

Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee
Thursday 6 February 2025
5th Meeting, 2025 (Session 6)

Review of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement Inquiry: Part 2

1. The Committee published the [UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement: Barriers to trade in goods and opportunities to improve the UK-EU trading relationship](#) report on 10 September 2024, following the first part of our [Review of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#) inquiry.
2. That piece of work focused on trade in goods between the UK and the EU. The second part of the inquiry is looking at trade in services and also youth mobility and touring artists.
3. The Cabinet Secretary's [response to CEEACC TCA Report Part I](#) set out the Scottish Government priorities for improving UK EU relations, including its aim to—
 - Seek full participation in relevant EU programmes, with specific priority to request a commitment to open negotiations with the EU Council to discuss options for partial or full association with Erasmus+ and Creative Europe
 - Seek restored opportunities for professionals in sectors across our economy to work in the EU
4. Evidence for the second part of the inquiry, focused on services, has covered: [a panel representing the legal profession](#) (31 October); [academics and think tanks](#) (21 November); [sectoral representative bodies](#) (5 December); [British Chambers of Commerce and Energy UK](#) (12 December); [economists and trade experts](#) (16 January); and the [European perspective](#) (23 January).
5. Last week was the [first of two panels](#) on youth mobility and this week we will be hearing from—
 - Paul James Cardwell, Professor of Law, the Dickson Poon School of Law, King's College London
 - Peter Brown, Director, British Council Scotland
 - Ellie Bevan, Head of Policy, Programmes & Engagement, Taith
6. A SPICe briefing is provided at **Annexe A** and a written submission from Taith at **Annexe B**.

Clerks to the Committee
February 2025

The logo for SPICe, featuring the text 'SPICe' in white on a purple-to-blue gradient background.

The Information Centre
An t-Ionad Fiosrachaidh

Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee

5th Meeting, 2025 (Session 6), Thursday, 6 February

Youth mobility

This paper has been prepared for the Committee's sessions on youth mobility, which forms part of its inquiry into the review of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement. It offers background on youth mobility prior to EU exit and the UK's association with EU programmes such as Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe. Additionally, the paper outlines the UK Government's Youth Mobility Visa and international exchange programmes established by the UK, Welsh, and Scottish Governments. It also highlights potential issues for discussion during the Committee's session on 6 February regarding youth mobility.

Background on youth mobility and the Trade and Cooperation Agreement

When the UK was an EU member state, UK citizens could travel, reside, work, or study in any EU Member State without needing a visa. The eligibility of UK citizens to live, work, or study in an EU Member State now depends on the national immigration laws and visa requirements of the host country.¹

Youth mobility schemes typically refer to visa or funding schemes that allow individuals aged between 18 and 35 to live, work, or study in a country for a set period. These schemes are generally designed to enhance skills across regions and promote cultural exchange. The EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement does not include provisions for youth mobility.

¹ UK citizens do not need to apply for a visa in advance of travel to the EU as a short-term visitor and can stay within the Schengen area for up to 90 days in any 180-day period.

Participation in EU programmes

[Part 5 of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement \(TCA\)](#) includes provisions for UK participation in EU programmes, with the specific programmes outlined in a separate Protocol known as Protocol I, or the [Protocol on Programmes and Activities in which the UK participates](#).

At the outset of TCA negotiations, the UK requested to continue participation in two EU programmes associated with youth and research mobility: [Horizon Europe](#) and [Erasmus+](#). Horizon Europe is a research and innovation programme that funds research projects, fellowships, and the mobility of researchers, while Erasmus+ facilitates student and staff educational exchanges. However, the EU and the UK were only able to agree on continued participation in Horizon Europe.²

UK's association to Horizon Europe

[Horizon Europe](#) is the EU's main funding programme for research and innovation. The programme facilitates collaboration between institutions across the EU and aims to strengthen knowledge exchange and the impact of research. It is not a student mobility programme.

In 2023, the UK agreed a deal with the EU to associate to Horizon Europe. [A joint statement](#) released by the UK Government and the European Commission states that from the 2024 Work Programme onwards:

UK researchers will be able to fully participate in the Horizon Europe programme on the same terms as the researchers from other associated countries, including leading consortia...

Further information about Horizon Europe and developments leading up to the deal agreed in 2023 are outlined in the July 2023 SPICe blog '[EU-UK relations – developments on the Horizon?](#)'

Erasmus+

The Erasmus programme, established in 1987, began as a university student mobility initiative. Over time, it has expanded to include previous EU programmes like Socrates, which focused on mobility and language learning. The current iteration, [Erasmus+](#), launched in 2014, is an EU funding programme that provides mobility and cooperation opportunities across various sectors:

- higher education
- vocational education and training
- school education (including early childhood education and care)

² SPICe published a blog in January 2021 on [university research funding and student mobility post-Brexit](#) following the publication of the TCA.

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- adult education
- youth
- sport.

Educational institutions and youth groups, as well as voluntary and sporting organisations, can apply for funding via Erasmus+. These organisations, if awarded a grant, then make this money available to their respective members.

[Grants for higher education students to study abroad](#) are the most well-known purpose of Erasmus+. Students can be funded for varying durations under Erasmus+. Long-term mobility can last from a minimum of 2 months to a maximum of 12 months within each study cycle (i.e., within each undergraduate or postgraduate degree). For one-cycle courses like medicine or architecture, the maximum duration can extend up to 24 months. Short-term mobility grants can support visits lasting between 5 and 30 days. Erasmus+ students do not pay tuition fees to the host university. Instead, they continue to pay their home institution's fees. The Erasmus+ grant covers part of the travel and living costs.

Implementation of Erasmus+

The [European Commission](#) is responsible for Erasmus+. It oversees the programme's budget, priority and target setting, application criteria, and evaluation. Most Erasmus+ activities are carried out at the national level with applications and awards for Erasmus+ projects managed by a network of [National Agencies](#). These agencies operate under the supervision of responsible government departments, known as National Authorities. The current mandate for the programme is running on the [EU's 2021 to 2027 multiannual financial framework and is supported by a €26.2 billion budget](#).

Full participation in Erasmus+ is open to [EU member states and associated third countries](#). The EU member states and associated third countries are subject to all the obligations and requirements of [Regulation 2021/817](#) (i.e., the regulation establishing the current Erasmus+ programme).

Impact of Erasmus+ in UK and Scotland

The [UK participated in Erasmus+ when it was an EU member state](#) and during the transition period. The Erasmus+ programme was managed in the UK by the UK Erasmus+ National Agency, which brought together the [British Council](#) and [Ecorys UK](#). The UK Government Department of Education was the UK National Authority for the Erasmus+ programme. The UK Government Department for Education also oversaw the alignment of the programme's delivery with the policies of the UK and devolved governments.

The funding cycle for the [2014 to 2020 Erasmus+ programme ended on 31 May 2023](#). This means [that Erasmus+ funding in UK and Scotland that had been awarded could have been used until that date](#). The UK is now a [third country not associated to the programme](#). Third countries not associated to the programme may only participate in Erasmus+ activities provided for by Article 20 of [Regulation 2021/817](#)

(i.e., where the European Commission has deemed there is good reason to allow international countries to participate and it considers it beneficial to the EU).

Funding in UK and Scotland

The [last Erasmus+ mandate that the UK participated in](#) as an EU member state ran from 2014 to 2020. The total programme funding was €14.7 billion.

The total reserved funding for Erasmus+ projects in the UK between 2014 and 2019 is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Total reserved EU funding for Erasmus+ projects in the UK 2014 - 2019

	2014	2015	2016	2018	2018	2019
€m	112	122	129	145	170	187

Note: The figures in this table are from publications by the [House of Commons Library](#) and the [British Council](#).

The UK Government [released estimates of the UK's contributions to the 2014 to 2020 Erasmus+ programme](#) in the UK Parliament House of Lords on 23 July 2021. Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay wrote in response to the question on behalf of the UK Government:

While the UK was a member state of the EU, we did not make separate contributions to individual EU programmes such as Erasmus+, but instead made an overall contribution to the EU budget which was then used to fund those programmes. It is therefore not possible to calculate a figure for the UK government's direct contributions to Erasmus+.

However, an indicative UK contribution figure can be obtained by taking the total Erasmus+ payments made in each year and applying to it the UK's funding share of the overall EU budget in that year.

The UK Government published Table 2 in its response. Table 2 estimates the UK's financial contributions to the Erasmus+ programme over the period of the 2014 to 2020 mandate during which the UK was an EU member state.

Table 2: UK indicative estimate of Erasmus+ contributions 2015 - 2019

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Erasmus+ payments executed €m [1][2]	1,834	2,048	2,153	2,366	2,857
UK Share of Own Resources [2]	15.7%	12.0%	11.9%	11.5%	11.8%
UK Indicative Erasmus+ Contributions €m	288	247	257	273	338
Exchange Rate [3]	1.38	1.22	1.14	1.13	1.14
UK Indicative Erasmus+ Contributions £m	209	201	224	241	296

[1] Budget amounts are taken from EU Financial Report Data (see https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/financial-reports_en). Note: the figures do not correct for assigned revenue from non-EU country participants in Erasmus+.

[2] Erasmus+ payments in each year cover both current programmes and the completion of previous programmes.

[3] UK Share of Own Resources are taken from EU Financial Report Data (see https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/financial-reports_en). Own resources are funds that Member States make available in advance for the EU (see 'What are Own Resources' worksheet for a detailed definition).

Note: the figures do not correct for assigned revenue from non-EU country participants in Erasmus+.

These figures are determined by the EU's Own Resources Funding System and do not reflect the UK's level of funding received from the Erasmus+ programme.

Payments in each year cover both current programmes and the completion of previous programmes.

Participation

The European Commission statistics on outgoing and incoming participants in Erasmus+ projects are shown in Figures 1 and 2. The full breakdown of participation outgoing and incoming students, trainees, and staff is published in the [European Commission's 2020 factsheet for the UK](#).

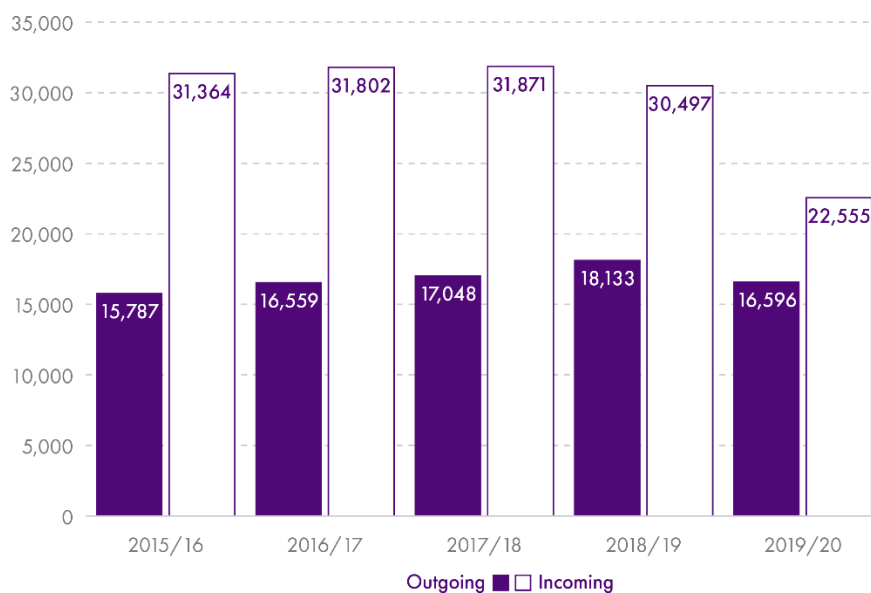


Figure 1. Outgoing and incoming students and trainees from and to the United Kingdom during Erasmus+ 2014-2020

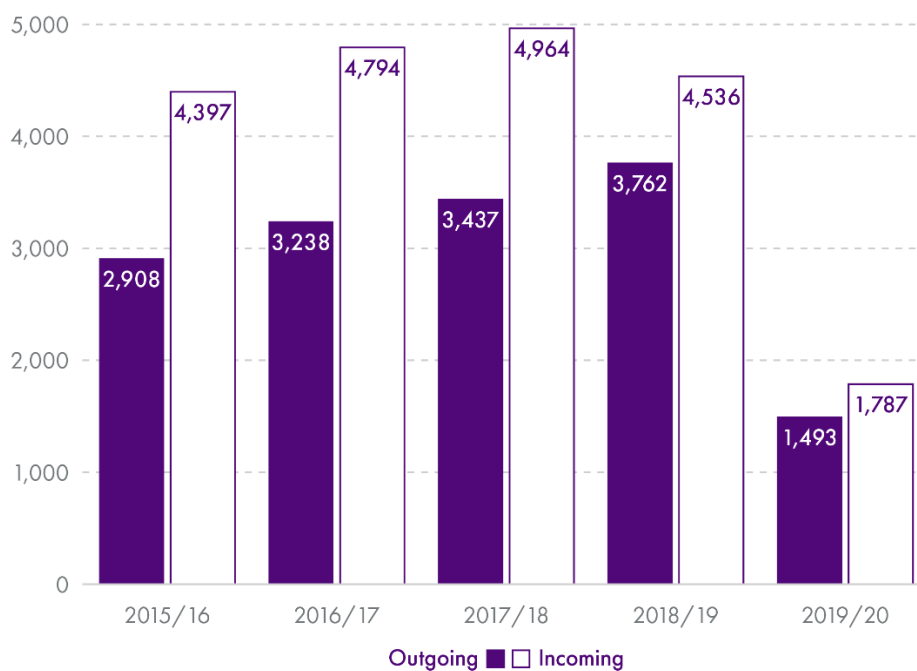


Figure 2. Outgoing and incoming staff from and to the United Kingdom during Erasmus+ 2014-2020

Figures previously obtained from Erasmus UK (and as reported in a SPICe briefing to the Education, Children and Young People Committee) show that between 2013/14 and 2022/23, 17,065 staff and 112,355 students took part in the scheme. Table 3 sets out the number of staff and students taking part by country of sending institution.

Table 3: Outgoing staff and student numbers by UK country of sending institution

Staff	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total cumulative
England	66	1,677	2,085	2,236	2,445	2,673	820	28	1,059	57	13,146
Northern Ireland	3	64	63	76	99	91	15	8	57	2	478
Overseas Territories	0	0	0	2	10	10	6	0	2	0	30
Scotland	11	262	357	465	516	644	218	7	169	18	2,667
Wales	0	88	130	142	148	148	43	0	40	5	744
Total	80	2,091	2,635	2,921	3,218	3,566	1,102	43	1,327	82	17,065

Students	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total cumulative
England	104	11,184	11,957	12,429	12,714	12,542	10,468	5,050	8,400	14	84,862
Northern Ireland	1	610	616	685	702	588	600	202	356	0	4,360
Overseas Territories	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	3
Scotland	6	2,197	2,431	2,548	2,705	2,701	2,487	840	2,207	2	18,124
Wales	10	741	738	794	754	744	559	256	408	2	5,006
Total	121	14,732	15,742	16,456	16,875	16,575	14,114	6,349	11,373	18	112,355

Source: Erasmus+ UK 2014-2023 Higher education mobility statistics

Between 2013/14 and 2022/23 of all UK **staff** taking part in Erasmus+:

- 16% were from Scottish institutions.
- 77% were from English institutions.
- 3% were from Northern Irish institutions.
- 4% were from Welsh institutions.

Between 2013/14 and 2022/23 of all UK **students** taking part in Erasmus+:

- 16% were from Scottish institutions.
- 76% from English institutions.
- 4% from Northern Irish institutions.
- and 4% from Welsh institutions.

Data from the [Erasmus+ annual report 2019](#) indicates that the UK was the 6th highest participator in the programme with 9,993 higher education students on study placements (see Table 4). The countries receiving the [most outgoing students](#) from the UK were Spain, France, and Germany (in that order). These countries were also the most likely to [send students to the UK](#) with France sending the most (7,155 students), followed by Germany (4,866 students) and then Spain (4,480 students).

Table 4: The countries participating in Erasmus 2014-2020 with the most higher education students on study placements. Data as reported by House of Commons Library from Erasmus+ annual report 2019.

1	Spain	34,276
2	Germany	33,282
3	Italy	30,876
4	France	30,505
5	Turkey	13,131
6	United Kingdom	9,993
7	Netherlands	9,852
8	Poland	9,729
9	Portugal	7,487
10	Belgium	6,269

Participation in Scotland

As detailed in Table 3, Scottish universities were often proportionately more active than universities in other nations and regions of the United Kingdom. The [Scottish Government stated](#) that:

Since 2014 more than 15,000 people have been involved in Erasmus+ projects across Scotland. These support skills development and collaboration across the EU through student and other exchanges. From 2014-2018 a total of €90.7 million was awarded to Scotland across 844 projects involving 13,957 participants. Proportionally more European Erasmus students come to

Scotland than to any other country in the UK, and proportionally more Scottish students study abroad on Erasmus than from any other country in the UK.

In [written evidence to the House of Commons Scottish Affairs Committee inquiry on Universities and Scotland](#) in October 2020, the Royal Society of Edinburgh indicated that Scottish participants comprised 12% of UK participants in Erasmus+ between 2014 and 2018. During the same period, Scotland received 13% of the total Erasmus+ funding in the UK, despite Scotland's population making up only 8.2% of the UK population. Similarly, [Universities UK stated](#):

Scottish universities benefited hugely from Erasmus+ participation, proportionally being one of the most active nations across Europe as well as within the UK (16% of all UK students participating in Erasmus+ were from Scottish institutions). 18,124 students from Scottish universities participated in Erasmus+ between 2014/15 and 2022/23. According to Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA) figures, 2,755 Erasmus+ students attended Scottish universities in 2018/19 on inbound schemes. In addition, Erasmus+ offered opportunities for staff with 2,667 university staff participating during the same time period.

Negotiations to participate in Erasmus+

In the years leading up to the UK's exit from the EU, retaining access to EU programmes such as Erasmus+ was a priority for the higher education sector. [Universities Scotland raised concern](#) that a successor scheme would be "inferior". The Russell Group, representing UK research universities including the University of Edinburgh and University of Glasgow, [highlighted the importance of Erasmus+](#) for students.

YouthLink Scotland ran the Keep Erasmus Plus campaign, calling on MPs and MSPs to support continued participation in the scheme. YouthLink Scotland highlighted the importance of Erasmus+ in its [response to the UK Parliament Education Committee's 2016 inquiry into the impact of exiting the EU on higher education](#). In the submission, YouthLink stated that Erasmus+ often benefited those furthest away from education the most, with 10% of Erasmus+ funding ring-fenced for the youth strand:

Erasmus+ funding has allowed young people, who might otherwise not have the opportunity, to participate in an international exchange. A number of our members involved in international youth work exchanges have noted the impact on young people in the case studies presented here. Through engaging in youth work, young people are more resilient, optimistic for the future, consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control.

In the run up to the UK exit from the EU, the Scottish [Government called for the UK to remain a member of the programme](#). The Scottish Parliament's Session 5 Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee also [recommended continued participation in Erasmus+](#). The [UK Government's February 2020 Future Relationship document](#) stated that participation would be considered "provided the terms are in the UK's interests."

The UK and EU did not reach a deal on participation in Erasmus+ during negotiations on the TCA and the programme was not listed in Protocol I. As such, the UK no longer participates in the scheme. When the EU and UK agreed the TCA, the European Commission stated in a [“Questions & Answers”](#) on 24 December 2020:

By leaving the EU, the UK effectively terminated the possibility for EU and UK students to benefit from the Erasmus exchange programme.

The Erasmus programme is open to the participation of third countries under the conditions set out in the basic act establishing the programme. Among these, third countries that become associated to Erasmus have to participate in the programme in full, to ensure the synergies between the different areas in the programme.

The UK requested partial participation in the programme, which is not foreseen in the basic act establishing Erasmus. The UK subsequently decided that it did not want to participate in Erasmus.

Following the UK Government’s announcement of withdrawal from Erasmus+, in January 2021 [a joint statement was issued](#) by then-Further and Higher Education Minister Richard Lochhead MSP and then-Welsh Minister for Education Kirsty Williams MS. This stated that the Scottish and Welsh Governments would explore how Scotland and Wales could “continue to enjoy the benefits offered by Erasmus+”.

Also in January 2021, 145 Members of the European Parliament wrote to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Commissioner Mariya Gabriel calling for the Commission to allow Scotland and Wales to have continued participation in Erasmus+. In February 2021, Ursula von der Leyen replied to the letter and [is reported in Politico](#) as stating:

As one constituent nation of the UK, association to Erasmus+ is not possible for Scotland, separately. The only possibility for the UK is to associate as a whole, or not at all.

The Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture Angus Robertson MSP indicated to the Committee in [oral evidence on 20 June 2024](#) that the Scottish Government was compiling a list of improvements to the EU-UK relationship that it considers reachable, one of which was to rejoin Erasmus+. The Cabinet Secretary later stated in the [Scottish Government’s response to the Committee’s report](#) on the TCA and trade in goods (dated 28 October 2024) that the Cabinet Secretary intends to:

Seek full participation in relevant EU programmes, with specific priority to request a commitment to open negotiations with the EU Council to discuss options for partial or full association with Erasmus+ and Creative Europe.

The current UK Government has indicated it has [no plans to rejoin](#) Erasmus+.

Views on Erasmus+ participation

Witnesses providing oral evidence to the Committee during its inquiry have provided various views on Erasmus+ participation. Irene Oldfather from the Scottish Advisory Forum on Europe gave [evidence to the Committee on 8 February 2024](#) and stated:

Participation in Erasmus+ is a clear and pressing issue, but we are not talking just about further and higher education. In recent discussions that we have had, businesses have said that they are keen for young people to be in apprenticeships and involved in exchanges; they do not want the approach to be about just further and higher education.

Alastair Sim from Universities Scotland stated at the same evidence session on 8 February 2024:

There have been strong voices from Scotland, the wider UK and European civil society partners that it would be a great thing to keep the UK fully in Erasmus+. That would help to build the living bridge between Europe and the UK of people who have been abroad and understood each other's cultures and circumstances. It is really disappointing not to get that, but I think that the decision has probably been driven by price. When the UK Government looked at what it would cost to be in Erasmus+, it stepped back.

Erasmus+ was also raised at the Committee's [session on legal services on 31 October 2024](#). Dr Adam Marks speaking on behalf of the Law Society of Scotland stated:

Broadly speaking, we would be delighted to rejoin something like Erasmus.

Professor David Collins from City St George's, University of London stated:

Britain was losing money on Erasmus. [...] Far more Europeans used Erasmus to come here than British students used it to go to Europe. The Turing scheme is very good, and it is a good example of where savings have been made as a result of Brexit.

The Education, Children and Young People (ECYP) Committee heard evidence about the impact of Erasmus+ withdrawal on the youth work sector on [24 May 2023](#). Liz Green of YouthLink Scotland said in the last seven-year cycle of the programme:

...youth projects in Scotland received €5,389,664.

Liz Green said that Erasmus+ had allowed youth organisations to provide opportunities to young people who would otherwise not have had experiences of international exchange and learning:

The fact that a key route to those experiences is unavailable to the sector and to those young people is having a significant negative impact on the youth work sector and on young people.

European Commission proposal for a youth mobility scheme

EU civil society engagement on youth mobility

The [European Economic and Social Committee \(EESC\)](#) serves as a consultative body within the European Union (EU). It comprises of representatives from employers' associations, trade unions, and civil society organisations and is intended to ensure the perspectives of civil society are considered in EU decision-making processes. Youth engagement is a significant part of the current EESC's work programme. The [opinion on EU-UK youth engagement issued by the EESC](#) proposed a mobility scheme for EU and UK citizens. The opinion states:

Given that post-Brexit changes to arrangements for mobility between the UK and the EU have had a disproportionately significant impact on younger people both in the EU and in the UK, especially in the area of education and science, the EESC should propose to the EU institutions to consider the possibility of facilitating EU-UK youth relations, including a possible reciprocal youth mobility scheme with the UK, as well as identifying various areas where EU-UK youth engagement can help young people on both sides of the Channel, which at the same time would contribute to enhancing EU-UK relations in general.

The EESC also called for the European Commission to negotiate for the reintegration of the UK into the EU programmes Erasmus+ and Creative Europe. It described the UK's decision to leave Erasmus+ as "the definitive issue impacting the EU-UK relationship in the field of youth". The EESC also suggested that the implementation review of the TCA was an opportunity to address the issue of youth mobility.

European Commission proposal to open negotiations

Following the EESC opinion, the European Commission [published a recommendation that EU member state governments agree to open negotiations with the UK Government](#) for an agreement on youth mobility between the EU and the UK (dated 18 April 2024).³ The recommendation means Member States must now agree whether to pursue a mobility agreement with the UK and develop the negotiating mandate to give to the European Commission. If the UK Government adopts a policy position in favour of an EU-UK youth mobility scheme, the European Commission would then be able to begin conducting negotiations. However, the UK Government has indicated that it has "[no plans for an EU-wide youth mobility scheme](#)". The European Commission has suggested they are not in favour of bilateral youth mobility agreements between the UK and individual member states. [Media reports](#) have suggested the UK Government have previously approached individual member states on the matter of bilateral mobility arrangements. The European Commission stated in a "[Questions and Answers](#)" on the proposal:

³ SPICe [published a blog on the detail of the Commission's proposal](#) on 19 April 2024.

Only an EU-level approach will ensure that all Member States are treated equally in respect of mobility of young people to the UK. This is one of the key considerations of the 2018 European Council guidelines on relations with the UK.

Parallel negotiations by Member States neither guarantee that the UK would be interested in reaching an agreement with each Member State nor would they guarantee that each Member State would be treated equally.

Summary of the proposed scheme

The European Commission indicates in its recommendation that the proposed scheme would be targeted at individuals aged between 18 and 30. This scheme would allow young people to stay in a member state country for up to four years without needing a specific purpose, such as studying, training, or working. The proposed scheme would require individuals to hold a valid travel document, comprehensive health insurance, and proof of sufficient means of subsistence for the period of their stay. UK nationals would not receive intra-EU mobility rights via the scheme. Admission under the scheme would only be valid for that specific member state country, with travel within the rest of the EU restricted to up to 90 days.

European Commission negotiating objectives

One of the European Commission's aims in the proposal is to restore equal treatment between EU and UK nationals on tuition fees and the healthcare surcharge. Currently, most EU students pay overseas or international tuition fees to study in the UK. The proposal would mean that EU students would be treated as home students with regard to tuition fees. The proposal would also mean that EU nationals on the envisaged scheme would be exempt from paying the UK Government healthcare surcharge paid by most foreign nationals applying for temporary permission to live in the UK.

UK Government Youth Mobility Scheme Visa

The UK Government Home Office operates a [Youth Mobility Scheme visa](#). It is available to young adults from specific countries to live, work, and travel in the UK for up to two years.

[Eligibility for the scheme](#) varies depending on the applicant's country of origin. For individuals from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Korea, applicants must be aged between 18 and 35. They must be at least 18 years old when the visa starts and 35 or under when applying. It is possible to apply before turning 18, and the visa can start after the applicant turns 35.

For applicants from other countries, the age range is 18 to 30. Eligible countries include Andorra, Iceland, Japan, Monaco, San Marino, and Uruguay. Additionally, applicants from Hong Kong (with an SAR passport) and Taiwan must be selected in the Youth Mobility Scheme ballot before applying. [British overseas citizens](#), [British overseas territories citizens](#), and [British nationals \(overseas\)](#) are also eligible, provided they are aged 18 to 30.

Applicants must also have at least £2,530 in savings. The [application process](#) can begin up to six months before the intended travel date. It involves proving identity, submitting necessary documents, paying an application fee of £298, and paying the healthcare surcharge.

The visa is valid for 24 months and allows multiple entries and exits from the UK. Citizens of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand can [extend their stay](#) by an additional year. While in the UK, visa holders can work in most jobs, study, and be self-employed under certain conditions. However, they cannot work as professional sportspersons or access public funds.

Proposal for a Scottish Graduate Visa

The Scottish Government published its proposal for a Scottish Graduate Visa on 22 January 2025. In a letter to the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee, Minister for Equalities Kaukab Stewart MSP stated:

This proposed tailored visa route would be for international graduates from Scottish Universities or Colleges who want to stay in Scotland, and would be deliverable within the current UK immigration system. It would be linked to a Scottish tax code and be based on a requirement to live and work in Scotland. It would give international students in Scotland an additional two years, beyond the existing Graduate Visa, to develop their career in Scotland to meet the salary threshold for a Skilled Worker Visa.

The [supporting strategy document](#) indicates the proposed visa route is based on a similar scheme from 2005 known as Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland. The Fresh Talent scheme ran from 2005 to 2008. The scheme concluded when the UK-wide Tier 1 post-study work visa was launched.

International Exchange Programmes

Following the UK's withdrawal from Erasmus+, the UK, Welsh and Scottish Governments each established student mobility programmes. The UK Government's Turing Scheme, Welsh Government scheme Taith and Scottish Government scheme Scottish Education Exchange Programme (SEEP) vary in scope and have progressed at different rates. More information about each scheme can be found under the headings below.

The Turing Scheme

The Turing Scheme is the UK Government's programme to provide grants to education providers for UK students to study and take up work placements anywhere in the world.

The UK Government announced in December 2020 that the Turing Scheme would open to UK students from September 2021, providing:

...similar opportunities for students to study and work abroad as the Erasmus+ programme but it will include countries across the world and aims to deliver greater value for money to taxpayers.

While the scheme was initially delivered by Capita, from AY 2024-25 it is being [delivered directly by the Department for Education](#).

Initial funding of £100m was provided for the first year of the scheme and this was expected to enable around 35,000 students to go on overseas placements and exchanges. The scheme is open to Scottish institutions. Organisations including schools, colleges and universities can apply for funding for projects on behalf of their students. [Youth work organisations were eligible to apply for Turing Scheme funding for 2023/24 in partnership with schools, further education or vocational education and training providers.](#)

An [August 2023 House of Commons Library \(HoCL\) briefing](#) on the Turing Scheme sets out the funding of £110m was available for AY 2022-23.

A [UK Parliament Written Answer](#) from 26 November 2024 states:

- The Turing Scheme has provided funding to support more than 160,000 placements since the UK's departure from Erasmus+;
- £105m has been allocated for AY 2024-25; and
- More than 43,000 students from across the UK will take part in placements in 2024-25.

Comparing the spend from Turing with that of Erasmus+ is complicated, and the HoCL briefing notes:

...as the Government has argued, direct comparisons here are also complicated by the fact the two programmes do not cover the same activities.

In terms of support provided for students, the HoCL briefing notes the UK Government has said grants under the Turing Scheme are “broadly consistent” with what was available under the 2014 to 2020 Erasmus+ programme. However, the briefing states that Erasmus+ living cost grants for placements outside the EU lasting more than eight weeks are more generous than what is provided by the Turing Scheme. In addition, while tuition fees are waived under Erasmus+, under the Turing Scheme it is only an expectation that universities will waive fees.

Table 5 shows projects funded by the Turing Scheme, broken down by nation and sector.

Table 5: Turing Scheme funding amounts and number of approved projects								
	Higher Education		Further Education		Schools		Total	
	Funding (£m)	Projects	Funding (£m)	Projects	Funding (£m)	Projects	Funding (£m)	Projects
2021/22								
England	56.04	111	21.65	101	5.77	105	83.46	317

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Wales	3.01	7	1.55	2	0.56	4	5.12	13
Scotland	6.95	17	0.98	7	0.38	5	8.31	29
N.I	0.94	4	0.65	9	0.00	0	1.59	13
UK Total	66.94	139	24.83	119	6.71	114	98.48	372
2022/23								
England	53.06	103	32.01	93	6.93	69	92.00	265
Wales	2.16	8	0.17	1	0.12	1	2.45	10
Scotland	5.81	16	2.65	11	0.56	3	9.02	30
N.I	1.08	4	1.52	7	0.00	0	2.60	11
UK Total	62.11	131	36.35	112	7.61	73	106.07	316
2023/24								
England	51.40	99	28.00	138	9.10	164	88.50	401
Wales	1.80	6	1.20	3	0.28	2	3.28	11
Scotland	5.60	15	3.60	17	0.74	11	9.94	43
N.I	1.20	4	1.70	12	0.15	3	3.05	19
UK total	60.00	124	34.50	170	10.27	180	104.77	474
2024/25								
England	54.47	101	29.57	184	9.29	266	93.33	551
Wales	1.3	7	0.73	4	0.15	4	2.18	15
Scotland	5.03	18	1.37	11	0.48	17	6.88	46
N.I	0.82	3	1.78	14	0.31	11	2.91	28
UK Total	61.62	129	33.45	213	10.23	298	105.3	640

Source: [HoCL Briefing](#) and [DfE figures 2024-25](#). Please note, the DfE figures refer to 'projects' as 'successful applications'.

Table 6 below shows the share of Turing Scheme funding by nation from 2021-22 to 2023-24.

Table 6: % share of funding by nation		
	£m	% share
2021/22		
England	83.46	84.7%
Wales	5.12	5.2%
Scotland	8.31	8.4%
N.I	1.59	1.6%
UK Total	98.48	100%
2022/23		
England	92.00	86.7%
Wales	2.45	2.3%
Scotland	9.02	8.5%

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N.I	2.60	2.5%
UK Total	106.07	100%
2023/24		
England	88.50	84.5%
Wales	3.28	3.1%
Scotland	9.94	9.5%
N.I	3.05	2.9%
UK Total	104.77	100%
2024/25		
England	93.33	88.6%
Wales	2.17	2.1%
Scotland	6.89	6.5%
N.I	2.9	2.8%
UK Total	105.3	100%

Source: [HoCL Briefing](#) and [DfE figures 2024-25](#)

The data in **Tables 5 and 6** shows that while Scotland's overall percentage share of Turing Scheme funding decreased in 2024-25, the number of projects increased to 46.

Table 7 shows participant numbers and the percentage of participants classed as disadvantaged by nation from 2022-23 to 2024-25. The [HoCL briefing states](#) the criteria for disadvantaged groups includes: students with an annual household income of £25,000 or less; students receiving Universal Credit or income-related benefits; school pupils/students in care or care experienced; school pupils who are/were entitled to free school meals; refugees and asylum seekers.

Table 7: Turing Scheme participant numbers by location and sector						
	2022-23		2023-24		2024-25	
	Participants	Disadvantaged participants (%)	Participants	Disadvantaged participants (%)	Participants	Disadvantaged participants (%)
England	33,099	53%	33,863	62%	38,054	55%
Wales	1,067	37%	1,355	45%	985	33%
Scotland	3,344	51%	3,943	52%	2,869	45%
Northern Ireland	864	48%	1,045	56%	1,210	44%

Source: [HoCL Briefing](#) and [DfE figures 2024-25](#)

Table 7 shows that the number of participants from institutions in Scotland fell from 3,943 in 2023-24 to 2,869 in 2024-25. The proportion of participants classed as 'disadvantaged' also fell. The number of participants from institutions in England rose to 38,054 in 2024-25 from 33,863 in 2023-24.

Details of the Turing Scheme for 2025-26 have not yet been announced.

Taith

In March 2021, the Welsh Government announced that their [replacement Erasmus+ scheme would start from 2022](#), with funding of £65m up to 2026. The scheme is called Taith, which is Welsh for 'journey'.

Taith is open to learners and staff in adult education; further and vocational education; higher education; schools; and youth work. Participating organisations in Wales can invite international partners and learners to study, train, volunteer or work in Wales. It is delivered by International Learning Exchange Programme (ILEP Ltd), a subsidiary company of Cardiff University.

The first programme (2022 to 2026) aims to fund 15,000 people from Wales to go on exchanges. 10,000 people from all over the world will come to study, train, volunteer or work in Wales.

A [Welsh Government news release](#) from November 2024 stated that, since it began in 2022, Taith has funded 327 Welsh organisations to support 199 projects in over 90 countries.

Taith also awarded £10m to Universities Wales to deliver the Global Wales project. This brings together Welsh further and higher education institutions and

organisations to work collaboratively to boost Wales' international profile, build networks and partnerships and support international recruitment.

The [Taith Programme Strategy](#) sets out five main objectives for the 2022 to 2026 :

1. To deliver an inclusive, all-Wales programme to get more people involved in international exchanges, to broaden the horizons and confidence of young people, learners and staff at all levels in Wales, give them life-enhancing opportunities and support them to become ambitious, capable learners throughout their lives.
2. To promote collaborations between Welsh and international organisations that enable two-way learning exchanges to benefit everyone involved, build international links, and support the education sectors, including youth work and adult education.
3. To encourage ambitious, innovative and creative activities that represent the best in international education exchanges and collaboration.
4. To raise the international profile of Wales as an open, outward-looking and globally responsible nation, committed to building on its legacy of international partnerships and relations.
5. To help deliver Welsh Government priorities in transforming international engagement and developing the best in international education and youth sectors through sustainable actions that benefit current and future generations in Wales.

The programme is also committed to improving access for people with disabilities, additional learning needs, underrepresented groups and from disadvantaged backgrounds. It seeks to promote Wales and the Welsh language to the world. It also seeks to encourage sustainable travel.

The [next Taith funding call](#) is set to open for applicants this month (January 2025), with a focus on mobility of participants, providing short and long-term opportunities to learn, work or volunteer. This is open to all sectors eligible for Taith.

More information about previous projects funded by Taith is [available on the Taith website](#).

Scottish Education Exchange Programme (SEEP)

The Scottish Education Exchange Programme (SEEP) is the Scottish Government's proposed replacement scheme for Erasmus+.

The Scottish Government stated in the 2021-22 Programme for Government (PfG) the intention to replace Erasmus+ with a Scottish Education Exchange Programme (SEEP). The [PfG stated](#):

We will...develop a Scottish Education Exchange Programme to support the international mobility of staff and learners, and work to resecure Scotland's access to the Erasmus + Programme.

In a [letter to the Education, Children and Young People \(ECYP\) Committee](#) on 19 May 2023, Minister for Further Education, Higher Education; and Minister for Veterans Graeme Dey said that the Scottish Government had engaged with stakeholders and is "listening to the sectors and the needs of their learners and staff". The Minister's letter stated that the Scottish scheme would focus on "addressing the gaps in the Turing scheme":

...including in areas such as the participation of youth programmes, adult learners, and community learning.

The letter also stated that the Scottish Government continued to "explore options to support the vital bilateral exchange arrangements between educational institutions".

Giving evidence to the [ECYP Committee on 21 June 2023](#), the Minister noted the budget challenges faced by the Scottish Government, and said he anticipated a pilot project would be launched later that financial year. Asked whether he anticipated any issues with the scheme in relation to the free movement of people now that Scotland was no longer in the EU, the Minister said:

We believe that the scheme would be covered by a six-month study visa, which would take account of a term. We believe that it will be ok, but we await confirmation of that.

Asked why Scotland had not at that time set up its own programme, the Minister said that the Scottish Government was looking at "a number of things to get this right". He said the Scottish Government wanted to look at Turing Scheme allocations and to "help determine what the gaps are":

As the committee knows, there is no inward mobility element to Turing and no inward or outward mobility for staff. Of course, there is also no youth element. We know that, but we need to understand the basis on which Turing awards. We will see shortly what the awards will be for 2023-24, which will also inform our thinking.

A further [letter from the Minister to the ECYP Committee in September 2023](#) announced that a Test and Learn Project would open for bids in October 2023, and this would be built on to develop SEEP in 2024-25.

The Minister's letter stated the Scottish Government would provide an "initial up to £1 million" for the test project. Scottish universities and colleges could bid for grants of between £1,000 and £25,000 for international projects. For projects containing cross-sectoral educational partnerships (e.g. with schools, youth work adult learning or sports organisations) a further £10,000 was available.

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The 2024-25 funding round opened for bids between 31 July and 15 September 2024. Grant letters were issued in October 2024 and projects are due to end by 31 March 2025.

In correspondence with SPICe in January 2025, Scottish Government officials stated that £535,000 was allocated to the 2024-25 programme, and that all applications meeting the scoring criteria were fully funded.

The Test and Learn project has three objectives:

- Maintain the Erasmus+ approach as far as possible, with projects being led by the higher education sector.
- Encourage the development of international partnerships between colleges and universities, addressing a gap between Turing and Erasmus+.
- Support the collaborative ambition set out in [Scotland's International Education Strategy](#) (IES).

To receive funding, bids must evidence how they will support at least one of the ten actions in the IES.

36 projects received funding through the 2024-25 programme. A full list of projects funded can be found on the Scottish Government website. These were taken forward by colleges and universities and focused on developing relationships with institutions elsewhere in the world, often involving visits to the institution. Projects covered a range of areas such as health care, sport, climate change and net zero, engineering, sustainability, culture and the arts, and staff and student mobility.

Scotland's International Education Strategy (IES)

[Scotland's International Education Strategy \(IES\)](#) was launched in February 2024. The Scottish Government's overall vision is for Scotland to be an attractive place to live, work, study and do businesses at the same time as becoming more active internationally, working in partnership with countries who share the aims of alleviating poverty and achieving net zero.

The ambitions for the IES are to work with universities and colleges to:

- attract students, staff and researchers from outside of the UK and diversify Scotland's international student population;
- maximise Scotland's global social, educational and economic contribution;
- become a world leader in international education, research and knowledge exchange and deepen global collaboration and engagement.

Delivery of SEEP is [listed in the strategy](#) as an action under the ambition to attract international students, staff and researchers to Scotland.

1.2 We will deliver a Scottish Education Exchange Test and Learn project in 2023/24 and build on this to develop a Scottish Education Exchange Programme.

The Scottish Government has an international network of offices. These are located in Beijing (China), Berlin (Germany), Brussels (Belgium), Copenhagen (Denmark), Dublin (Ireland), London (United Kingdom), Ottawa (Canada), Paris (France) and Washington DC (USA). These offices engage with governments and organisations and their work includes forwarding the aims of the IES.

Views on international exchange programmes

Witnesses appearing at Scottish Parliament Committees in recent years have provided evidence about the Turing Scheme, Taith and the Scottish Education Exchange Programme.

Giving evidence to [this Committee in February 2022](#), Professor Andrea Nolan of Universities Scotland said that “the lack of inward mobility” was a “real challenge” of the Turing Scheme.

Professor Nolan said a Scottish scheme could take elements from Erasmus+ and the Turing Scheme by combining the Turing Scheme’s short-term exchanges with continuing support for inward students as offered by Erasmus+. Professor Nolan highlighted the work universities had to do to build relationships in the aftermath of the UK’s withdrawal from Erasmus+:

...the ideal scheme would have those reciprocal relationships. We are all frantically trying to build them...You can just imagine it, though: we once had this wonderfully organised multifaceted scheme, and now we are all suddenly making bilateral arrangements. The ideal would be a broad-based scheme with no bilaterals and funding for inward students.

Professor Nolan also said that another strength of the Turing Scheme was its focus on ensuring disadvantaged students had opportunities to take part in exchanges.

The ECYP Committee heard evidence on student mobility programmes at its meetings on [24 May](#) and [21 June 2023](#). At the [24 May 2023 meeting](#), the Committee heard from representatives from Taith and YouthLink Scotland.

Liz Green of YouthLink Scotland also highlighted the Turing Scheme’s focus on provisions for young people requiring additional support as a positive aspect, however she added that youth organisations “cannot really access” Turing, and while they could apply in partnership with institutions it was not as accessible to them as Erasmus+ had been:

...the scheme is not set up for youth work. It does not have opportunities for informal education programmes to make that youth work difference or to run a youth work programme through it. It does not seem to be accessible to the sector.

Liz Green said YouthLink Scotland would like to see a Scottish scheme have a:

...ring-fenced youth work sector-specific strand, so that funding is available specifically for youth work.

During the same meeting, Susana Galván of Taith spoke about how the programme was launched. In March 2021, the Welsh Government announced funding of £65m over four years to set up an international learning exchange programme. Hosted at Cardiff University as a subsidiary company of the university, the programme launched in February 2022.

Susana Galván spoke of the scheme's aim of being all-inclusive, and stated it provided inward and outward mobility opportunities. She said the visa regime sometimes posed challenges:

...there is an inward mobility aspect to Taith, and particularly with work-based mobilities—things such as apprenticeships and work-based learning—the current visa regime makes it really difficult for those mobilities to take place. We are constantly raising that with the Welsh Government...

She added:

The visa regime can also be a challenge for outward mobility, particularly because Taith is sometimes not recognised. It is not as well known as Erasmus. We are seeking to ensure that the programme is known and that people know that it facilitates the mobilities.

Giving evidence to [this Committee on 31 October 2024](#), Professor David Collins of City St George's, University of London said that he personally felt the Turing Scheme was "much better" than Erasmus+ and that he did not see the lack of staff mobility under Turing as a loss.

However, in evidence to [this Committee on 21 November 2024](#), Professor Catherine Barnard of the University of Cambridge said Turing "has not been an adequate replacement" for the loss of Erasmus+

In evidence to [this Committee on 8 February 2024](#), Alastair Sim of Universities Scotland said that while there were "a lot of administrative difficulties" with the Turing Scheme, the numbers of students participating in it were "not incomparable" to the numbers benefitting from Erasmus+.

On SEEP, Alastair Sim said:

At the moment, it is so small that it is hard to reach a judgment on it. It is very much proof of concept. The Scottish Government will need to evaluate it and decide whether it is worth developing further and whether it is good value for money compared with other things that, frankly, having faced funding cuts, universities are prioritising.

Issues to discuss

The Committee held an evidence session on 30 January 2025 with representatives from Universities Scotland, Colleges Scotland, YouthLink Scotland, and the National Union of Students Scotland. Members discussed:

- the decision to not associate with Erasmus+

- the lack of provision for youth work in the replacement exchange programmes and the potential ringfencing of youth work funding in exchange programmes
- the lack of reciprocal mobility arrangements in Turing and lack of funding for inward mobility
- the uncertainty over the longevity of the replacement schemes given the funding commitments are made on an annual basis.

Today's evidence session is an opportunity to discuss youth mobility post EU exit and the role that the issue may play in UK-EU relations ahead of the TCA implementation review. The Committee may wish to explore the set-up of the replacement schemes, such as Taith and Turing, and their comparison to the UK's previous participation in Erasmus+.

The Committee may wish to explore any additional or unanticipated effects of not associating with Erasmus+ or setting up a bespoke mobility scheme with the EU. For example: whether there are any significant changes to rates of European language learning by young people in the UK and teaching of English as a foreign language in the EU; and whether non-participation in Erasmus+ impacts access to other funding opportunities such as Horizon Europe.

The Committee may also wish to discuss whether there is interest in an EU-UK youth mobility scheme and what aspects of Erasmus+ and the replacement schemes could inform a potential EU-UK youth mobility scheme.

The Committee may also wish to explore the Scottish Government's proposal for a Scottish Graduate Visa, current UK arrangements for graduate visas and how more skilled graduates can be attracted to settle in Scotland.

Courtney Aitken, Post EU Researcher

Lynne Currie, Senior Researcher (Further and Higher Education)

31.01.25

Note: Committee briefing papers are provided by SPICe for the use of Scottish Parliament committees and clerking staff. They provide focused information or respond to specific questions or areas of interest to committees and are not intended to offer comprehensive coverage of a subject area.

The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP www.parliament.scot

Annexe B

Taith – Written submission for the TCA enquiry (Scotland)

Taith is the Welsh Government funded international learning exchange programme for Wales. It is for people in every part of Wales, in every education sector – schools, youth, adult education, further education, vocational education and training, and higher education, and every education type – formal, informal and non-formal.

Taith has been established to create life-changing opportunities for people in Wales to learn, study and volunteer all over the world.

Taith has two grant funding opportunities:

- Pathway 1, which supports organisations based in Wales to send their learners, young people, staff and volunteers on an international learning exchange. [Pathway 1 - Taith](#)
- Pathway 2, which supports educational innovation in Wales through international collaborations. [Pathway 2 - Taith](#)

Strategy

We refreshed our [strategy](#) in October 2023 to ensure greater focus on inclusion and accessibility.

Taith's purpose is to create life-changing opportunities for learners and young people across Wales through international learning exchanges. Our mission is to fund inclusive and accessible international educational exchange opportunities for learners and staff across Wales, with opportunities for international learners and staff to visit Welsh partners.

We aim to improve access for people from underrepresented groups including:

- Disabled people
- people from ethnic minority backgrounds
- people with additional learning needs
- people from disadvantaged backgrounds

Our objectives are:

1. Ensure exchanges provide the greatest impact
2. Fund high quality learning exchange projects
3. Support educational innovation in Wales

How we developed the programme

Taith was created following the UK government's decision to withdraw the UK from Erasmus+. The Welsh Government made the decision to fund a Welsh programme which aimed, where possible, to fill the gap left by the withdrawal from Erasmus+. Taith was therefore initially developed with this aim – to offer the same activities, to the same types of participants and within the same education sectors. The principles of reciprocity were also key, with funding available to bring people into Wales, as well as for people in Wales to travel abroad.

Ongoing consultation with the sectors, and better understanding the challenges and barriers they face has enabled us to develop Taith into a programme which works for all education sectors. Taith genuinely welcomes and supports small organisations who have never previously believed that international exchange was an option for them or their participants. We offer support, advice, and guidance to those with little experience, and who are often time and resource poor, but with a passion and a vision for providing opportunities for those with the most to gain. We provide additional funding for people from disadvantaged backgrounds, Disabled people and people with additional learning needs, to overcome barriers to their participation, as well as providing additional funding to those organisations supporting participants from these underrepresented groups.

The areas which we feel have had the most significant impact on the success of the Taith programme are:

- 1. Engagement and outreach with all sectors**, developing strong, open relationships with stakeholders which enables open and honest conversations and feedback
- 2. Regular review and adaption of the programme policy** to ensure continuous improvement, to take feedback into consideration, and to overcome barriers to participation
- 3. Support mechanisms** in place to support organisations to raise awareness of the programme, support organisations to apply, and support them throughout the duration of their projects - Taith Programme Officers, Sector Organising Bodies and Taith Champions
- 4. Communication** which seeks to be open and welcoming and the use of inclusive and accessible language
- 5. Financial support to address barriers to participation**, including actual costs for participants with barriers to accessing the programme who are Disabled, have additional learning needs, or who come from a disadvantaged background

Life changing opportunities

Pupil referral units, special schools and charities working with the most vulnerable in society have been able to take young people and adults on genuinely life changing international exchanges. Many of these organisations had never considered international exchange before the creation of Taith. Homeless young people, children excluded from mainstream education, adults with lived experience of substance misuse, mental health and the justice system, children with severe and complex disabilities and additional learning needs have all been given the opportunity to travel and learn overseas because of Taith. Many of them have never left their hometown before, let alone travelled abroad. The stories we have been told about the impact of the opportunities on the lives of these young people, and in many cases on the lives of their families, are humbling and awe-inspiring in equal measure. Links to a few of these stories below:

Ysgol Pen y Bryn is the largest special school in Swansea for pupils aged 3 to 19 with a wide range of additional learning needs. Their pupils have a wide range of academic needs, and many come from a background of deprivation. In March 2024 they took seven pupils and staff to Florida to explore a different environment which would provide cultural experiences, important life skills and connections with American students.

<https://www.taith.wales/story/ysgol-pen-y-bryn-visit-florida-united-states/>

Portfield School is a special needs school for children and young people aged 3 – 19 located in Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire. Their pupils have a diverse range of complex and profound special needs. Through Taith funding, they were able to take pupils from Key Stage 3/4 on fully accessible learning exchanges to Belgium and Sweden.

<https://www.taith.wales/story/portfield-school-visit-belgium-and-sweden/>

St Giles is a charity with a vision to create inclusive communities where the voices of those facing the greatest adversity can be heard, where opportunities flourish, and where positive futures are realised. St Giles uses expertise and real-life past experiences to provide advice, advocacy and support for people held back by poverty, exploitation, abuse, dealing with addiction or mental health problems, caught up in crime or a combination of these issues and others. In March 2024, they embarked on an inspiring journey, taking a group of individuals with lived experience to Norway. As part of their trip, they visited a Norwegian recovery centre that champions the transformative power of peer support in recovery.

<https://www.taith.wales/story/st-giles-trust-visit-norway/>

Canolfan Addysg Conwy is a pupil referral unit for learners facing challenges in mainstream education. Most of the learners suffer with mental health issues brought about by anxiety and low self-confidence following traumatic mainstream school experiences. These traumas, alongside identified and unidentified additional learning needs and adverse childhood experiences outside of the school setting, result in pupils with significant and complex learning, social and emotional needs. In February 2024, a group of learners and accompanying staff travelled to Finland. For many of the learners it was their first time out of Wales, and provided them with an opportunity to develop skills, build confidence, and to open their eyes to a new country and culture.

<https://www.taith.wales/story/penrhos-avenue-pupil-referral-unit-canolfan-addysg-conwy-visit-finland/>

Taith, Turing and Erasmus+

As highlighted above, Taith was initially developed with the intention of filling the gap left by Erasmus+. As a result, the eligible sectors are the same, as are the eligible activities/mobility types. Where the programmes differ is in the duration of HE mobility opportunities (Taith allows much shorter durations for reasons of accessibility and inclusion) - and in the approach and focus of the programme. We have worked hard to position Taith as a programme for all education sectors, which works equally well for youth as it does for higher education, whereas Erasmus+ has traditionally been seen as primarily a programme for higher education. We have taken feedback on board from organisations in Wales who did not feel able to apply to Erasmus+ for a variety of reasons, and tried to develop and implement measures within Taith to address these barriers.

The below is a comparison of Erasmus+ data for Wales (for all Key Actions) 2017 – 2019, and Taith data for both Pathways 2022 – 2024 (it does not include Pathway 2 2024 data as the assessment process is ongoing). The Taith numbers will therefore increase once this process is complete). The intention was to compare Taith and Erasmus+ data for Wales over a comparable 3 year period.

Number of Welsh applicants and successful organisations for E+ and Taith. Organisations which apply more than once are counted only once.

	Erasmus+	Taith
No of Welsh applicants (unique)	137	176
No of funded Welsh organisations (unique)	78	136

Number of funded unique Welsh organisations within each sector. Organisations are counted once per sector.

	Erasmus+	Taith
Schools	46	70
Youth	12	31
Adult Education	5	17
FE/VET	13	16
HE	7	8

It is not yet possible to compare participant data as Taith projects funded in 2022 – 2024 are ongoing and not all mobilities have yet taken place. We are on course to exceed the number of learners who took part in an international learning exchange under Erasmus+, over a comparable period, despite limited funding and the challenges associated with being a new programme. This is particularly stark in the youth sector, where we have already seen over 4 times more young people go abroad for an international exchange through Taith than did under Erasmus+ over the comparable 3 year period.

The key similarities between Taith and Turing are that both are global programmes, both offer shorter durations for HE, and both have a significant focus on inclusion and the participation of people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The main differences are that Taith is reciprocal, allowing participants to come into Wales as well as participants to travel from Wales, whereas Turing allows outward mobilities only. Turing is open to the Schools, FE and HE sectors, Taith also includes Youth and Adult Education. Turing is for learners only, Taith is open to learners and staff.

Below is a comparison of the number of funded projects for Taith and Turing for the funding call years 2022 – 2024. Taith data includes both Pathway 1 and Pathway 2 for all years apart from 2024. The assessment process is ongoing for this funding call and so we do not yet have data on the number of funded projects.

2022

	Schools	Youth	Adult Education	FE/VET	HE
Taith	22	17	9	12	14*
Turing	1	N/A	N/A	1	8

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2023

	Schools	Youth	Adult Education	FE/VET	HE
Taith	36	17	5	14	14*
Turing	2	N/A	N/A	3	6

2024

	Schools	Youth	Adult Education	FE/VET	HE
Taith	25	16	6	10	6**
Turing	4	N/A	N/A	4	7

* In 2022 and 2023, Taith allowed HEIs to apply under 2 strands – education and research. This accounts for why there are more applications within the HEI sectors than HEIs in Wales.

** In 2024 the education and research strands were merged.