ERASMUS MANIFESTO

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS ACROSS EUROPE

IMPROVING LINKS BETWEEN EDUCATION AND WORK

ERASMUS GOES GLOBAL

A FORCE FOR CHANGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

REACHING OUT TO UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS

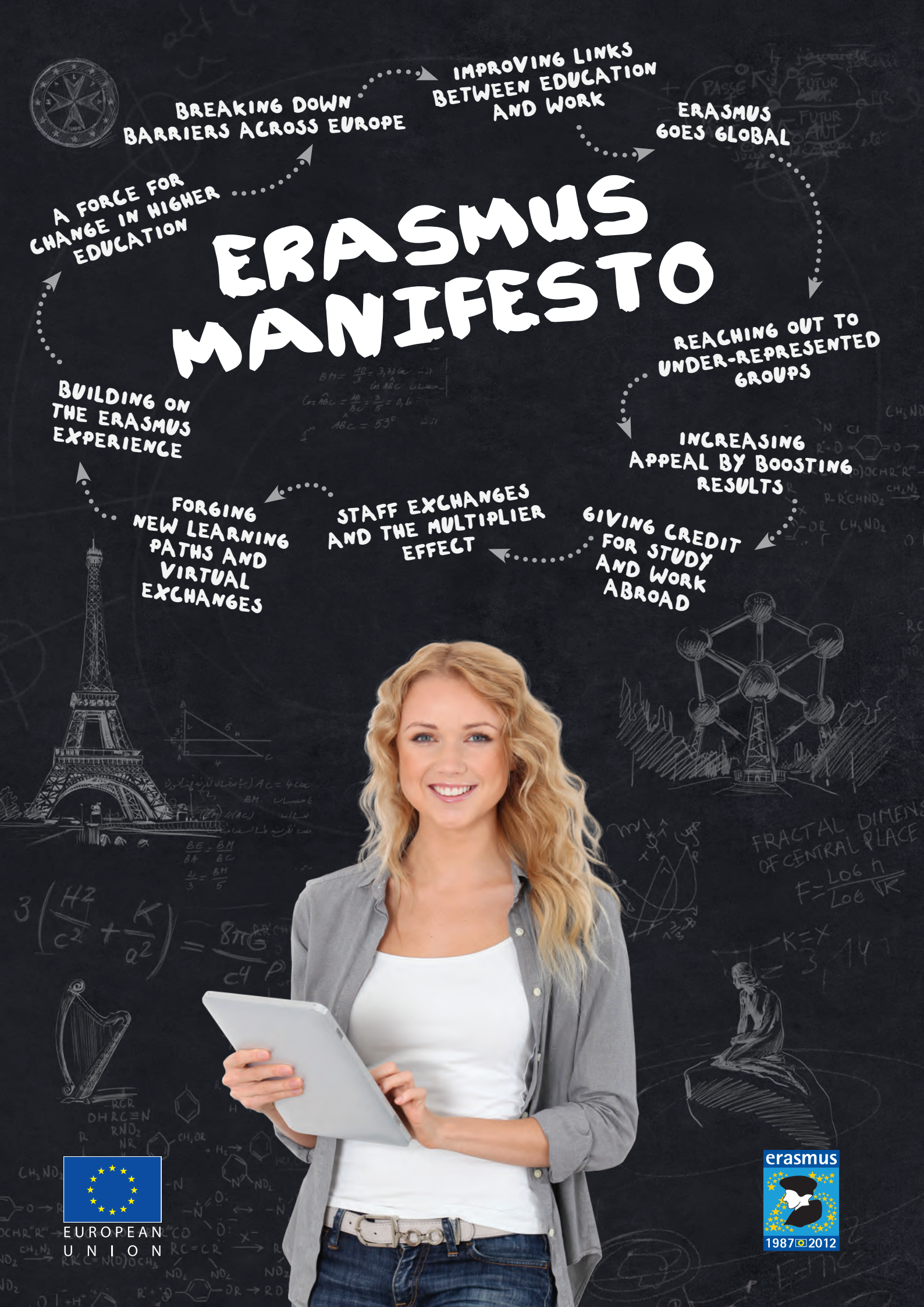
BUILDING ON THE ERASMUS EXPERIENCE

INCREASING APPEAL BY BOOSTING RESULTS

FORGING NEW LEARNING PATHS AND VIRTUAL EXCHANGES

STAFF EXCHANGES AND THE MULTIPLIER EFFECT

GIVING CREDIT FOR STUDY AND WORK ABROAD



EUROPEAN UNION

erasmus 1987 2012

INTRODUCTION

Erasmus is today part of young people's lives across Europe. To 'go on Erasmus' or 'do an Erasmus' is understood all over Europe as a period of study or work abroad, learning languages and discovering a new culture and a new way of life.

In 2012 we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Erasmus Programme. Nearly three million young people and staff have taken part to date, building their knowledge and self-awareness, and returning to share with their families, friends, fellow students and colleagues a better understanding of the European Union and its peoples. A generation of Europeans can now highlight their Erasmus stay as evidence of a skillset highly prized on the labour market: adaptability, self-reliance, engagement and openness to new experiences.

Erasmus has been a powerful force for good, and not just for those who have taken part. It has helped modernise European higher education, making our once very different systems comparable, compatible and transparent. Using tools and insights gained through Erasmus, students, academics, administrators and policy-makers have transformed higher education in the broader European area into a system that places the learner at its centre. It now needs to go further, deepening cooperation and with a more global perspective, working tirelessly to improve the quality of higher education in Europe and beyond.

We, 66 Erasmus Ambassadors, call on the European Institutions, national and regional governments, universities, businesses and all persons of goodwill, to support Erasmus, materially and morally, with renewed energy and conviction. The Programme yields a strong return on the resources it invests and continues to be Europe's best ticket for the future.

This manifesto considers the achievements of Erasmus over the past 25 years and looks forward to the evolution of the Programme so that it can be of even greater service to European citizens and society in the coming years.

A FORCE FOR CHANGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Erasmus has enabled students, academic staff and administrators to develop new curricula and test innovative approaches to learning, teaching and assessment. Erasmus led to the development of a tool, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System that measures student workload and the competences they build in their course work. Students today can compare courses and cycles in institutions across Europe, making it easier than ever before for them to choose where to study abroad. The groundwork for individual mobility done, Higher Education Institutions now need to develop stronger strategies to cooperate worldwide.

National, regional and European bodies should make sure that the Erasmus Programme can offer excellence by funding strategic cooperation, encouraging staff to team-up with colleagues from different countries, disciplines and sectors, to expand the boundaries of knowledge, ensure innovative and creative teaching and bring higher education closer to the needs of society.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS ACROSS EUROPE

Erasmus has helped to break down barriers between national education systems and to create a common learning space across Europe. Student and staff mobility helps people to understand and learn from differences that may otherwise divide us. This could be taken further to create links between local communities, including companies and civil society, and young people from abroad.

We ask Higher Education Institutions to work more closely at a local level, to improve and diversify integration, for example through outreach activities, social projects and Erasmus traineeships.

Higher Education Institutions need to enhance and facilitate mobility in subject areas where mobility levels are lower and promote a wider variety of destinations both to students and staff. Former Erasmus students now in positions of influence, whether in academia or the labour market, should be invited as role models for the next generations to promote the benefits of European integration.



IMPROVING LINKS BETWEEN EDUCATION AND WORK

An Erasmus experience offers invaluable skills to employers. Making the most of the benefits, however, requires greater cooperation between Higher Education Institutions, the labour market and students, along with the wider community. Mutual learning, based on academic freedom and real-life work projects, will contribute to giving students the skills they and employers need at Bachelor, Master and Doctoral levels.

Employers and their networks should anticipate the skills they will need in the future, and make better use of the opportunities that Erasmus traineeships bring, while Higher Education Institutions should offer academic recognition of traineeships abroad through the existing credits-for-learning system. Mobility of staff between education and work should be further enhanced. Creating a platform for employers, academia and students to form partnerships could boost the uptake of Erasmus traineeships.



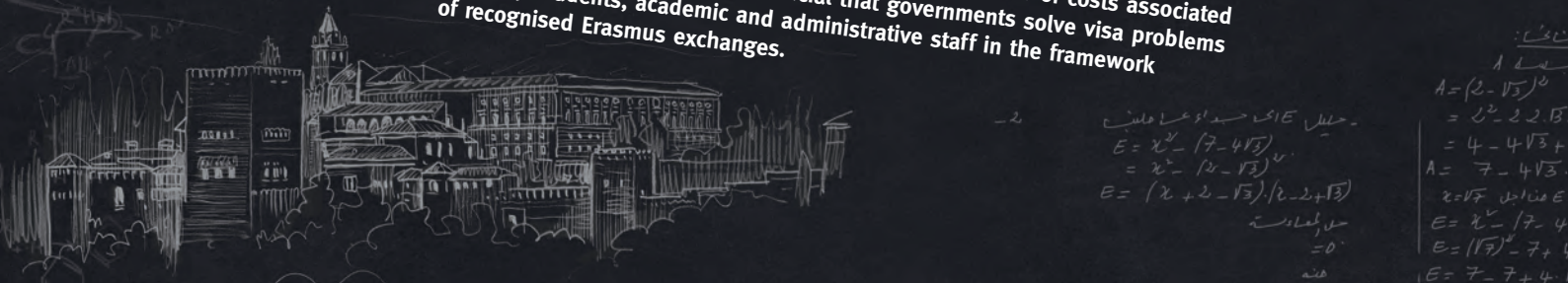
ERASMUS GOES GLOBAL

Erasmus, the most extensive academic mobility Programme in the world, should expand beyond Europe, providing opportunities for learners and teachers to broaden horizons and gain new knowledge, as well as for institutions to expand their capacity and strengthen partnerships with neighbourhood countries as well as globally.

We propose that in future Erasmus should foster joint degrees, knowledge creation and transfer, and educational excellence. Europe needs to be a key player in the global race for talent and Erasmus should help to make the European Higher Education Area the best place to teach and learn and, at the same time, support the development of strong higher education systems elsewhere.

We call for adequate funding to support the higher levels of costs associated with these objectives. It is also crucial that governments solve visa problems faced by students, academic and administrative staff in the framework of recognised Erasmus exchanges.





REACHING OUT TO UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS

Ensuring a fair and equal chance for everyone requires the recognition of the different groups who are under-represented in Erasmus schemes. To this end the European Commission and national governments should ensure appropriate funding and legislation is in place. Loans and grants should be designed to allow a wider range of students to participate. Outreach activities in schools are essential to attract a more diverse Erasmus population.

Regional, national and European programmes should become more flexible, to cater for the needs of a broader student population. Inclusive teaching, portable services and benefits, and tailor-made measures to address challenges faced by specific groups are important to prompt a favourable shift in institutions, learning environments and attitudes to foster not only unity but equality in diversity. The Erasmus University Charter should be amended to include equal access for all. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is a good example of how such norms can work for the better.

INCREASING APPEAL BY BOOSTING RESULTS

The Erasmus Programme is already extremely popular and successful but could benefit many more students and staff. To do this, there should be increased promotion of the opportunities to students, staff, institutions, employers and parents so that they all understand the value of the Programme. To maximise its appeal, it needs to focus more on the potential it offers to improve academic quality and the benefit to the Higher Education Institutions, students and staff that take part. One way to support this is to improve the availability of language preparation of students and staff prior to any visit abroad to ensure they have the linguistic competences for the necessary 'give and take' that will help to make their stay a success, especially the lesser-taught European languages.

The European Commission, National Agencies and Institutions should make sure that administrative issues do not become bureaucratic obstacles that impede institutions, staff and students from participating in Erasmus. At the same time, institutions could offer more flexible learning options – blending physical and virtual mobility, for example – to boost student interest and encourage wider participation from a more diverse population.

GIVING CREDIT FOR STUDY AND WORK ABROAD

The success of Erasmus depends on students gaining recognition in their home institution for what they achieve during their stay abroad. This is fundamental to the Programme and huge progress has been made, but there is much room for improvement in practice. The tools to ensure full recognition exist and Higher Education Institutions need to implement them at all institutional levels.

The European Commission should support them in calculating the credits on the basis of student workload linked to learning outcomes. Faculties and their members must also engage more closely with partner institutions so that they can guarantee before students leave on a mobility experience that their study and/or work abroad will be recognised.

Course catalogues should be up to date and available in good time and the recognition process should be straightforward. Students should have the means to address any problems.

STAFF EXCHANGES AND THE MULTIPLIER EFFECT

Erasmus is so widely known as a programme for students that the role of staff exchanges is often overlooked. Yet staff mobility makes an enormous contribution, bringing fresh ideas for new curricula and teaching methods, enhancing partnerships with institutions abroad and inspiring students to adopt a more European and global perspective. It contributes to the professional development of the staff member, whether they are a lecturer or administrator, and has a multiplier effect on student mobility.

Institutional leaders should incorporate staff mobility into the institution's international strategy so that it becomes a core element of academic and administrative careers. They should acknowledge the personal investment and value of mobility and offer incentives and recognition for staff mobility.



FORGING NEW LEARNING PATHS AND VIRTUAL EXCHANGES



Institutions should offer international experience to as many students as possible by supporting 'internationalisation at home'. Information and communication technology fosters new ways of learning, as well as virtual mobility, either on its own or combined with physical mobility. We call on institutions to propose innovative new learning paths, including between disciplines and sectors.

Curricula and learning opportunities should be more flexible, to allow transnational group work, for example, or enable students and staff to follow a short visit abroad with a period of virtual mobility, ensuring the cooperation is sustained after the physical visit. National agencies, Erasmus coordinators, staff and students might participate in a virtual community to build bilateral partnerships and share Erasmus experience and best practices in studies and traineeships.

BUILDING ON THE ERASMUS EXPERIENCE

An Erasmus experience benefits the individual and his or her social, academic and professional networks. It enriches the local community, home institution and European integration. To build on this experience, the European institutions, National Agencies and Higher Education Institutions should create frameworks to encourage feedback from students and staff who have taken part in the Programme.

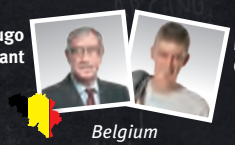
Erasmus participants should identify the cultural, social, linguistic and professional benefits of their experience to maximise their labour market or professional development and should be supported to share such experiences. Further support should be offered to those who promote mobility programmes or take part in activities to add value to their own experience. National and European bodies should encourage the creation of national Erasmus alumni networks.





ERASMUS MANIFESTO DEVELOPED BY THE 66 ERASMUS STUDENT AND STAFF AMBASSADORS FOR THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ERASMUS PROGRAMME

NC-32-12-156-EN-C


Hugo Marquant
Marc Goffart
Belgium

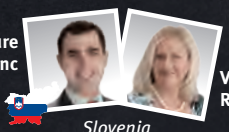

Connie Væver
Nina Siig Simonsen
Denmark


Boryana Klinkova
Rumyana Todorova
Bulgaria


Jana Vitvarová
Jozef Ristvej
Slovakia


Milada Hlaváčková
Tomas Vitvar
Czech Republic


Katerina Galanaki-Spiliotopoulos
Maria Kaliambou
Greece

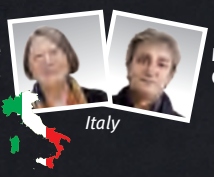

Jure Kumljanc
Vesna Rijavec
Slovenia


Antoinette Charon Wauters
Marco Amherd
Switzerland

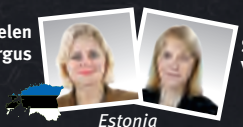

Aleksejs Naumovs
Madara Apsalone
Latvia

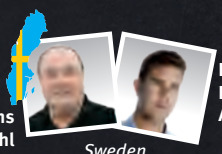

Tadas Zukas
Vilma Leonaviciene
Lithuania


Jelena Simić
Katica Šimunović
Croatia


Ann Katherine Isaacs
Maurizio Oliviero
Italy

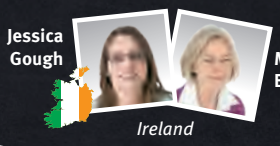

Laura Popa
Ion Visa
Romania

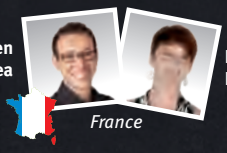

Helen Margus
Sirje Virkus
Estonia

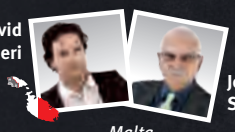

Hans Åhl
Karl-Fredrik Ahlmark
Sweden

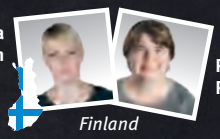

Elena Luptak
René Kremser
Austria


Fidel Corcuera Manso
Tomás Sánchez López
Spain

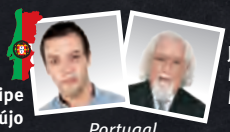

Jessica Gough
Miriam Broderick
Ireland


Julien Pea
Nathalie Brahimi
France

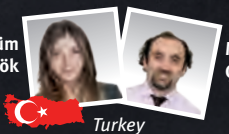

David Friggieri
John Schranz
Malta


Elina Ylipelkonen
Paula Pietilä
Finland

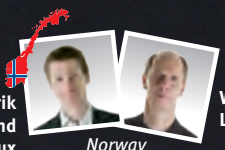

Piroska Bakos
Mária Dudás
Hungary


Filipe Araújo
José Marat-Mendes
Portugal

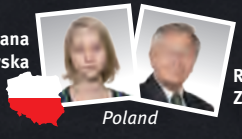

Maria Hadjimatheou
Stavroulla Antoniou
Cyprus

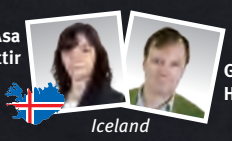

Begüm Yurdakök
Mustafa Çoban
Turkey

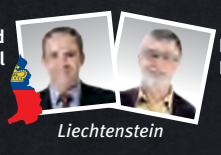

Bram Peper
Désirée Majoor
The Netherlands


Frederik Strand Sardinoux
Wolfgang Laschet
Norway

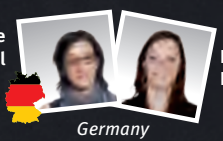

Lucien Kerger
Matthieu Cisowski
Luxembourg


Diana Dmuchowska
Ryszard Zamorski
Poland


Ása Kjartansdóttir
Guðmundur Hálfdanarson
Iceland


Gerold Büchel
Hansjörg Hilti
Liechtenstein


Julia Kennedy
Kate Samways
United Kingdom


Christiane Biehl
Katja Krohn
Germany

doi:10.2766/31632

ISBN 978-92-79-19511-2

ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus

Publications Office