



July 4, 2022

Dear Mr. Castro,

I hope you are well.

Alexis Phylactopoulos shared with the EUASA Political / Legal Committee that you had a fruitful conversation about US Study Abroad at this year's NAFSA conference. We thank you for making yourself available and continuing to dialogue with us on all things related to our profession.

We first wanted to follow up on the possibility of **EU-wide / multiple-country visas**. You asked how many cases per year does EUASA see in which visas have to be issued for programs in multiple countries? We have not kept statistics and would have difficulty telling you exactly the number but it's a request from students that started roughly 10 years ago and has become a trend. It corresponds to the tendency of US students to have double or triple majors and therefore choose programs in multiple countries because they correspond to the exact credits they need. As you know, US higher education institutions, with pressure from parents, try to keep the student on track for graduation in 4 years; consequently, getting the maximum number of credits transferred has become just as important as the international experience itself. A typical scenario would be for a student to choose a semester in one country to learn the language and semester 2 in an English-track program more closely related to their major. Indeed, one study program might be with an EUASA member program and another might be to directly enroll at an EU university.

In response to your related question as to which countries' consulates present challenges in issuing such visas and which countries' consulates appear to have the best practices, this is something that is beyond the scope of EUASA's role. Nevertheless, each country has reported that, during Covid, they have developed better relationships with their respective consulates (despite some delays in visa deliverance)

but also with visa intermediaries such as Campus France or SEPIE in Spain. Consequently, we would like to focus only on the role of the EU legislation that could help deliver multiple-country visas and not on individual countries.

The second point you discussed with Mr Phylactopoulos, is the goal of **including US study abroad students in the larger category of study abroad in Europe**. For us, it seems important and logical that there are no distinctions to be made between students attending European public degree-granting institutions and study abroad students pursuing educational objectives in non-degree-granting programs of US universities in Europe and/or independent non-degree-granting private institutions. As we established during our visit to Brussels in 2020, we have more points in common than dissimilarities.

To this end, we renew our wish **to be included in any of the related work groups** to which we could contribute our experience and knowledge. Since US sending institutions expect our programs to provide a great deal of support for our students and not only educational, we are well versed in the areas of student housing, cultural integration, labor and immigration rules, budgetary concerns, mental health and emotional needs, etc. even though our number one goal remains academic excellence. Almost all of our Resident Directors are themselves professors and researchers and therefore, in combination with all the skills just mentioned, would bring to the table a vast array of know-how and nuanced understanding of study abroad as it plays out in Europe in 2022.

A point that you mentioned in one of our previous exchanges was the idea of developing **an education fair that focuses on North American students**. Should this still be of interest to you we would love to participate in that initiative. In the same spirit, we would be happy to initiate further discussions with **NAFSA**; based on the model of their regional meetings in the US, could we not imagine one day a NAFSA conference in Brussels? We are also in regular touch with **The Forum on Education Abroad** and that US study abroad organization might be of interest to the EU Commission as well.

To conclude, we would very much appreciate another opportunity to **meet face to face** with you and your colleagues in Brussels. Last time, we met with your predecessor as well as Graham Wilkie from Erasmus+ and the DG Migration and Home Affairs in what proved to be a very productive conversation. Based on our academic calendars, we think that late September / early October would be a good time for us to come. Can you let us know if this is possible and make suggestions for the various offices / Commission members with whom we should meet?

Once again, we thank you for your continued support and willingness to engage with our association.

Sincerely,

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

Laurent Ringer  
EUASA, Secretary  
Senior Director of Administration, Parsons  
Paris

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Robinson', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Ringer', with a stylized, cursive script.

**CC: Political & Legal Committee members:**

*Alexis Phylactopoulos, Chair of AAECG (GR)*

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