



Country Brief – European Union (EU)

Overview

International dialogue, comparison and competition are strong drivers in enhancing the quality of education and training systems and promoting cultural understanding. Australia and the European Union (EU) have a long history of collaboration in education and training with exchanges of staff and students at vocational (VET) and higher education (HE) levels. Europe is also a major source of international students. In 2012, Australia had 36 578 enrolments from the EU, most from the UK, Germany and France (5 208, 4 602 and 4 093 respectively). The EU is regarded as a priority science and research collaboration partner for Australia due to its world-class reputation across a broad spectrum of scientific fields and high level of investment in research and innovation. The traditional knowledge powerhouses' of the UK, Germany, France and Italy produce a significant proportion of the world's scientific publications, and the 27 EU Member States produce 30% of the world's published scientific knowledge. The European Innovation Union Scoreboard 2011 ranked the EU fourth behind the US, Japan and Korea in innovation performance.

Education Institutional Cooperation

Encounter: Australia-Europe 2013

Since 2002, the EU and Australia have promoted cooperation between students, faculty and higher education institutions through the ICI-ECP, now known in Australia as Encounter: Australia–Europe. Such cooperation enhances the quality of higher education and vocational training for both partners and promotes greater intercultural understanding. Selected projects are eligible for up to €350 000 for each of up to four years. In 2013, Encounter: Australia–Europe will provide funding for mobility projects (VET and HE) and double or joint degree programmes (HE only). Proposals must include at least one EU institution and one Australian institution. The call for Encounter: Australia–Europe proposals closes on 15 May 2013 and is available online from aei.gov.au/international-network/europe/eubilateral-mobility-projects/pages/joint-mobility-projects.aspx

Erasmus Mundus 2013

Erasmus Mundus aims to enhance quality in higher education through scholarships and academic cooperation between Europe and the rest of the world. Australian institutions may participate in the Erasmus Mundus programme as part of Action 2, which supports the establishment of cooperation partnerships between European and non-European higher education institutions. Consortia must include a minimum of five higher education institutions from at least 3 European countries and a number of higher education institutions from targeted non European regions. More information is available from ec.europa.eu/erasmus-mundus.

Individual Cooperation

Erasmus Mundus 2013

Along with institutions, individuals may apply for Erasmus Mundus scholarships at masters or joint doctorate level by applying directly to the course coordinator, or through exchange with their home university. Individual scholarship information is available from: ec.europa.eu/erasmus-mundus.

Research and Innovation Cooperation

Connecting Australian-European Science and Innovation Excellence (CAESIE)

CAESIE is a new vehicle for driving collaboration between Australian and European researchers and business. It aims to strengthen and expand the existing formal Australian-EU science relationship to promote innovation and engagement from industry (particularly small-to-medium enterprises), focussing efforts on making a significant

contribution to addressing some of the world's grand challenges: Clean energy; Sustainable cities; and Healthy ageing through sustainable technology. The three-year project (2012–2015), jointly funded by the European Commission (EC) and Australian Government, strongly supports joint policy directions, including a focus on promoting innovation, tackling global challenges, increasing participation in programs by SMEs, and promoting program and policy synergies. See caesie.org in the coming weeks.

Looking ahead: 2014 and beyond

The Erasmus for All and Horizon 2020 programs currently are under consideration as part of the EU's 2014–2020 budget. The final budget is yet to be determined.

Erasmus for All (possibly YES Europe)

It is expected that Erasmus for All will be the EU program for education, training, youth and sport. It will bring together a number of previous programs under the one banner. The largest action will be to promote learning mobility. This will include mobility programs for staff, teachers, school leaders and trainers, HE and VET students. It will also include 'youth mobility' for volunteering, youth exchanges and international mobility. This learning mobility component will comprise sixty three per cent of the total Erasmus for All budget. More information is available from ec.europa.eu/erasmus-for-all

Erasmus for All will also include a new loan guarantee scheme for EU masters students to study at another EU (or associated) country. This is unavailable to Australian students.

Horizon 2020

Horizon 2020 is the anticipated new EU research funding program that will take a strategic high-level focus to research and innovation, focusing on global societal challenges such as energy security and climate change, and strengthening economic and industrial competitiveness. Under Horizon 2020, the relationship with third countries such as Australia will shift towards forward cooperation roadmaps that identify tightly focussed research areas (or challenges) where there are mutual priorities and strengths, and where there is critical mass to realise strong outcomes. It will support the development of our existing innovation dialogue with Europe to focus on the facilitation of links between researchers and industry to promote research and innovation collaboration to address major challenges and to boost productivity.

Part of the intended programme is the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions for research mobility, one of which is the Research Innovation Staff Exchange (RISE) programme, which aims to improve sustainable collaboration in training and knowledge sharing. RISE will include both international and intersectorial exchange programmes and participants will be able to be at any career level, but must return home at the end of their exchange. The programme will replace the International Research Staff Exchange Scheme, in which Australia had been very successful. More information is available from: ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020.

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