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**Position of the Austrian Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (FHK) on the draft report of the CULT committee concerning the next Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport 2014-2020**

Dear Ms Korhonen,

The FHK would like to take the opportunity to follow your invite and share our opinion on the draft report of the next Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sports.

First of all we welcome the suggestion of calling the programme "YES Europe" (Youth, Education, Sports Europe) instead of "Erasmus for all". "Yes Europe" is short and concise and implies a positive connotation of Europe. Besides it does not exclude anyone as might be the case with the term "Erasmus" as it has been used only for a certain group of participants.

Furthermore we strongly disagree with the budget cut for the higher education sector compared to the earlier version of the proposal. The European Union wants to enhance mobility as stated in the Bucharest Communiqué and in the Council's conclusions on the benchmark for learning mobility. By 2020, an EU average of at least 20 % of higher education graduates should have had a period of higher education-related study or training (including work placements) abroad, representing a minimum of 15 ECTS credits or lasting a minimum of three months. In Austria mobility amongst students in higher education is still far below 20%: During the academic year 2011/2012 12% of students of Universities of Applied Sciences and only 2.5% of students of Universities had a period of higher education-related study or training abroad. The objective of increasing mobility cannot be reached by such a serious budget cut. In times of economic and financial crisis young people need all the more support. Moreover mobility enhances key competences and increases employability and therefore the competitiveness of Europe.

Another critical issue is the duration of the stay abroad. The required period of studying abroad to gain a mobility grant has proved to be an obstacle for many students. Especially since the implementation of the Bologna reform, the curricula of those programmes that

also have to comply with professional regulations such as health-related programmes do not leave room for longer placements. Therefore we recommend to provide financial support also for shorter mobility periods of one or two months and to permit mobility not only once but several times during the course of studies.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us ([nicole.guthan@fhk.ac.at](mailto:nicole.guthan@fhk.ac.at)). We hope you will take into account our contribution.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Helmut Holzinger  
President



Mag. Kurt Koleznik  
Secretary General