

## Erasmus Generation calls for a more social exchange programme!

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of September, the Erasmus Student Network has [launched a petition](#) to European Commission and the European Parliament to create an Erasmus programme which **encourages social integration & intercultural awareness** through **volunteering and engaging with local communities** during an international exchange.

The petition is accompanied by the [SocialErasmus Charter](#) which examines the key elements that should form the backbone of an Erasmus experience. Additionally, the project features supporting measures for all involved actors, including **recognition of volunteering** activities in Higher Education Institutions. This will allow for the next Erasmus programme 2021-2027 to multiply the results of the investment in each participant and **support the creation of a society of active citizens**. The initiative is also rooted in **large-scale research** ([ESNsurvey 2016, page 53](#)) which proves that only one-third of international students developed a high number of local friendships as expected.

*"The Erasmus programme should create a generation of Europeans who transcend cultural divisions and feel empowered to build multicultural societies. By **volunteering and helping their host communities** international students grow personally and become ambassadors of the programme and its message."*

- Wim Gabriels, SocialErasmus+ Project Coordinator

*"International education faces two main challenges – **fostering interaction between international and local students and ensuring that exchange students get the most from their experience**. SocialErasmus is the much-needed solutions to those obstacles. Sign the petition and help us contribute to a more social Erasmus programme!"*

- João Pinto, President of Erasmus Student Network

[SocialErasmus+](#) is a project coordinated by the Erasmus Student Network and co-funded by the European Commission. It aims at **building bridges between international students and local communities by bringing the students to local schools**. The project consortium includes the European University Foundation (EUF), Youth for Exchange and Understanding (YEU), Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Universität Wien, Universidad de Vigo, Scholengroep Vlaamse Ardennen and ESN Besançon.

[Erasmus Student Network \(ESN\)](#) is the **biggest student association in Europe**. Present at **over 1000 Higher Education Institutions**, it unites **over 500 local associations in 40 countries**. More than 13,000 volunteers take care of their international peers under the motto **"Students helping students"**. ESN works for the creation of a more mobile and flexible education environment by supporting and developing the student exchange from different levels and providing an intercultural experience.

For more information, contact Wim Gabriels at [wim.gabriels@esn.org](mailto:wim.gabriels@esn.org) and visit [www.socialerasmus.org](http://www.socialerasmus.org).

