

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-004167/25
to the Commission
Marieke Ehlers (Pfe), Auke Zijlstra (Pfe), Rachel Blom (Pfe)
(22 October 2025)**

Subject: Extension of the Erasmus+ programme to North Africa and the Middle East

This question concerns the Commission's plan to extend the Erasmus+ programme to non-EU students from North Africa and the Middle East.

1. How does the Commission justify funding the education of social elites from countries with a questionable reputation in terms of the rule of law and human rights, while EU Member States that — in the EU's view — violate the rule of law are excluded from EU funding, in particular for Erasmus+?
2. What will the Commission do to ensure that student visas issued under the Erasmus+ programme are not misused for migration or terrorism purposes? For example, will it ensure that students return to their country of origin after their studies or adequately screen the students' ideas, criminal records and risk profile before entry?
3. Countries such as Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco are known for their lack of academic freedom ⁽¹⁾. What will the Commission do to ensure that the massive influx of North African and Middle Eastern students onto European university campuses does not lead to even more Islamism and violent protest, and in particular to guarantee the safety of Jewish students?

Submitted: 22.10.2025

**Answer given by Ms Šuica on behalf of the European Commission
(29 January 2026)**

The Pact for the Mediterranean ⁽¹⁾ promotes a comprehensive, end-to-end and rights-based approach to migration and mobility, which includes pursuing an effective return and readmission policy, as well as promoting legal pathways in line with EU and national competences.

When applying for visas, including for study purposes, third-country nationals go through thorough security checks. As part of the general conditions set out under Article 7 of Directive 2016/801 ⁽²⁾, where third-country nationals are considered to pose a threat to public security, they should not be admitted. ⁽³⁾

Southern Mediterranean partners already benefit from existing opportunities under the international dimension of Erasmus+, funder under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument.

As an instrument for brain circulation, not migration, Erasmus+ allows students from the Southern Mediterranean region to study in the EU for a limited period (2 to 12 months) as part of their studies in their home country and students typically return to their home country to finalise their studies. No additional funding is foreseen, and current funding allows to finance around 6 000 students per year.

The Commission is legally bound to ensure that organisations and individuals that do not respect EU values, including the rule of law and respect for human rights, do not receive EU financial support.

The Financial Regulation ⁽⁴⁾ includes an exclusion ground under the Early Detection and Exclusion System for entities engaged in activities contrary to the EU values. Should the Commission become aware of such activities, it may take appropriate action.

¹ <https://academic-freedom-index.net/>

⁽¹⁾ JOIN(2025) 26 final (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025JC0026>).

⁽²⁾ OJ L 132, 21.5.2016, pp. 21-57 (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2016/801/oj/eng>).

⁽³⁾ Directive (EU) 2016/801 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes or educational projects and au pairing.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024 (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/2509/oj/eng>).