

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Convener of Education, Children and Young
People Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Copied to UKSIs@parliament.scot

19 February 2026

Dear Douglas

**THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME (DATA PROCESSING) REGULATIONS 2026
EU EXIT LEGISLATION – PROTOCOL WITH SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT**

I am writing in relation to the protocol on obtaining the approval of the Scottish Parliament to proposals by the Scottish Ministers to consent to the making of UK secondary legislation affecting devolved areas arising from EU Exit.

That protocol, as agreed between the Scottish Government and the Parliament, accompanied the letter from the then Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations, Michael Russell MSP, to the Conveners of the Finance & Constitution and Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committees on 4 November 2020 and replaced the previous protocol that was put in place in 2018.

I attach a Type 1 notification which sets out the details of (The Erasmus+ Programme (Data Processing) Regulations 2026) which the UK Government propose to make and the reasons why I am content that Scottish devolved matters are to be included in this SI. This will enable the necessary data processing by the National Agency (NA) from 1 June 2026, the NA must formally begin mobilisation in order to be able to deliver the programme and be ready to support applicants with their applications from November 2026. The SI must also be in force before the NA commences processing personal data in order to ensure there is a lawful basis for that processing. Please note, we are yet to have sight of the final SI and they are not available in the public domain at this stage. We will, in accordance with the protocol, advise you when the final SI is laid and advise you as to whether the final SI is in keeping with the terms of this notification.

I am copying this letter to the Convener of the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

I look forward to hearing from you by Monday 23 March.

Kind regards

BEN MACPHERSON MSP
Minister for Higher and Further Education

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St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

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NOTIFICATION TO THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

Name of the SI(s) (if known) or a title describing the policy area

The Erasmus+ Programme (Data Processing) Regulations 2026.

Is the notification Type 1 or Type 2

Type 1 - The Erasmus+ Programme (Data Processing) Regulations 2026.

These Regulations enable the processing of personal data as part of the Erasmus+ Programme. Regulation 3 enables the National Authority, National Agency and Independent Audit Body to process personal data for the purposes of enabling or facilitating the performance of the functions of those bodies under the Erasmus+ Programme and enable the sharing of personal data to persons undertaking functions in respect of the Erasmus + Programme for certain purposes. Regulation 4 enables the processing of personal data by a relevant person, being the Secretary of State, a devolved authority (the Scottish Ministers, the Welsh Ministers or a Northern Ireland Department), the National Agency or the Independent Audit Body for the purposes of certain statistical analysis and research or the provision of support to the National Agency in relation to specified functions of the National Agency, and enables a relevant to disclose personal data to another relevant person for those purposes.

The Secretary of State makes these Regulations in exercise of the powers conferred by section 31 of the European Union (Future Relationship) Act 2020.

The SI is expected to be sent for registration, processing and laying approximately between 13-17 April and come into force on 1 June 2026.

The aforementioned Regulation definitions are as follows:

“National Authority” means the Secretary of State notified to the European Commission as being the person in charge, at national level, of monitoring and supervising the management of the Erasmus+ Programme in the United Kingdom;

“National Agency” means one or more bodies designated by the National Authority for the purpose of managing the implementation of the Erasmus+ Programme at national level in the United Kingdom and;

“Independent Audit Body” means the body designated by the National Authority for the purpose of issuing an audit opinion in respect of the National Agency’s yearly management declaration as part of the Erasmus+ Programme;

Details of the provisions that Scottish Ministers are being asked to consent to.

Summary of the proposals

- The definition of the Erasmus+ Programme is drafted to take advantage the definition of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) in the EU (Future Relationship) Act 2020, which is ambulatory. This means that as the TCA is amended the definition continues to apply to the future amended versions of

the agreement. Taking advantage of this ambulatory definition means that we will not have to make an amending SI to reflect the next MFF (or any future MFFs should we continue to participate in the programme).

- The intention of reg 3 is to ensure a domestic legal basis for any processing which the National Authority, National Agency or Independent Audit Body need to undertake in order to fulfil their obligations under the E+ Programme. This is drafted in this way as would be very difficult to identify all the relevant functions to set them out in this instrument given they span across various sources of EU law and for the NA also the contribution agreement with the EU which we don't have sight of.
- The intention of reg 4 to enable processing for the Secretary of State and Scottish Ministers, Welsh Ministers and an NI Department to undertake research/statistical analysis and to be able to provide ad hoc support to the National Agency, for example, if there is a question relating to a particular individual in Scotland, Wales or NI's circumstances, reg 4 intends to enable the relevant Government to assist the National Agency in answering that.

Does the SI relate to a common framework or other scheme?

No.

Summary of stakeholder engagement/consultation

Fortnightly engagement between DfE and devolved governments together with a separate SI specific working group is in place – which has supported associated stakeholder communications/engagement. No direct communication related to this specific SI has been shared with Scottish stakeholders at this point – given both the relevance at this point and due to the commercial nature/ sensitivities related to the appointment of a National Agency in summer 2026.

A note of other impact assessments, (if available)

As per above, n/a given the forums in place.

Summary of reasons for Scottish Ministers' proposing to consent to UK Ministers legislation

Consent to a sole UK SI will enable the necessary data processing by the National Agency from 1 June 2026, the National Agency must formally begin mobilisation in order to be able to deliver the programme and be ready to support applicants with their applications from November 2026. This will support the website launch, which is essential to ensure UK applicants are ready to engage with Erasmus+ and support applicants with their applications from November 2026, whilst ensuring delivery of the programme maximises opportunities to reach potential applicants.

The SI must also be in force before the National Agency commences processing personal data in order to ensure there is a lawful basis for that processing. The proposed SI will include: providing a statutory legal basis for the National Agency to process personal data for the purposes of Erasmus+, and facilitating the sharing of personal data between the National Agency and DGs (in addition to DfE, the EU, and an independent audit body). This is intended to ensure that all

administrations can access and use relevant personal data where needed, to support analysis and oversight.

As noted, the EU (Future Relationship) Act 2020 is the legal route for a sole UK SI, limited to data processing powers, is acceptable in the circumstances. The UK Government have committed to developing a broader joint SI with DGs in respect of the establishment and governance of the National Agency with full engagement and scrutiny by the Scottish Government.

Intended laying date (if known) of instruments likely to arise
Mid-April – precise date unknown at this stage.

If the Scottish Parliament does not have 28 days to scrutinise Scottish Minister's proposal to consent, why not?

Yes.

Information about any time dependency associated with the proposal

As noted, the SI must be in force before the NA commences processing personal data in order to ensure there is a lawful basis for that processing.

Are there any broader governance issues in relation to this proposal, and how will these be regulated and monitored post-withdrawal?

A draft proposal for Erasmus+ governance, meetings and reporting has been shared by DfE with devolved governments for review and to shape its development – providing assurance in ongoing engagement and input from contract mobilisation of the National Agency from summer 2026.

Although the alignment policy is relevant for these specific regulations, Scotland having access to Erasmus+ will bring back advantages to Scottish Students that were lost to Brexit.

Reassociation with Erasmus+ is just one element of Scotland's policy of closer alignment with the EU and we will continue to seek alignment in other areas of devolved competence where it is beneficial and meaningful to do so.

Any significant financial implications?

There are no related financial costs.

SUMMARY NOTIFICATION TO THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

SI NOTIFICATION: SUMMARY

Title of Instrument - The Erasmus+ Programme (Data Processing) Regulations 2026
Proposed laying date at Westminster Between 14-17 April
Date by which Committee has been asked to respond 23 March 2026
Power(s) under which SI is to be made section 31 of the European Union (Future Relationship) Act 2020
Categorisation under SI Protocol Type 1
Purpose To ensure a domestic legal basis for any processing which the National Authority, National Agency or Independent Audit Body need to undertake in order to fulfil their obligations under the Erasmus+ Programme. Also, to enable processing for the Secretary of State and Scottish Ministers, Welsh Ministers and an NI Department to undertake research/statistical analysis and to be able to provide ad hoc support to the National Agency.
Other information
SG Policy contact: Carron Flockhart