



**European Association for
Architectural Education**
Association Européenne pour
l'Enseignement de l'Architecture

Winterthur/Brussels, March 14, 2022

EU Commissioner Mariya Gabriel
Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium
By e-mail

Subject: The higher arts education community urges the Commission to start an Erasmus+ initiative for students enrolled in Ukrainian higher education institutions.

Dear Commissioner Gabriel,

EAAE sharply condemns the military aggression by Russian forces against Ukraine, a sovereign European state. We are deeply concerned for the wellbeing of civilians from and in Ukraine, in particular students and academics, as well as those in Russia peacefully protesting the war. EAAE stands in solidarity with all those affected and displaced by this violent conflict.

EAAE has decided to start a [collective effort](#) to support connecting Ukrainian students who seek an opportunity to continue their studies temporarily in a guest country and the member schools of EAAE who have the capacity to receive them. However, this situation is not sustainable beyond a few weeks.

We therefore ask you together with AEC, CILECT, ELIA and others, to start **an Erasmus+ initiative for Ukraine**.

This action would provide students enrolled in Ukrainian institutions a place at a university or academy in an EU country for one year and a grant to cover living expenses. Such an action would give students the possibility to continue their studies in times of war, at least for a period of one year (as the ERASMUS+ stays are limited to 12 months). Time is of the essence, with refugees arriving every day. This process would require little bureaucracy for those universities and students who want to participate. We believe that the existing, EU-wide network of Erasmus+ offices would be ideally equipped to execute this action.

Making Ukrainian students eligible for Erasmus+ funding would be the most important step in this action, both in a longer term but also possibly to address the immediate urgent need. For example, Ukrainian students could be awarded Erasmus+ spots that have not yet been filled up, even in this term.

Exchange, research and collaboration across borders can only flourish in freedom and peace. Your statement of 3 March 2022 reads: 'We are determined to support Ukrainian students, young people, teachers and educators in these extremely challenging times'.¹ The measures already announced in that statement, relating to Erasmus+, while useful, are not sufficient to face the crisis at hand.

Creating a special Erasmus+ action would be a clear message from the European Commission on actively and sustainably promoting European values. It would offer tangible support by giving many young people the opportunity to continue their studies in these disastrous times. Also, this measure would provide a perspective that is of longer consequence than the much-needed immediate action.

We are available to develop the idea further with you.

We thank you in advance for your support and remain sincerely,

Oya Atalay Franck
President EAAE
Dean School of Architecture, Design and Civil Engineering ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_22_1529