ISMLA

Independent Schools' Modern Languages Association

Great news! Erasmus+ is truly back!

The recent confirmation that the UK will formally rejoin the Erasmus+ programme from 2027 represents a highly significant development for schools wishing to revive or expand international exchanges. The agreement between the UK and the EU, finalised in April 2026, is expected to reopen funding streams for school partnerships, group mobility projects, staff training and wider educational collaboration across Europe. Over 100,000 participants are expected to benefit in the first year alone, including school pupils, teachers and youth organisations.

For languages departments, this development has the potential to reduce some of the financial barriers associated with running exchanges and reciprocal visits. Erasmus+ funding may support travel, organisational costs, preparatory visits and partnership-building activities, making exchanges more accessible to a broader range of pupils and schools. Importantly, the programme places strong emphasis on intercultural understanding, inclusion and international cooperation – all central to the aims of language education.

The return of Erasmus+ also sends an important symbolic message about the value of international mobility and language learning within UK education. At a time when many schools have struggled with the administrative and safeguarding pressures associated with exchanges, the renewed availability of structured European funding and partnership frameworks may help schools rebuild confidence in this area.

ISMLA would strongly encourage schools to consider how their own international partnerships may benefit from this development. In the recent All Party Parliamentary Group meeting for Modern Languages, Vicky Gough from the British Council emphasised that schools should begin by connecting with potential partner schools overseas in the first instance. They may also want to consider a theme for a joint project. The British Council will act as the UK National Agency for Erasmus+, and schools will be able to register interest and access guidance ahead of the first funding calls in 2027.

This development reinforces ISMLA's belief that exchanges remain an essential component of language learning and global citizenship education, and that meaningful international partnerships can continue to flourish when supported by proportionate safeguarding, strong communication and sustainable funding structures. If you need further assistance with language exchanges, please refer to our dedicated page for advice.

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