

## **Sofia Corradi, the driving force behind the Erasmus program, elected winner of the 10th Carlos V European Award**

*The award ceremony will be held throughout the year at the Royal Monastery of Yuste, the headquarters of the European Academy of Yuste Foundation*

Mérida, 9 February 2016.- The European Academy of Yuste Foundation has announced the decision of the jury for the tenth Carlos V European Award, which has been won by Italian professor Sofia Corradi, known as “Mamma Erasmus” for being the driving force behind the most important international exchange program for young students in Europe.

With this award, the jury wishes to recognize ***“her career and, above all, her great commitment and contribution to the process of European integration by means of the design and implementation of the ERASMUS initiative of the European Union, as well as her work and endeavour on behalf of academic mobility, focussing on young European students as a guarantee of tomorrow and the future of Europe”***.

Isabel Gil Rosiña, spokesperson of the Government of Extremadura and a member of the Board of Trustees of the European Academy of Yuste Foundation, announced the jury's decision on behalf of Guillermo Fernández Vara, Chairman of the Award Jury, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the European Academy of Yuste Foundation and President of the Government of Extremadura. With this award for Sofia Corradi and, therefore, her work and the Erasmus program, the aim of the jury and the European Academy of Yuste Foundation is to convey a clear message to the general public, expressing commitment to what unites us, not what separates us, even though many are now attempting to squander this process, without perceiving the importance of the preservation of Europe's great achievements and its main values as the cornerstone of our success and our common future. The Erasmus program, the Schengen agreement and the Euro are the great achievements and sources of pride of the EU, which States, institutions, civil society and the general public should continue to support.

The results of the work initiated by Sofia Corradi for the benefit of the European integration process have established the foundations for other successful educational initiatives of a similar nature which reach beyond Europe's borders, such as Erasmus Mundus, as well as Erasmus Plus, the European Union's current program. Through her work, the Erasmus program has directly changed the lives of almost 3.5 million European students from around 4,000 universities throughout its period of operation, lasting nearly 30 years (the program was created in 1987). It has also benefited the teaching staff and, more indirectly, the environment where the students have led their lives, promoting highly positive changes in European academic, social, cultural, educational and economic life since its creation.

The award has gone to a woman, an academic who has changed the way of viewing Europe and living in the European Union. It has been given to one of the major European projects encouraging co-existence, diversity, understanding, cooperation, European values and, more

importantly, helping us to eliminate the mental barriers, the stereotypes, which are the main obstacle to progress and the peaceful co-existence of Europeans and those who inhabit our continent.

Sofia Corradi thus becomes the tenth person, and the second woman, to receive the Carlos V European Award, which continues to lend commitment and importance to the positive changes which can be brought about by people and, upon the basis of this award, projects and institutions, with great ideas and the initiative, determination and will to carry them out.

After being informed of the jury's decision, Sofia Corradi expressed her "gratitude and a feeling of honour at being considered for a distinction as prestigious as the Carlos V European Award". She declared that she was "particularly pleased that the award has been made by an institution from Spain, a country with a great European spirit, as well as strong links with Latin America". In reference to the name of the award and the figure of Carlos V, on whose empire it was said that the sun never set, she stated that her "dream is that, in a more peaceful world like that which we seek to build today, Erasmus will become a global project, in which the sun will never set either".

### ***The 10th Carlos V European Award***

It should be pointed out that this is the 10th Carlos V European Award, following the recent twentieth anniversary of the presentation of the first award to Jacques Delors, the former President of the European Commission, in 1995. There have been, therefore, ten awards, which demonstrates that the Carlos V European Award has a well-established and proven track record, confirming Extremadura's commitment to the process of European integration and the values it promotes and highlighting the importance of initiatives such as this one, born from civil society, on behalf of the unity and cooperation of the peoples of Europe. The recipients of the award until now have been Jacques Delors (1995), Wilfried Martens (1998), Felipe González (2000), Mikhail Gorbachev (2002), Jorge Sampaio (2004), Helmut Kohl (2006), Simone Veil (2008), Javier Solana (2010) and José Manuel Durao Barroso (2013).

Following the announcement of the award a total of twenty nominations were submitted by institutions from seven countries in the European Union, with a total number of seventeen candidatures being selected for the 10th Carlos V European Award.

### ***Carlos V European Award***

The European Academy of Yuste Foundation created the Carlos V European Award in order to recognize the work of those who have excelled in their commitment to the process of building the European Union or for their contribution to the enhancement of the cultural, scientific and historical values of Europe. Therefore, the Carlos V European Award represents the spirit of the construction of a united Europe.

The award is made by the Board of Trustees of the European Academy of Yuste Foundation, on the motion of a jury designated for such a purpose and made up of renowned figures from the different socio-cultural fields of Europe, as well as the members of the European Academy of Yuste themselves and previous winners.

The award ceremony is a solemn act presided over by the Spanish Royal Family, to be held in 2016 at the Royal Monastery of Yuste (Cáceres, Extremadura). The ceremony for the Carlos V European Award is seen by the European Academy of Yuste Foundation as a privileged moment to express its commitment to a united and cohesive Europe.

## *Jury of the Carlos V European Award*

**Mr Guillermo Fernández Vara**

President of the Government of Extremadura and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the European Academy of Yuste Foundation.

**Chairman of the Jury of the Carlos V European Award**

**Mr Johannes Hahn**

Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations. European Commission

**Mr José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil**

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. Government of Spain

**Mr Helmut Kohl<sup>[1]</sup>**

Carlos V European Award Winner 2006

**Prof. Dr. Jürgen Elvert**

Professor of the University of Cologne

**Mr José Manuel Durão Barroso**

Carlos V European Award Winner 2014

**Ms Aránzazu Beristain Ibarrola**

Head of the European Commission Representation in Madrid

**Mr Jacques Delors**

Carlos V European Award Winner 1995

**Ms Benita Ferrero-Waldner**

President of the EU-LAC Foundation

**Prof. Dr. Ursula Lehr**

Member of the European Academy of Yuste Foundation

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**Ms Blanca Martín Delgado**

President of the Assembly of Extremadura

**Mr Asís Martín G. de Cabiedes**

Executive President of Europa Press

**Prof. Dr. Enrique Moradiellos García**

Professor of Contemporary History. University of Extremadura

**Mr Segundo Píriz Durán**

Vice-Chancellor of the University of Extremadura

**Prof. Dr. Sylvain Schirman**

Director of the Institute of Political Studies in Strasbourg

**Mr Reinhard Selten**

Winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics. Member of the European Academy of Yuste Foundation

**Mr Martin Schulz**

President of the European Parliament

**Ms Pilar Blanco-Morales Limones**

Minister of the Treasury and Public Administration of the Government of Extremadura

**Mr José Antonio Vera Gil**

Executive President of the EFE Agency

## *SOFIA CORRADI*



**Sofia Corradi** (Sofia Corradi (Rome, 5 September 1934), better known as Mamma Erasmus. A graduate in Law from the Sapienza University of Rome, she completed her studies and research at the UNESCO Academy of International Law in Paris and the London School of Economics. For over twenty years she has been scientific director of the Research Office of the Conference of University Rectors. She writes for La Repubblica, Corriere della Sera, Il Sole 24 Ore, La Stampa and several Italian and foreign magazines.

Her work provides the basis for the Erasmus Program of the European Union, as she was one of the first people in Italy and Europe to believe in the importance of formally recognizing studies undertaken abroad. But, above all, she believed in the need to give everyone the opportunity to grow and develop in an inter-cultural and inter-linguistic environment. After obtaining a

Fulbright scholarship to study for a year in the United States, she conducted research for the United Nations Commission on Human Rights dealing with the right to education as a fundamental human right.

In 1969 she began to work, holding multiple multilateral meetings which, 18 years later, led to the creation of the Erasmus Program. This mobility program for European students was finally approved in 1987.

Some of the awards she has received are the Erasmus Program's Gold Saint Valentine's Prize (promoting love between people) and the Orient Express Award for a book about the Erasmus Program (encouraging contact between nations).

Her books include *Erasmus, Comett, Lingua, Tempus; Educazione permanente e formazione universitaria internazionale, Le conferenze dei rettori delle università, italiana, comunitaria, paneuropea, mondiale; Storia e documenti and The Erasmus Program and its Origins*. She has published articles and essays in numerous national newspapers and specialized journals.

**The Erasmus Program** has changed the lives of two million European students over the past 25 years. Erasmus exchanges benefit not only the students but also the teaching staff and have brought about hugely positive changes in European academic life since their creation. The Erasmus Program conceived by Sofia Corradi has been a vitally important step towards building a truly united Europe with common universal values, including full respect for its diversity.

The story of how the program was conceived and how she put it into practice is told at: [www.lifelong.it/library/erasmus\\_en.doc](http://www.lifelong.it/library/erasmus_en.doc).



