

Brussels, 7 July 2004

## **Erasmus programme awarded the Prince of Asturias “International Cooperation” Prize: reactions of President Prodi and Viviane Reding**

***Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission, and Viviane Reding, European Commissioner for Education and Culture, today welcomed the award of the Prince of Asturias “International Cooperation” Prize to the Community programme Erasmus.***

Today in Oviedo, the 2004 Prince of Asturias “International Cooperation” Prize was awarded to the Community programme Erasmus.

“It fills me with pleasure and pride to learn that this prestigious prize has been awarded to what is undoubtedly one of the best known Community programmes”, declared the President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi. “In 1987, 3 000 young pioneers took part in the inaugural programme involving 11 countries. Today, more than 120 000 students annually are benefiting from the Erasmus programme in 30 countries.”

“The one million students mark was reached two years ago and I would like to reiterate our ambition to reach three million Erasmus students by the beginning of the next decade”, said Viviane Reding, Commissioner for Education and Culture. “Erasmus has greatly contributed to the emergence of a genuine Europe of Universities which will be further strengthened next September by the launch of Erasmus Mundus”.

Erasmus is a decentralised programme which has been an integral part of the Socrates programme since 1995. It is open to students who have completed their first year at university and enables them to spend between three and 12 months at a university in another European country. Spain is the favoured destination of Erasmus students. Approximately EUR 190 million are allocated to the programme annually.

To find out more:

[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/erasmus/erasmus\\_en.html](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/erasmus/erasmus_en.html)