

Youth Experience Scheme: Case Studies

Rachel Reeves: 'Unpick the harm Brexit did to the prospects of young people in the UK'

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Cameron Thompson, recent graduate and Young European Movement member

Speaking at the Labour Conference, Rachel Reeves has revealed she is pushing for a 'more ambitious deal to unpick the harm Brexit did to the prospects of young people in the UK'.

The Chancellor said she wants an ambitious youth experience scheme to allow mobility for under-30s in and out of the UK.

European Movement UK has spoken to young people affected by the loss of Erasmus+ and 'youth experience'

since the UK left the EU.

Cameron Thompson, student and Young European Movement member, said:

“I spent a year abroad, reduced to half a year, in Japan under the Turing Scheme [the replacement for Erasmus+ after leaving the EU]. We were left without the promised additional finance for 4 months that was meant to support our living, and when they got back to us it was half the promised amount. Because Turing also isn't properly vetting accommodation at the destination, we were stuck in accommodation that was sub-par and had a serious mould problem.

"The Turing Scheme not only betrayed students who went abroad by providing false information and even delaying funds, but also did not assist nor help my 'university abroad' team when my accommodation was unsuitable.

"ERASMUS+ has been tried and tested; every experience I hear of is that of consistent care, funding being delivered as stated in their initial promise, and has an established infrastructure for support with universities and companies. I'm certain I could've enjoyed my full year abroad having such support.”

Alfred Quantrill, Young European Movement UK and Bristol University student, aged 20

"The Young European Movement welcomes the recent comments of Nick Thomas Symonds regarding the Youth Experience Scheme. Rachel Reeves's recent statement is reinforcing our hope that a youth mobility scheme will come to pass.

"The Youth Experience Scheme promises to open up jobs to young Brits who, more than ever, lack opportunities within their own country. We urge the Government to make this happen as soon as possible.

"We deserve the same rights as other young people in Europe, and the Government has a chance to make real steps towards providing chances abroad for ambitious and hard working young people, who can bring their skills back home and boost our economy, as well as deepen links with our largest trading partner.

"European employers and educational institutions are far less likely to offer opportunities to young Brits if they are only able to stay for two years, or can only move within one EU member state.

"The Government must push for three or four year stays within the EU to ensure the scheme succeeds, so that young Brits have time to engage in serious work and study to develop their skills. Young European Movement would also call on the Government to ensure that any scheme negotiated with the EU allows for full movement within the EU or Schengen area, rather than limiting participating young people to a single EU country."

Cameron Thompson, recent graduate and YEM member, said:

"Since childhood, studying abroad has been a dream for me. I always envisioned myself combining the freedom and independence of university life with the exploration and cultural immersion that come with being in a foreign country. Particularly, the thought of studying International Relations (my subject of choice) at Sciences Po, Paris, was always a goal for me.

"This particular university would have enhanced my studies, career, and personal growth, as one of the most prestigious IR institutions in Europe, whilst allowing me to enhance my understanding of the French language and form continent-wide connections. However, that dream collapsed post-Brexit, as the UK's withdrawal from the Erasmus+ scheme made this unfeasible.

"The logistical challenges of visas and red tape, combined with the significantly increased financial burden, meant that my dream was no more. Had Britain remained in the EU, my tuition fees would have been means-tested, meaning that even for someone like me, from a working-class background, international study would still have been accessible and realistic.

"Now, as a UK student outside the EU, I would be forced to pay the whole €14,720 fee, placing this goal beyond reach. Furthermore, the loss of the Erasmus+ scheme removed my access to tuition waivers and mobility grants, as well as residency support, putting the final nail in the coffin of my dream to study internationally."

ENDS

European Movement UK was founded in 1949 by Sir Winston Churchill, to prevent further conflict between European countries. It remains a cross-party organisation campaigning on the benefits of close ties between the UK and EU.

Interviewees available - email or call 07837 959 942

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