



Ms Iliana Ivanova

Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth
Rue de la Loi 175
B-1048 Brussels

Brussels, 15 December 2023

Dear Commissioner Ivanova,

We wish to share our profound consternation in relation to the project “Active Together” funded under the Erasmus+ programme, which appears to be in blatant contradiction with the core values of the EU and the EU’s treaty obligation to uphold international law.

The Commission website¹ presents the youth exchange project entitled “Active Together”, funded by the Erasmus+ programme, as taking place “in Dakhla (Morocco)”, involving 42 young people from 7 participating countries (Greece, Italy, Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania, Portugal and Spain). The project organiser, the Spanish NGO Proactive Future, refers to the project activity as taking place in February 2024 in “Dakhla, North Africa”² and indicates Morocco as the non-EU country involved and refers to a Moroccan partner, FCC Morocco.

As you will know, Dakhla is not situated within the internationally recognised borders of Morocco but in Western Sahara, which is a non-self-governing territory under the unlawful occupation and annexation of Morocco.

While we are dedicated to supporting all EU efforts to promoting youth exchanges, including outside EU borders, we are deeply concerned that the above-mentioned project misleads our European youth and lures them into participating, against their will, in a process of legitimising an illegal occupation.

The EU Court of Justice has unequivocally recalled in successive rulings that Morocco and Western Sahara are “separate and distinct territories” and has made clear in these rulings that all EU dealings with the occupied territory of Western Sahara are to strictly comply with international law, in particular by securing the prior consent of the people of Western Sahara³. Moreover, there is an obligation under international law, applicable to all EU Member States and institutions, to refrain from recognising a situation resulting from an unlawful acquisition of territory.

We thus urge you:

- 1) to immediately suspend this project in light of the above information;

¹ <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/it/projects/search/details/2023-1-ES02-KA152-YOU-000145178> Project reference 2023-1-ES02-KA152-YOU-000145178

² <https://www.proactivefuture.eu/l/active-together/>

³ <https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2021-09/cp210166en.pdf>



- 2) to carry out a comprehensive review of all past, ongoing and planned projects with Morocco under the Erasmus+ programme in order to identify whether these projects comply with international and EU law and policies in relation to Western Sahara;
- 3) to clarify what safeguards are in place to prevent similar incidents in the future;
- 4) to indicate how Saharawi youth – both from the occupied territories and the refugee camps in Tinduf, Algeria – may benefit from Erasmus+ programmes.

Looking forward to your response on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

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François Alfonsi, Greens/EFA

Ana Miranda, Greens/EFA

Miguel Urbán Crespo, The Left

María Eugenia Rodríguez Palop, The Left

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