



Erasmus+ activities in Brazil

Discover how Brazilian students, researchers and higher education institutions benefit or have benefited from Erasmus+ by reading their testimonials below.

Jean Monnet activities at UFMG, by Alexandre Mendes Cunha

The Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) now holds a Jean Monnet Module and a Jean Monnet Chair. Could you tell us more about the objectives and its application process?

In the Jean Monnet 2015 Call for proposals, the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) was granted with a Module and a Chair. Both are connected to the Centre for European Studies of the university. I am the academic coordinator of the module, and my activities are mainly focused on our undergraduate course of International Economic Relations. Prof. Jamile Diz is in charge of the chair and is based at our Law School. Both the Module and the Chair offer different courses in EU studies to our students, but the specific focus points of research are different: Intellectual history and monetary integration for the Module and Community law for the Chair.

How did UFMG apply?

The application process is quite clear. Everything was done online through the Erasmus+ application form. Some other documents should be attached to the main form, as a "Description of the project", a "Detailed budget table" and a "Declaration", signed by the president of the university. The most challenging part is the "Description", which should include detailed information about the characteristics and relevance of the proposal, the team of professors and researchers involved and the specific details about the design and implementation of the proposal. This is undoubtedly the most important document in the evaluation process, since it is where you not only demonstrate the relevance and originality of the proposal, but also its feasibility and the team's capacity to execute it.

What is funded by the European Union?

The European Commission co-financing value is 30 000 euros for the module and 60 000 euros for the chair, for three years of activities. This amount is intended to be used in the academic activities described in the proposal. The total amount is calculated according to the number of teaching hours in European studies proposed in each of the project. We are using these funds, for example, to promote seminars and workshops that are an important part of both the teaching and the research activities. These events are also important in the dissemination of European studies in Brazil and to establish channels of communication between Brazilian and European research communities, including the discussion of common challenges.

The activities in the module and the Jean Monnet Chair at UFMG are going really well and we hope to consolidate and expand European studies at our university in order to apply for a Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence for the UFMG in the near future.



Alexandre Mendes Cunha is associate professor at the Economics Department at UFMG. He is the Head of the Centre for European Studies at the university. He is a specialist in history of economic thought and intellectual history and has been working mainly on the economic debates about the European Union creation and the dissemination of economic ideas in Europe.



Vitor Alevato do Amaral teaches Literary Translation and English Literature at the UFRJ Faculty of Letters and is also Director of International Relations at UFRJ and member of the Board of Directors of CGRIFES (Council of Heads of International Offices of the Brazilian Federal Higher Education Institutions).

From 2014-16, he served as Vice-President of the Brazilian Association for International Education (FAUBAI). Vitor Amaral has extensive experience in the management of international projects, mainly with European HEIs, and has participated as a speaker in several international education conferences (e.g. NAFSA, EAIE, AIEA, AIEC and AMPEI).

Third left in the picture, together with EM incoming students.

UFRJ experience with Erasmus Mundus, by Vitor Alevato do Amaral

Erasmus Mundus, especially in its Action 2, caused a considerable impact on the day-to-day life of the International Offices in many Brazilian Higher Education Institutions. Although primarily focused in fostering collaboration between Europe and other parts of the world, Erasmus Mundus definitely represented, in the case of Brazil, a considerable incentive for dialogue between Latin American institutions. At the end of the day, the programme was regarded as a factor of synergy in the Latin American region.

In the case of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), we have participated as partners in ten EM consortia, and co-coordinated two of them: BABEL (U.Porto) and SUSTAIN-T (POLIMI). The experience of taking part in such well-funded and complex consortia played a decisive role in enhancing the capacity-building of UFRJ's international staff. In each of the ten consortia, visibility and transparency in the rules and calls were thoroughly pursued by all agents involved. Information sessions were organised in the university campuses and online news were published on several occasions.

Moreover, because of our role of co-coordinators, we have also participated in information sessions outside Rio de Janeiro (in the states of Acre, Mato Grosso do Sul, and Minas Gerais) as well as outside Brazil (in Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru).

Finally, it is important to mention that the selection of target group 3 applicants has always been a challenge, as it requires constant interaction among the partners and associate partners due to the various social and political realities encompassed by the process.

Now Erasmus+ proposes another kind of collaboration, in which a more focused relation is expected to be established between the partner HEIs, and, more attention has been drawn to the smoothness of credit recognition.



[Sofia Vilasboas](#) is an actress and researcher in performing arts and has completed a bachelor-degree in psychology.

She completed her master's degree from Erasmus Mundus programme on *Étude du Spectacle Vivant* at the Université Paris VIII, France. Currently she is a PhD student in performing arts at University of São Paulo (USP) and her field of study is on contemporary plays and aesthetic dialogue between Brazil, France and Belgium.

Meet Sofia Vilasboas – the new Erasmus Mundus Alumni Association (EMA) representative in Brazil

Sofia, could you tell our readers some more about EMA?

The [Erasmus Mundus Alumni Association](#) (EMA) is a volunteer organisation founded in 2006. Since its beginning, the Association is driven by the Erasmus Mundus (EM) students and alumni, and nowadays it has over 9 000 members. Throughout the years, EMA has been constantly working to build a strong community and to offer international networking opportunities for EM students and graduates, both professionally and personally. Our members can join our professional networks and service teams to network in a wide variety of fields.

As a researcher, how do you view the benefits of networking?

The basis of a researcher's work, especially in my field, develops by sharing professional experiences and personal contacts. When building knowledge together, it is necessary to have a broader perspective of networking.

Networking is especially rewarding in the case of Erasmus Mundus, as you have the chance to establish contacts and even partnerships at an international level, with people with a wide variety of cultural backgrounds.

Are there any tips that you would like to give to prospective Erasmus candidates?

I believe that knowing your personal goals and expectations of the programme you are applying for is an important factor. Most Erasmus Mundus programmes are unique in their academic proposal: The topics are inter or multidisciplinary, with a varied range of staff and, in many cases, they happen as a consortium (you study in at least 2 or 3 universities during the course). With this in mind, it is important to be familiar with the programme when you are applying for it. Do not hesitate to contact current students and ask them to share their experience.