

ERASMUS

Inter–university cooperation between Switzerland and the EU since 1996

Introduction

Switzerland is neither a member of the EU, nor of the EEA. This means that if it is to participate in EU education and training programmes a bilateral agreement must be concluded. This will not be possible, however, until bilateral agreements between Switzerland and the EU have been concluded in other priority areas such as transport.

In order to be able to continue the inter–university cooperation which was built up during the period of official participation, the Federal Office for Education and Science (FOES) allocated resources to permit Swiss education and training bodies to take part at least as a ‘indirect partner’ after 1995/96.

Thanks to these transitional or alternative measures, the exchange programme was able to continue and even expand during the past years.

The Swiss procedures follow as closely as possible the rules of the EU’s Lifelong Learning Programme / ERASMUS .

Student grants

A national agency, the Information and Coordination ERASMUS Switzerland (ICES), is responsible for awarding mobility grants to exchange students from both partners.

These include grants for students both going from and coming to Switzerland.

The Swiss universities inform the Information and Coordination ERASMUS Switzerland (ICES) of their exchange figures in April for the following academic year, and the latter then proceeds with its calculation of grants.

So far it has been possible to provide visiting students from EU countries with grants amounting to CHF 200 to 300 (Euro 120 to 180) per month. Grants for students going from Switzerland were slightly lower.

Subsidies resulting from institutional contracts

Universities in Switzerland are also able to apply for the conclusion of institutional contracts. A total of 30 universities and other higher education institutions took advantage of this possibility in 2007/2008.

In Switzerland such institutional contracts are concluded with the Federal Office for Education and Science (FOES).

This supports the same type of activities as the EU.

The FOES has laid down two different procedures for the payment of financial contributions in the framework

of the institutional contracts.

The subsidies guaranteed by such contracts are paid – as soon as the contract is concluded and regardless of whether a project has been accepted by the EU or not – for the following project categories:

- organising mobility (OM)
- teaching staff mobility (TS)
- ERASMUS teaching fellowships (ETF)
- preparatory visits (PV)
- ECTS

Payment for project categories where a coordinating institution is necessary depends on the authorisation of the entire project by the EU Commission. This means that in the case of the following 4 project categories the Swiss university in question must provide the SER with a copy of the contract between the EU Commission and the coordinating institution:

- intensive programmes (IP)
- development of joint study plans (CDI and CDA)
- European modules (EM)
- integrated language courses (ILC)

Participation in other activities in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme also receive financial support.

The other chapters of the Lifelong Learning Programme and other EU education and training programmes

The Swiss government has also allocated financial resources for participation in the other chapters of the Lifelong Learning Programme (COMENIUS, ERASMUS, LEONARDO DA VINCI), as well as in the Youth in Action programme. Furthermore, agencies for the Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth in Action programmes have been set up.

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