



Organisers: ESN, LLLP

Day and time: Thursday December 6th – 14.30 – 16.30

Room: European Parliament, A3H1

Volunteering in the local community - The social dimension of the Erasmus+ Programme

Concept

While many HEIs, students, policy-makers, employers recognize the benefits of studies abroad, there remain challenges to date. Many exchange students indicate that they do not have as much interaction with local population as they were expecting and hoping to have ([source: ESNsurvey 2016](#)). A stronger focus on the Social Dimension of the Erasmus+ programme is therefore necessary in order to create a Generation of Young Europeans that transcend cultural divisions and build multicultural societies. All of this is particularly true with the negotiations for the new Erasmus programme undergoing their core phases.

During the debate, local outreach projects such as the [SocialErasmus](#) and the [Comaninity Project](#) will be presented, looking at how one can encourage exchange students to take part in volunteering activities in their host community and recognize competencies gained through increased interaction with local communities. The project will look both at macro solutions (changing practices of HEIs) and micro solutions (tools for students, schools, associations).

SocialErasmus is pilot project on the engagement of Erasmus+ students as volunteers in the local community that was submitted to the European Parliament with the concrete objective to develop a framework that will allow to roll out volunteering on exchange as an integral part of the programme in the future. This action has the potential of strengthening active citizenship when the students return home, helping to create a generation of active European citizens who have lived a mobility experience as a student.

While volunteers are chronically underrated, their role can never be overestimated. LLLP has develop best practices in the field through their project “Comaninity”, whose aim is to bridge the existing gap between marginalised young people and public institutions such as youth services.

Agenda

Welcoming words - MEP Brando Benifei

- Szilvia Kalman, *Policy officer, European Commission*
- Wim Gabriels, *ESN Project Coordinator*
- Ann-Sophie Vanderschueren, *Policy Officer - Vrije Universiteit Brussel*
 - Eddy Raepsaet, *Scholengroep Vlaamse Ardennen*
- Pauline Boivin, *Project and Policy Officer, LLLPlatform*
- Giuseppina Tucci, *Steering Committee member of LLLP*

Q&As with the audience

Moderator - Marie Montaldo, *European University Foundation (EUF)*

Concluding remarks - MEP Brando Benifei