

Programmes, cohesion contribution and Erasmus

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The package secures Swiss participation in Union programmes. A separate agreement on Union programmes provides for Swiss association with Horizon Europe, the Euratom research and training programme, the Digital Europe programme and, from 2027, Erasmus+. To bridge the gap, the Commission allowed Swiss researchers to apply for most Horizon Europe calls from 1 January 2025 under a transitional arrangement, subject to the conclusion of the association agreement.¹ For the University of Basel and the life sciences cluster, the return to European research funding is perhaps the most concrete benefit of the package. It restores access to the grants of the European Research Council, whose prestige plays a role in the recruitment of leading scientists.

The return to Erasmus+ carries a symbolic charge that Part B, Chapter II has explained. Erasmus of Rotterdam, who died in Basel in 1536, chose the city because its printers and its openness offered him the freedom to work. The European exchange programme named after him was suspended for Switzerland after the vote of February 2014, which forced Swiss universities to finance a national substitute, the Swiss–European Mobility Programme, now administered by Movetia.² The return of Basel students to the programme bearing the name of the humanist buried in their Minster would close a circle that many in the city regard as a measure of their place in Europe.

The cohesion contribution is the price of the programme participation and of market access in general. Switzerland would contribute about CHF 350 million per year to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the Union from 2030 to 2036, with an interim contribution for the years from 2025 to 2029. The Swiss contribution takes the form of projects agreed bilaterally with the partner states and remains outside the Union budget.³ In political terms, the contribution has been less controversial than the

institutional elements, although it has raised the familiar question of whether Switzerland pays for market access without voting on its rules.

1 Notes

1. On the transitional arrangement allowing Swiss entities to participate in Horizon Europe calls of the 2025 work programmes and on the agreement on Swiss participation in EU programmes (Horizon Europe, Euratom, ITER, Digital Europe, Erasmus+ from 2027), see the publications of SERI. Status to be verified. ↩
2. On the Swiss–European Mobility Programme (SEMP) and the national agency Movetia, which has administered Swiss mobility programmes since 2017, see their publications; on Erasmus of Rotterdam in Basel, see Part B, Chapter II. Cross-reference; to be verified. ↩
3. On the Swiss cohesion contribution of CHF 350 million per year for the period 2030–2036 and the interim contribution of about CHF 130 million per year for 2025–2029, see the dispatch of 13 March 2026 and the communications of the FDFA. Figures to be verified. ↩

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