

Erasmus Vote Power

Training event on the European Elections 2019

Friday, 8 February 2019

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ERASMUS VOTE POWER

Active citizens for an active Europe!



Over fifty people from different countries flew to Brussels, Belgium on 8th of February 2019, to take part in an innovative project “**Erasmus Vote Power - Active citizens for an active Europe**” which aim to motivate the **Erasmus Generation** to go to vote for the **European elections**, which will take place **between 23 and 26 May 2019**. Thanks to the financial support of the *European Parliament* and the *Erasmus+ Students and Alumni Alliance (ESAA)*, we were able to invite selected Erasmus Ambassadors to encourage and discuss the active involvement of young citizens living abroad during the European elections. Inter alia, the event was attended by active members of the Erasmus Students Network and the Erasmus Mundus Association, along with other students, young international professionals and Erasmus Volunteers.

The event began with speeches of Laura Popa (European Parliament), Nicola Filizola (Vice-President of the garagErasmus foundation), Oana Dumitrescu (European Commission) who started with opening messages that inspired attendants to find a campaign very passionate. Laura Popa shared an emotional speech about having a voting chance from abroad and how important it is nowadays to be able to vote. Nicola Filizola and Oana Dumitrescu encouraged the attendees to fight for the future of their Europe. We also proudly presented a message from **Antonio Tajani, the President of the European Parliament**.



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ERASMUS VOTE POWER

Active citizens for an active Europe!

Dear citizens,
Dear **Erasmus Ambassadors**,
Dear Europeans,

I wasn't lucky enough to be an Erasmus student. Before answering your invitation, I asked a guy from my staff, who experienced it first-hand, what that experience represented for him.

"It was the first time I felt truly European", he replied without hesitation. Well, I think my message for you should start like this.

Because these words are the best way to underline how important the work you are all doing is. You are fuelling that spark that in many cases Erasmus itself sparked, that **feeling of being European** that today seems so rare and difficult to convey.

I am convinced that our European Union is still imperfect. I believe that it needs to be improved because it must be able to **provide concrete answers to the major problems that concern citizens**: from global warming to the management of migration flows, from unemployment to security. To do so, it is not enough to talk about numbers, constraints or international agreements. It is not just economics and diplomacy that can revitalise this great project. We must remember that Europe was not born to be a simple alliance between States, the European Union is not just the free market or the single currency, it is much more. In order to have a future, **we need an identity**, an identity based on the values that we have indelibly written in the Treaties. If we want to **get the European citizens back to the polls**, if we want to make them

more involved and reduce the distance between them and the Brussels offices, if we want this dream to continue, we must not forget it.

We must feel proud to be European, just as we are proud to be Italian, German or French. Because when we disagree, when the voice of those who want to destroy this Union and not improve it will be even louder, it will be those values and that identity that will keep us together.

I may look like a dreamer to you, but as Erasmus of Rotterdam said: **"In every activity, passion removes most of the difficulties"**.

And I would like to repeat it once again today, that passion often blossoms with **the unforgettable experience of Erasmus**.

Thanks again,
Antonio Tajani



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Right after, Mats Hvid (European Movement International) introduced the public to the political challenges of the European Elections 2019, Sebastiano Putoto (Young European Federalists) explained how the European elections are a patchwork of national electoral rules and political campaigns, whereas Nadia Deis (AEGEE-Yvote) presented the Y vote application as a tool for EU citizens to know how to vote regardless of where they are.

The second part of the event was designed specifically to train ambassadors on a common narrative for the European elections and on the concrete steps to set up their own #ErasmusVotePower projects in their hosting countries. Presentations of Maurits Van Rooijen (garagErasmus High-Level Council), Carlo and Fabrizio Bitetto (garagErasmus), and Erwan (#ThisTimeImVoting ambassador in Belgium) were motivating and inspiring. In the end, the ambassadors had a chance to speak about themselves and about the ideas of the project which might increase the number of voters living abroad. Each of them shared a different story, a different motivation and amazing projects to carry out in their role of ambassadors!

The event concluded with a focus on the Erasmus+ Student and Alumni Alliance (ESAA), whose members and sections were suggested as top partners of the Erasmus ambassadors' projects. Francesco Guerzoni (ESAA Board member) debriefed ambassadors on what ESAA is and how to get in touch with its local sections along with the local offices of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Erasmus+ agencies in each EU country. Particularly positive was that several ambassadors already had plans and contacts with local EU representations and ESAA local sections, underlining how much these young European citizens are well placed to spread the word about the European elections.

Programme of the event

- 9.45 | **Meeting Point**
Station Europe, Place du Luxembourg
(in front of the European Parliament)
- 10.00 | **Accreditation**
Entrance: Rue Wiertz 60
- 10.30 | **Visit of the European Parliament**
- 11.00 | **Opening messages**
- **Laura Popa**, European Parliament, Youth Outreach unit
 - **Oana Dumitrescu**, European Commission, Higher Education unit
 - **Nicola Filizola**, garagErasmus vice-President
- 11.15 | **Message by Antonio Tajani**, President of the European Parliament
- 11.20 | **European Elections 2019 explained**
- **Mats Hvid**, European Movement International, Head of Projects and Campaigns
European Parliament, the EU and why voting matters
 - **Sebastiano Potuto**, Young European Federalists, Board member
European elections, but national rules: how does it really work?
- Facilitation
Nicola Filizola, garagErasmus vice-President

12.00 | Q&A

12.15 | Active citizens for an active Europe

- **Maurits Van Rooijen**, garagErasmus, President of the High Level Council, Rector and CEO of Global University Systems
- **Carlo Bitetto**, garagErasmus, Director

Facilitation

Nicola Filizola, garagErasmus vice-President

12.45 | Wrap up of the morning

- **Nicola Filizola**, garagErasmus vice-President

12.55 | Group picture

13.00 | Lunch

13.45 | Training – session I: #ErasmusVotePower

- **Fabrizio Bitetto**, garagErasmus, CEO
Mission of the Erasmus Ambassadors
- **Ambassador**, This Time I'm Voting
This time I'm voting campaign
- **Nadia Deis**, AEGEE, Project Officer
Y vote platform

Facilitation

Eugenia Casariego, gE4Brussels

15.45 | Q&A

16.00 | Coffee break

16.30 | Training – Session II: Ambassadors’ toolkit and your role in the project

- **Francesco Guerzoni**, Erasmus+ Students and Alumni Alliance, Board member and policy manager of the garagErasmus foundation
 - *Partnering up at local level: the ESAA network*
 - *EVP Toolkit, materials available, logistics for event*

Facilitation

Eugenia Casariego, gE4Brussels

17.00 | Q&A

17.20 | Closing

- **Carlo Bitetto**, garagErasmus, Director

17.30 | End