



2017 marks the 30th Anniversary of the European education exchange programme, Erasmus. Over the past 30 years Erasmus has given around 9 million people the chance to study and work abroad in an exchange programme that spreads across Europe. It is now so popular that when talking about Europe it may be even more well-known than the Eurovision song contest.

The Erasmus+ programme, organised by the European Union, started in 1987 encompassing 11 countries. It offered students and staff mobility between universities. The 'plus' was added in 2014, to include teachers, youth workers, volunteers, apprentices, vocational students, and expanding the programme across continents.

At the kick-off event – 'From Erasmus to Erasmus+ - Celebrating 30 years of enriching lives and opening minds' – EU speakers and Erasmus+ alumni highlighted that mobility of students and teachers is more important now than ever before, at a time when migration is at an all-time high and xenophobia is rising in many countries.

The event spread the same message as the [United Nations' Together Campaign](#) for respect, safety and dignity for all.

Tibor Navracsics, the EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, stated that 'Erasmus gives students a chance to see other points of view, and rethink their own', those who take part are 'building bridges between countries and cultures'.

'Erasmus students can be the antibodies to the spreading disease of discrimination and war' stated Silvia Costa, Chair of the committee for culture and education.

Erasmus+ now has more funding and aims to widen opportunities for even more students across the globe, as they open up the programme to more and more countries outside of Europe.

Students who have already taken part in the programme are said to return home more mature and adaptable, and able to identify themselves not only with their city or country, but with Europe and the world as a whole.



The Erasmus+ 30th anniversary banner is displayed in front of the Erasmus+ building in Brussels. The banner is a large curved banner that reads "FROM ERASMUS TO ERASMUS+ A STORY OF 30 YEARS". The banner is red and blue, with the text in white and yellow. The banner is displayed in front of a modern building with many windows. Several people are gathered in the foreground, and there are smaller banners on poles.