

**Motion for Time Limited Debate –**  
**Cross-channel opportunities for young people**

Proposer: Mr Antony Hook

Seconder: Mr Richard Streatfeild, MBE

**Background – Provided by the Liberal Democrat Group**

Since Brexit, various programmes that facilitated youth mobility between the UK and EU member states have been lost.

Young people in Kent and across the UK are now facing diminished opportunities for cultural exchange, education, and training in the EU. In addition, EU young people now face additional restrictions for opportunities in the UK (to our own economic loss).

Prior to Brexit, our young people were able to freely travel between member states, and wider European Economic Area (EEA) to live, work and study without time limit.

Our young people now have a 90-day limit on the time they can spend in Europe without buying a visa. EU students without 'settled status' in the UK must apply for a student visa at a cost of £490 per applicant.

The UK is no longer a member of the Erasmus + programme. The scheme provides funding for education, training and sport and cultural exchanges with participating countries for all ages, but with a specific focus on young people.

Prior to Brexit, some Kent schools took part in the Erasmus + programme, enabling students to travel on exchanges across Europe and beyond at little or no cost. University aged students were also able to take part in study abroad placements.

It is possible for the UK to take part in the scheme without being a member of the EU. The UK Government has decided not to participate as either a programme or partner country. Non-EU countries such as Norway, Turkey and Serbia are full programme members. Partner countries are eligible for some parts of the scheme, and this includes countries such as China, India and Brazil.

*Universities in Kent*

Kent and Medway have four universities and a wide array of higher learning providers that serve both UK and international students. These are major local employers. Kent's unique geographical position and cultural significance makes the county an attractive place to live, work and study for young people from the EU.

There has been a significant drop in the number of EU students enrolling at UK universities. Between 2020 and 2022, the number of EU students enrolling at a UK university dropped by 53%.

The current tuition fee for each full-time EU undergraduate at the University of Kent is £19,300 to £23,500, per year so this is a significant loss to our economy.

## *Schools*

Kent's historical and cultural significance and proximity to Europe has made it an attractive location for international school visits.

Since Brexit, new legislation stopped school children from EU countries being able to enter the UK by using their official national identity cards. Instead, access is only permitted to those with a passport. For many schools, this is a stumbling block as not all children have passports because they carry an extra cost and are unnecessary for family holidays within Europe. It is more attractive to take a class to a country which does not have these issues.

Reduction in EU school visits to Kent has had a significant impact on local businesses that rely on tourism. Deirdre Wells, CEO of Visit Kent said: "For some of our big attractions like Canterbury Cathedral and Leeds Castle, they've seen a significant drop. It could be as much as 90% in the number of educational visits from abroad. It's huge".

## **Motion**

This Council regrets:

1. The loss of the ability of young people from Kent and the rest of the UK to travel freely to the EU for study.
2. The significant impact on our university sector of the loss of youth mobility, including a sharp decline in the number of European students enrolling on courses.
3. The impact on visits to Kent from EU schools, and Kent schools to the EU, due to additional bureaucracy and associated costs.

This Council resolves to:

Request that the Leader write to the Prime Minister expressing the council's support for:

1. Negotiations to re-establish reciprocal mobility between the EU and UK for school trips, students and other young people.
2. Expansion of opportunities for young people to study, teach and volunteer abroad by returning to the Erasmus + programme as an associated programme member.