasmus+ is boosting participation by African people and organisations with the objective of supporting the mobility of 35,000 students and researchers from the African continent by 2020, leading to a total number of 105,000 by 2027.

Erasmus+ is the European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport for the period 2014-2020. Erasmus+ funds academic and youth mobility and cooperation between Europe and other regions in the world, including Africa, where it supports activities that are closely matched with the EU's

policy cooperation priorities for the continent. African countries have been able to take part in Erasmus+ as partner countries since 2014.

For more information

[Factsheet](#)

[Africa-Europe Alliance](#)

The Africa-EU [Partnership](#)

[Erasmus+](#)