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## Comodini Cachia appointed shadow rapporteur for delegating and implementing acts on Erasmus+

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Therese Comodini Cachia (MEP, EPP, Malta) has been appointed shadow rapporteur for the follow up of delegated and implemented acts related to Erasmus+ programme.

The Erasmus+ programme aims to boost skills and employability, as well as modernising Education, Training, and Youth work. The seven year programme with a €14.7 billion budget will provide opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain work experience and volunteer abroad while fostering cooperation and bridging the worlds of education and work in order to tackle the skills gaps we are facing in Europe. As an integrated programme, Erasmus+ offers more opportunities for cooperation across the education, training, youth, and sport sectors and is easier to access than its predecessors, with simplified funding rules.

Commenting on her appointment as shadow rapporteur Comodini Cachia said *"Mobility is a key factor that empowers students by providing them with transversal skills and enhances their employability. Streamlining previous EU programmes to make it easier for young people to engage in mobility is certainly a step in the right direction which needs to be sustained"*. Comodini Cachia stated that she will be working to facilitate an effective implementation process of the Erasmus+ programme.

Comodini Cachia has recently also hosted a conference entitled "International Youth Mobility: Beyond Erasmus+ Program - 25 years of Youth Empowering Youth" organised by the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) on the occasion of International Students Day. During the conference Comodini Cachia said that *"Currently over 5 million young people (aged 15-24) in the EU are unemployed, that is, more than one in every five young Europeans. In some cases vacancies exist but skills gaps and low employability of graduates is a problem. Erasmus+ can thus play an important role in tackling these challenges."*

At this conference, students spoke of various challenges that are still a barrier for them, including financial issues, lack of information, fear of recognition of their exchange and long bureaucratic procedures. ESN representatives said that reaching the target of 20% mobile students by 2020 remains a challenge and thus more needs to be done. ESN, which is also represented in Malta, is one of the biggest non-profit international student organisations. Its vision of enrichment of society through international students stems out through its firm belief that through the mobility of young people the whole society benefits. This is primarily due to enhanced knowledge about different cultures which translates into open-mindedness, tolerance and mutual understanding.

Therese Comodini Cachia is a member of the CULT (Culture and Education) Committee in the European Parliament.

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