

PRESS RELEASE ON THE JOINT POSITION PAPER
OF EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ALLIANCES

Unlocking Erasmus+ KA131 for Joint Programmes

The Case for Removing the 12-Month Mobility Limit

A proposal for the inclusive and sustainable funding of Joint Programmes in the context of the European Degree

A JOINT INITIATIVE OF

INGENIUM · EU-CONEXUS · UNITA · EURECA-PRO
YUFE · RUN-EU · FORTHEM · ULYSSEUS



Eight European University Alliances call on the European Commission to extend Erasmus+ KA131 funding to Joint Programmes

Eight European University Alliances, INGENIUM, EU-CONEXUS, UNITA, EURECA-PRO, YUFE, RUN-EU, FORTHEM and ULYSSEUS, have jointly submitted a position paper to the European Commission's higher education unit advocating for the removal of the 12-month limit on Erasmus+ KA131 student mobility for those enrolled in accredited Joint Programmes. The paper, titled *Unlocking Erasmus+ KA131 for Joint Programmes: The Case for Removing the 12-Month Mobility Limit*, sets out a practical adaptation to the Erasmus+ Programme Guide that would allow KA131 funding to cover the full duration of a Joint Programme.

The proposal responds to a structural difficulty in the way Joint Programmes are currently funded. Under the present Programme Guide, KA131 long-term mobility is capped at twelve months per study cycle, a limit designed for the classic exchange model in which a student spends part of a degree abroad before returning home. Joint Programmes work differently: mobility forms part of the curriculum itself, with students typically studying at two or more partner institutions across the full twenty-four months of a joint Master's, or thirty-six months of a joint Bachelor's. The twelve-month cap therefore covers, at best, half of a student's mobility needs at Master's level and only a third at Bachelor's level.

The eight signatory Alliances argue that closing this gap requires neither new legislation nor additional budget. Article 5 of the Erasmus+ Regulation (EU) 2021/817 sets no maximum duration for mobility activities, so the twelve-month cap is a provision of the Programme Guide rather than a legal requirement. Because the Commission revises the Programme Guide annually in consultation with the Erasmus+ Programme Committee, the change can be introduced for the 2027 Work Programme without amending the Regulation, building on earlier adaptations such as the recent revision of the rules governing Blended Intensive Programmes.

The paper puts forward three targeted amendments to the Programme Guide. The first establishes an exception to the twelve-month limit for students in Joint Programmes accredited under the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, subject to a clause preventing double funding. The second introduces flexibility in defining the sending institution, so that any partner in a consortium can take on that role and the funding burden is shared more equitably across the partnership. The third offers an optional budget ceiling that protects the general mobility pool, giving National Agencies control over how much KA131 funding is directed towards Joint Programme mobility. Alongside these immediate measures, the paper sets out two complementary proposals for the sustainable funding of Joint Programmes as the European Degree agenda scales over the coming years, namely the recognition of Joint Programme delivery in KA131 funding allocation and the introduction of organisational support grants comparable to those already available for Blended Intensive Programmes.

The timing of the proposal is closely tied to the European Degree agenda. The Council Resolution of 12 May 2025 on a European Degree label, together with the European Degree Exploratory Actions backed by a €14 million call for proposals, has placed Joint

Programmes at the centre of European higher education policy. Yet accredited Joint Programmes remain few: fewer than one hundred have been evaluated under the European Approach, most at Master's level and many linked to Erasmus Mundus, while a survey by the FOREU4ALL topical group identified 86 joint degrees currently operational or in accreditation and a further 125 under development across the Alliances alone. Because most cohorts range between twenty and forty students, the budgetary effect of extending KA131 mobility would be modest, while the effect on the viability of these programmes could be considerable.

The Alliances frame the proposal as a question of inclusivity. Erasmus Mundus funding has historically concentrated among research-intensive universities, leaving universities of applied sciences and other institution types with limited access. KA131, by contrast, is available to every accredited higher education institution in Europe through its National Agency, which makes it the most widely accessible instrument for supporting Joint Programme mobility across institutional profiles and across regions, including those facing depopulation, where programmes with an embedded European dimension can help retain talent.

The eight signatory Alliances invite other European University Alliances, Joint Programme consortia, stakeholders and policymakers to endorse the position and to support the inclusion of these adaptations in the 2027 Erasmus+ Work Programme and Programme Guide.

A JOINT POSITION PAPER OF European University Alliances



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