

Erasmus of Rotterdam
My wish is to be a citizen of the world

Erasmus University Rotterdam takes its name from the great philosopher, theologian, and humanist, Desiderius Erasmus. A man who had a great influence on the intellectual and cultural climate of his time, using the new means of communication of his time: books. Erasmus, regarded as one of the world's foremost thinkers, was born in Rotterdam on October 28th, in 1466. He was one of the great minds of the Renaissance, a new era in the history of humankind.

Erasmus identified himself as Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus, although he left Rotterdam when he was a toddler and became a true cosmopolitan: 'I don't want to be a citizen of a particular city, but one of the entire world' (*civis totius mundis*). He stayed in Paris, London, Oxford, Cambridge, Freiburg im Breisgau and Louvain. He also lived in Italian cities, in particular in Venice, Rome, Turin and Bologna. He died in Basel, in 1536.

His spiritual point of reference was the Latin-Christian world, and although fighting/denouncing its abuses, he remained a loyal member of the Church of Rome and never joined the Reformers. He tried to convince the leaders of that time to work together to bring peace. He fearlessly defended freedom of speech and thought. He was highly esteemed among kings and learned persons because of his appeal for individual freedom and tolerance, drawing his inspiration from ancient Greek and Latin literature and the Bible. A learned society unified by a common belief was his ideal.