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Answer given by Ms. Šuica

On behalf of the European Commission

(26.1.2026)

The Pact for the Mediterranean¹, presented by the Commission and the High Representative, sets out a new ambitious strategy to strengthen EU relations with its southern Mediterranean partners, while also making Europe stronger and more resilient.

The possibility for short term student exchanges from any region in the world, including the Southern Mediterranean, towards the EU is not new, it already exists under the international dimension of Erasmus+, financed out of NDICI/Global Europe, not from Erasmus+ core budget under Heading 2.

For 2021-2027, NDICI – Global Europe¹ had already allocated EUR 175 million for student and staff mobility under the international dimension of Erasmus+ benefitting the Southern Mediterranean region². Therefore, the Pact does not expand Erasmus+ at the expense of European students.

As an instrument for brain circulation whereby students and staff from third countries return after their mobility, this funding allows around 6 000 higher education students and staff from the Southern Mediterranean to study, train or teach in the EU per year³.

In addition, when screening grant applications for Erasmus+, the Commission is legally bound to ensuring that organisations and individuals that do not respect EU values, such as the rule of law and respect for human rights, do not receive EU financial support, in line with the 2024 recast of the Financial Regulation⁴.

Moreover, 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 2016/801⁵, where third-country nationals are considered to pose a threat to public security, they shall not be admitted.

¹ https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/document/download/1d7e2bec-d688-49a1-bcfb-a67ba667514d_en?filename=ad-mip-2024-c2024-7509-erasmus-annex_en.pdf.

² https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/document/download/1d7e2bec-d688-49a1-bcfb-a67ba667514d_en?filename=ad-mip-2024-c2024-7509-erasmus-annex_en.pdf.

³ As a point of comparison, the EU counts close to 20 million higher education students.

⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/2509/oj/eng>.

⁵ OJ L 132, 21.5.2016, pp. 21–57 (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2016/801/oj/eng>).