

## Erasmus reaches the 2 million students mark

According to new figures, released today, the EU's Erasmus programme for mobility and co-operation in higher education, enabled more than 162 000 European students and 27 000 academics to go abroad to study or teach in the academic year 2007/2008. New opportunities supported through Erasmus included work placements and training abroad for university staff. Overall, more than 182 000 Erasmus students went abroad for a period of studies or a placement. Student exchanges with Erasmus, counting both studies and placements abroad, grew by 5.2 % compared to 2006/07, while the increase for study mobility alone was of 2.1 %. On the basis of these latest figures, it can be assumed that by mid 2009 Erasmus has exceeded the mark of 2 million students.

Commenting on these figures Ján Figel', European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, said: "More and more of Europe's students are able to participate in Erasmus exchanges. The fact that the programme has helped 2 million students go abroad for studies and placements since its launch in 1987 makes Erasmus a European success story. Research clearly shows that not only the mobile individuals, but also their educational institutions and society as a whole greatly benefit from such transnational mobility. Now we would like to build on the success of Erasmus and offer such opportunities to all young people who want to go abroad for learning. To this end, we have recently opened a public consultation on the best strategy to achieve this objective".

In 2007/08, 162 695 Erasmus students studied abroad with the support of Erasmus. This brings the total for the 21-year period from 1987 to 2008 to approximately 1 846 600 students. While this represents an annual increase of 2.1 % compared to the previous year, the growth rate is slowing down, with 10 countries recording negative growth. In other countries, however, for example in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, the number of outgoing Erasmus students for studies has picked up growth.

The countries sending most Erasmus students as a share of their student population are Liechtenstein (6.43 %), Austria (1.77 %), the Czech Republic (1.54 %) and Spain (1.41 %). In absolute terms, Germany was the country with the highest number of outgoing students, followed by Spain, France and Italy. As in previous years, Spain remained the most popular destination for Erasmus students, with France in second place, followed by Germany and the United Kingdom.