



March 29, 2021

Dear European Union Commissioners,

EUASA is an association of national and international study abroad organizations that welcome American and other international students to Europe all year round. From our mission statement, EUASA, a not-for-profit organization,

seeks to give visibility and advocacy to study abroad programs to facilitate student mobility within Europe, to foster international understanding and to improve communication, standards of best practice and share key information useful to all members of the association.

The purpose of the Association is primarily to address the many complex issues affecting the establishment and functioning of such programs in Europe and provide specific up-to-date information on fiscal, legal and immigration matters in the EU area.

Our organization represents 8 national associations that, in turn, represent over 500 study abroad programs and we host, according to the last Open Doors figures (https://opendoorsdata.org/fact_sheets/europe/) over **190 000 American students** each year. The programs vary from 3-week faculty-led programs to full-year immersion programs, many of which emphasize learning European languages and about the history and culture of these countries. Others are more specialized and focus on politics, economy, literature, art history and even so-called STEM subjects (Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). We should add that a few programs are devoted entirely to the study of European governance institutions, a unique opportunity for our students to gain a deeper understanding of the complexity and steady progress of the European Union.

Hosting organizations across Europe also vary a great deal, from non-profit associations to branch campuses of US fully accredited higher education institutions from all 50 States, as well from Canada. The students we welcome each year take classes at local universities, are led on in-country educational tours or even Europe-wide field study, including visits to EU institutions, monuments, and museums. Recent

economic impact studies estimate that these programs generate some **2,5 billion Euros** annually.

The local economies are boosted in many ways when full cohorts of Americans study in Europe. Each program usually represents several full-time employees, part-time staff members, a legion of part-time faculty, all of them hired on local contracts. The students are housed in private residences, apartments, on-campus student accommodations or host families who receive stipends. The course-related and program-related excursions include travel by chartered buses or national rail, stays in hotels, meals in a variety of local establishments, etc. The contributions these programs and students make to the local economies are varied, widespread and significant.

These programs also have an indirect but certainly no less negligible impact on the host countries. Many of these US study programs in Europe offer scholarships, internships or teaching opportunities for EU students and faculty to spend time in the US. For many European students - given the expensive tuition costs in American higher education - it's their only chance to study in the US. Another indirect benefit comes from having US students study alongside their EU peers; nothing can replace the wealth of intellectual and cultural exchanges that take place in this context.

We are writing today to solicit your help in the urgent question of American students planning to study in Europe this coming summer and fall. As you can imagine, the pandemic has severely affected this sector of the economy and many staff and faculty members were put on furlough schemes or definitively let go on economic grounds. The programs that were able to maintain their status, even with only a few or no students, are increasingly concerned about the arrival of our summer and fall groups.

Therefore, we are urging the EU Commission to consider the following points and to take immediate action:

- We would like to ensure that North American students and faculty are admitted to the EU in the next months (i.e., ideally from May 2021), with no unnecessary national restrictions. While each country is free to establish its own rules at the moment, we think a strong statement from the commission emphasizing the importance of open borders in order that international student mobility can continue is of essence.
- We would like to ensure that if a student or faculty member is vaccinated in the US, these vaccines can be recognized and accepted in the EU territories. Here too, a strong and definitive statement by the EU could influence the decisions that member states will take.
- If this proposal is accepted and implemented across the EU, we would like to receive clear and uniform indications of what documentary evidence will be required to this purpose.

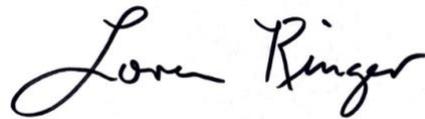
- Finally, we would like to receive confirmation that the Digital Green Pass as it is being developed and implemented can be extended in due course to North Americans arriving in Europe.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, familiarize yourself with our professional sector and consider our requests. Though a part of each country's education system, our presence is often overlooked and neither the number of students nor the economic impact of the study programs show up in statistics on either a national or European level. Consequently, we would be grateful to follow up on the issues outlined in this letter with a phone or video conference call. We are committed to ensuring that as many American students as possible, especially during this sensitive COVID-19 period, continue to be able to benefit from the invaluable opportunity that study abroad in the EU provides, and do so safely.

Most sincerely,



Dr. Stephen Robinson
EUASA, Chair
Director and Professor, Champlain College,
Dublin Campus



Dr. Loren Ringer
EUASA, Secretary
Director of Administration, Parsons Paris