

***Written address  
for the 70th anniversary of the State Scholarship Foundation***

Dear friends,

It is such a nice coincidence that the State Scholarship Foundation is celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, exactly when the Erasmus+ programme and the vibrant community that has been set up around this emblem of European integration are turning 35!

As one of the founding countries of Erasmus, Greece has been an essential part of the programme since its creation in 1987. European integration and Greece's democratic, economic and social achievements over the past decades have gone hand in hand and reinforced each other. And Greek organisations make an important contribution to the development of the European dimension in education, training, youth and sport.

Since 2014, around 210,000 learners across all fields of education, training and youth have already carried out a mobility activity from and to Greece. Greek schools, universities, youth organisations, public authorities and enterprises have participated in 500 Strategic Partnerships together with organisations from other countries.

The most famous feature of Erasmus+ is of course the mobility of learners. But there is much more to it. The programme boosts European cooperation between thousands of organisations and associations on our continent. Whether they are universities, schools, vocational training providers or youth organisations, they build common approaches to teaching and learning, exchanging experiences and adapting together to the new challenges. All of which contributes to improving the quality of education. The Erasmus+ programme is key to supporting the European Union's efforts to make the European Education Area a reality by 2025, removing barriers to high quality learning for all and enabling learners to move more easily across Europe's education systems.

The positive impact on so many aspects of the participants' lives has concrete effects. It improves employability, develops new knowledge, skills and competences,

closes skills and competency gaps. It builds confidence and independence, creates greater open-mindedness and curiosity about new challenges. It boosts innovation and entrepreneurship, enhances tolerance and understanding towards other people. The programme also contributes to building a stronger European identity and to enhancing active citizenship.

Lastly, Erasmus+ is a symbol of solidarity and exchange around Europe and beyond, the antithesis of hatred and intolerance, and it is all the more important to celebrate the activities of this programme and of your foundation after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It has shown us that Erasmus+ is more than just a symbol, it has proved to be an efficient tool to help our Ukrainian friends.

So today, let's celebrate unity and solidarity, and congratulations on your anniversary!

***Mariya Gabriel***

***Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth***