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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The Erasmus action of the Socrates programme supports European activities in higher education institutions and promotes the mobility and exchange of their students. Student exchanges within Erasmus play a major role in widening of students' awareness of Europe and provide young European citizens with the skills and the knowledge necessary for benefiting from the opportunities and overcoming the challenges of an enlarged Europe.

The Erasmus Student Network is a pan-European organisation which was founded in Copenhagen in 1990 with the support and encouragement of the European Commission. Today, the 210 Local sections of the network are operating in 28 countries and aim at providing practical assistance to incoming students by means of a mentor-system, help in finding accommodation, social events, the provision of information sessions and brochures. They also provide useful information and guidance to fellow students wishing to participate in different exchange programmes. This peer group assistance provided by ESN has not only practical value but reinforces the community of understanding which the Erasmus programme seeks to foster.

At European level, the Erasmus Student Network is developing projects for supporting and contributing to the enhancement of student mobility in higher education, and is a recognised and valuable partner of the European Commission. The Headquarters of the organisation is in Brussels, located at 98 Rue du Trône.

The European Commission has provided some financial assistance to ESN for specific projects, such as the "1.000.000 Erasmus Students" carried out in 2002. However, other sources of practical and financial support are also needed if the network is to fulfil its potential. I would therefore invite you to provide assistance to the members of this student organisation in any way you may find appropriate in order to enable them to fulfil their important task for the Erasmus programme.

Belén BERNALDO DE QUIRÓS
Head of Unit