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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Mînzatu
on behalf of the European Commission
(19.8.2026)

International students contribute to the EU's economy by filling skill gaps, driving research and innovation, and contributing to a more skilled workforce. The Erasmus Mundus action is designed to attract talent, promote academic excellence, international cooperation, and the attractiveness of European higher education. It supports high-quality joint master's programmes delivered by consortia of higher education institutions, with scholarships awarded to the best students worldwide on the basis of excellence and equal treatment principles[1].

Third-country nationals are selected from a wide range of countries across the world. The selection and decision to award the grants is done by the joint master's, following the programme's guidelines. Since 2004, a total of 41 474 students have benefited of Erasmus Mundus scholarships, of which 35 826 (86%) were non-EU nationals. The top five non-EU nationalities of scholarship holders since 2004 are India, China, Brazil, Pakistan and Mexico. The proportion of non-EU nationals awarded an Erasmus Mundus scholarship varies yearly; in 2025 it was of 81%, with an amount of EUR 65 million devoted to scholarships for this group to participate in joint programmes that typically last for two years.

Erasmus Mundus mobility is subject to the applicable EU and national legal frameworks, including on visa and residence, in particular Directive (EU) 2016/801[2]. The Commission monitors the implementation of the programme, including participation and completion data, through the Erasmus+ performance and reporting framework. Decisions on the right of residence after the completion of the studies and the enforcement of migration rules remain primarily within the competence of Member States.

[1] European Commission: European Education and Culture Executive Agency, Ferencz, I. and Kupriyanova, V. (eds), 20 years of Erasmus Mundus – Beyond borders and boundaries, Publications Office of the European Union, 2024, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2797/767054.
[2] OJ L 132, 21.5.2016, pp. 21–57.