Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing 'Erasmus+': the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport and repealing Decisions No 1719/2006/EC, No 1720/2006/EC and No 1298/2008/EC (Text with EEA relevance)

REGULATION (EU) No 1288/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

of 11 December 2013

establishing 'Erasmus+': the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport and repealing Decisions No 1719/2006/EC, No 1720/2006/EC and No 1298/2008/EC

(Text with EEA relevance)

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Articles 165(4) and 166(4) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

After transmission of the draft legislative act to the national parliaments,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee[(1)],

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions[(2)],

Acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure[(3)],

Whereas:

(1) The Commission's communication of 29 June 2011 entitled 'A Budget for Europe 2020' calls for a single programme in the field of education, training, youth and sport, including the international aspects of higher education, bringing together the action programme in the field of lifelong learning ('Lifelong Learning') established by Decision No 1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council[(4)], the Youth in Action programme ('Youth in Action') established by Decision No 1719/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council[(5)], the Erasmus Mundus action programme ('Erasmus Mundus') established by Decision No 1298/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council[(6)], the ALFA III programme established by Regulation (EC) No 1905/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council[(7)], and the Tempus and Edulink programmes, in order to ensure greater efficiency, a stronger strategic focus and synergies to be exploited between the various aspects of the single programme. In addition, sport is proposed as part of that single programme (the 'Programme').

(2) The interim evaluation reports of the existing Lifelong Learning, Youth in Action and Erasmus Mundus programmes and the public consultation on the future of Union action

Changes to legislation: *There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council. (See end of Document for details)*

in education, training and youth, as well as in higher education, revealed a strong and in some respects growing need for continuing cooperation and mobility in those fields at European level. The evaluation reports emphasised the importance of creating closer links between Union programmes and policy developments in education, training and youth, expressed the wish that Union action should be structured in such a way as to respond better to the lifelong learning paradigm, and pressed for a simpler, more user-friendly and more flexible approach to implementing such action and the end of the fragmentation of international higher education cooperation programmes.

(3) The Programme should focus on the accessibility of funding and the transparency of administrative and financial procedures, including through the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and digitisation. Streamlining and simplifying the organisation and management, and a sustained focus on reducing administrative expenditure, are also vital to the success of the Programme.

(4) The public consultation on the Union's strategic choices for the implementation of the new Union competence in the field of sport and the Commission's evaluation report on preparatory actions in the field of sport provided useful indications regarding priority areas for Union action, and illustrated the added value that the Union can bring in supporting activities aimed at generating, sharing and spreading experiences and knowledge about different issues affecting sport at the European level, provided that they are focused in particular at grassroots level.

(5) The Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth defines the Union's growth strategy for the coming decade to support such growth, setting five ambitious objectives to be reached by 2020, particularly in the field of education, where the aim is to reduce early school-leaving rates to a level below 10 % and to enable at least 40 % of 30-34 year-olds to have completed tertiary or equivalent education. This also includes its flagship initiatives, in particular Youth on the Move and the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs.

(6) In its conclusions of 12 May 2009, the Council called for a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), setting up four strategic objectives with a view to responding to the challenges that remain in creating a knowledge-based Europe and making lifelong learning a reality for all.

(7) Pursuant to Articles 8 and 10 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), as well as Articles 21 and 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the Programme promotes inter alia equality between men and women and measures to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. There is a need to widen access for members of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and actively to address the special learning needs of people with disabilities in the implementation of the Programme.

(8) The Programme should include a strong international dimension, particularly as regards higher education, in order not only to enhance the quality of European higher education in pursuit of the broader ET 2020 objectives and the attractiveness of the Union as a study destination, but also to promote understanding between people and to contribute to the sustainable development of higher education in partner countries, as well as

their broader socio-economic development, inter alia by stimulating ″brain circulation ″ through mobility actions with partner-country nationals. To that end, funding should be made available from the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) and the Partnership Instrument for cooperation with third countries (PI). Funds might also be made available from the European Development Fund (EDF) in accordance with the procedures governing it. The provisions of this Regulation should apply to the use of those funds, while ensuring conformity with the respective Regulations establishing those instruments and that fund.

(9) In its resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), the Council emphasised the need to consider all young people as a resource in society and sought to facilitate their participation in the development of policies affecting them by means of a continuous structured dialogue between decision-makers and young people and youth organisations at all levels.

(10) Bringing formal, non-formal and informal learning together in a single programme should create synergies and foster cross-sectoral cooperation across the various education, training and youth sectors. During the implementation of the Programme, the specific needs of the various sectors and, where appropriate, the role of local and regional authorities should be duly taken into account.

(11) To support mobility, equity and study excellence, the Union should establish, on a pilot basis, a Student Loan Guarantee Facility to enable students, regardless of their social background, to take their Master's degree in another country to which participation in the Programme is open (the 'Programme country'). The Student Loan Guarantee Facility should be available to financial institutions which agree to offer loans for Master's studies in other Programme countries on favourable terms for students. This additional and innovative tool for learning mobility should neither replace any current, nor impede the development of any future, grant or loan system supporting student mobility at local, national or Union level. The Student Loan Guarantee Facility should be subject to close monitoring and evaluation, in particular concerning its market uptake in different countries. In accordance with Article 21(2) and (3), a mid-term evaluation report should be submitted to the European Parliament and to the Council no later than the end of 2017, with a view to obtaining political guidance on the continuation of the Student Loan Guarantee Facility.

(12) Member States should endeavour to adopt all appropriate measures to remove legal and administrative obstacles to the proper functioning of the Programme. This includes resolving, where possible, administrative issues that create difficulties in obtaining visas and residency permits. In line with Council Directive 2004/114/EC[(8)], Member States are encouraged to establish fast-track admission procedures.

(13) The Commission's communication of 20 September 2011 entitled 'Supporting growth and jobs – an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems' sets out a framework within which the Union, Member States and higher education institutions can cooperate to boost the number of graduates, to improve the quality of education and to maximise the contribution that higher education and research can make

to helping Member States' economies and societies emerge stronger from the global economic crisis.

(14) In order to better address youth unemployment in the Union, particular attention should be paid to transnational cooperation between higher and vocational education institutions and businesses, with a view to improving students' employability and developing entrepreneurial skills.

(15) The Bologna Declaration, signed by the Education Ministers of 29 European countries on 19 June 1999, established an intergovernmental process aimed at creating a European area of higher education, which requires continuous support at Union level.

(16) The crucial role played by vocational education and training (VET) in helping to achieve a number of targets set out in the Europe 2020 strategy is widely acknowledged and defined in the renewed Copenhagen process (2011-2020), taking into account, in particular, its potential in addressing Europe's high level of unemployment, especially youth unemployment and long-term unemployment, promoting a culture of lifelong learning, countering social exclusion and promoting active citizenship. Quality traineeships and apprenticeships, including those in micro-enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises, are needed in order to bridge the gap between the knowledge acquired through education and training and the skills and competences required in the world of work, as well as to enhance the employability of young people.

(17) It is necessary to strengthen the intensity and extent of European cooperation between schools, and of the mobility of school staff and learners, in order to address the priorities set out in the Agenda for European Cooperation on Schools for the 21st century, namely to improve the quality of school education in the Union in the fields of competence development and in order to improve equity and inclusion within school systems and institutions, as well as to reinforce and provide support for the teaching profession and school leadership. In this context, the strategic targets on reducing early school leaving, improving performance in basic skills, and improving participation and quality in early childhood education and care, should be prioritised along with targets reinforcing the professional competences of school teachers and school leaders, and improving the educational opportunities for children with a migrant background and those at a socio-economic disadvantage.

(18) The renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning included in the Council's resolution of 28 November 2011 aims at enabling all adults to develop and enhance their skills and competences throughout their lives. Particular attention should be paid to improving learning opportunities for the high number of low-skilled Europeans, in particular by improving literacy and numeracy and by promoting flexible learning pathways and second-chance measures.

(19) The action of the European Youth Forum, the National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARIC), the Eurydice, Euroguidance and Eurodesk networks, the eTwinning National Support Services, the National Europass Centres, and the National Information Offices in the neighbourhood countries is essential in order to achieve the objectives of the Programme, in particular by providing the Commission with

regular, updated information regarding their various fields of activity and through the dissemination of the Programme results in the Union and in the partner countries.

(20) Cooperation under the Programme with international organisations in the field of education, training, youth and sport, in particular with the Council of Europe, should be strengthened.

(21) In order to contribute to the development of excellence in European integration studies worldwide, and to respond to the increasing need for knowledge of, and dialogue on, the European integration process and its development, it is important to stimulate excellence in teaching, research and reflection in this area by supporting academic institutions, associations active in the field of European integration and associations pursuing an aim of European interest, through the Jean Monnet Action.

(22) Cooperation under the Programme with civil society organisations in the fields of education, training, youth and sport, at national and Union level is of great importance in order to create a broad sense of ownership in relation to lifelong learning strategies and policies and to take into consideration stakeholders' ideas and concerns at all levels.

(23) The Commission's communication of 18 January 2011 entitled 'Developing the European Dimension in Sport' sets out the Commission's ideas for action at Union level in the field of sport following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, and proposes a list of concrete actions to be taken by the Commission and Member States in order to increase sport's European identity in three broad chapters: the societal role of sport, the economic dimension of sport and the organisation of sport. It is also necessary to take into account the added value of sport, including indigenous sport, and its contribution to the Union's cultural and historical heritage.

(24) There is a need to focus in particular on grassroots sport and volunteering in sport, on account of the important role that they play in promoting social inclusion, equal opportunities and health-enhancing physical activity.

(25) Improved transparency and recognition of qualifications and competences and extended acceptance of Union transparency and recognition tools should contribute to the development of quality education and training, and facilitate mobility for both lifelong learning and occupational purposes throughout Europe, between countries as well as across sectors. Opening up access to methods, practices and technologies used in other countries will help to improve employability.

(26) To that end, it is recommended that extended use be made of the single Union framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass) established by Decision No 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council[(9)], the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) and the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) established pursuant to Recommendation 2006/143/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council[(10)], the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) established pursuant to the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008[(11)], the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) established pursuant to the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18