

Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

Please describe your institution's international (EU and non-EU) strategy. In your description please explain a) how you choose your partners, b) in which geographical area(s) and c) the most important objectives and target groups of your mobility activities (with regard to staff and students in first, second and third cycles, including study and training, and short cycles). If applicable, also explain how your institution participates in the development of double/multiple/joint degrees.

At Siedlce University of Natural Sciences and Humanities we believe that there is a need for internationalisation of our university; hence, internationalisation is recognised as an integral part of the university's development strategy. In the area of our interest are the following actions: student mobility for studies and work placements, teaching and non-teaching Staff mobility. The university has three main strategic objectives:

- 1) developing scientific research and transferring its scientific findings into business,
- 2) providing high quality of education,
- 3) internationalising university's activities.

Nowadays, internationalisation is a necessary condition of development of any institution of higher education. It is the key contributor to the quality of education. The efforts to open the university to international students and lecturers have been taken since 2001/2002. The university carefully chooses its partners, trying to link the LLP/Erasmus activities with scientific and research activities, going beyond the programme. The potential for cooperation is checked prior signing inter-institutional agreements. So, study programmes are compared and so is the research carried out in both institutions. Moreover, bearing in mind prospective mobility, the languages of instruction are also taken into account when choosing partners. We willingly cooperate with neighbouring Eastern countries, whose cultures our students and staff are familiar with and whose languages are easily understood, e.g. Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia, etc., and also with other culturally – different countries. We seek to cooperate with Western Europe whose long and rich tradition in research and education may help to enrich our research and education. So, in the centre of our interest are both countries within and

outside Europe. In the next years the university intends to take further measures to modernise and internationalise its activities. Providing good quality courses in English is a step towards this goal. The university can become an educational centre for students from European and non-European countries. Cooperation with foreign universities and having access to their scientific experience have been so far, and will be in the future, a big stimuli to the improvement of the quality of education and research. Our aim is to increase academic and non-academic mobility in participating and non-participating countries. We want to provide students with enhanced study opportunities at foreign partner universities. From a professional point of view, studies abroad are particularly useful and very much needed for our students of humanities, business, science, computing, agriculture and biology. The main objective behind this is to prepare students for future work in international, multicultural, and competitive working environments. We believe that supporting contacts and cooperation between researchers and research teams contributes to a higher scientific success rate, better education, higher prestige, and more funds available; therefore, the promotion of teaching staff mobility will be of utmost importance to us. Moreover, to prepare students for future work in international working environments, we will keep organizing student placements, as international practical experience allows them to acquire higher professional competence and gives them better start-up conditions.

Our plans for the period 2014 – 2020 include:

- 1) opening a specialisation - International Business for undergraduate students at the Faculty of Economic and Legal Sciences. This specialisation will be available for students in the academic year 2013/2014,

- 2) opening an MA programme in management in English – it is expected to be launched in two years' time),
- 3) creating and implementing the project of double-diplomas not later than within the next four years,
- 4) creating and implementing an MBA programme,
- 5) improving the activities promoting the university, and actively searching for new partners and students, also from non-European countries, especially China, India and Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan,
- 6) actively using the existing agreements and extending the collaboration beyond their scope, especially towards common scientific research, creating networks to apply for European grants, and contributing in each other's international scientific journals- two projects will be continued, i.e International week and Meetings with Business for home and foreign lecturers and students, ending with a book in English.

In all the actions undertaken under the programme we will respect the rule of equality between men and women taking part in the projects. Moreover, disabled students and teachers will be given an equal chance to participate in any project implemented at the university. All the actions will be undertaken in a way to enhance social and economic cohesion.

If applicable, please describe your institution's strategy for the organisation and implementation of international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects in teaching and training in relation to projects implemented under the Programme.

Recognising the contribution of higher education to the formation of new jobs and economic growth, the university will endeavour to enter partnerships to form sound cooperation with local/regional businesses and social organisations. Thus cooperation will be expanded with the Eastern Chamber of Commerce to strengthen the activities ranging from discussing study programmes to organising student placements and carrying out common projects, such as Meetings with Business. It targets businesspeople who do not have easy access to the latest knowledge. Every year several Erasmus lecturers are invited to this event and to International week to share their latest knowledge of the issues vital for businesspeople and students alike. Moreover, cooperation will be furthered with the Zentis company, which has been organising a number of competitions targeting our students and drawing on our students' ideas. It is strongly believed that this cooperation will promote students' creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Additionally, the university will expand cooperation with the Sokolow Meat Company financing the research carried out by the Faculty of Natural Sciences, whose findings are then used by the company. Furthermore, bearing in mind the need to preserve cultural heritage, the university is planning to further develop cooperation with the organisation The Association of Polish Community, whose aim is to strengthen ties with the Polish communities living in the Post-Soviet states. The association cooperates with the university within the project 'Summer School of the Polish Language and Culture. This cooperation will be continued in the future. Being close neighbours, the university has already had talks with partner institutions in Ukraine, Latvia, Belarus to initiate and develop new projects leading to double diplomas and to implement a programme which gives students a chance to finalise their last year of Master's degree studies at either our or partner university.

Please explain the expected impact of your participation in the Programme on the modernisation of your institution (for each of the 5 priorities of the Modernisation Agenda) in terms of the policy objectives you intend to achieve.*

The university will adhere to the five principles of the Programme:

- 1) increasing attainment levels to provide the graduates and researchers Europe needs;

From the very beginning one of the main goals of the international policy was to add some extra value to the university's programmes, and both visiting students and lecturers were encouraged to participate in the university's research and publishing activities. Moreover, the university will facilitate further access of the disabled to our study programmes, supporting the activities of its Centre for Education and Rehabilitation of the Disabled;

2) improving the quality and relevance of higher education;

The university will increase the number of courses in English and will introduce MA programmes in English as well as double diploma studies. The university will seek to increase the links with business sector to invest in its research and innovation. The contacts with labour market institutions will be maintained in order to use their expertise in forming the new study programmes the labour market needs. To know what the labour market needs the Career Planning Office will continue carrying out Graduates Employability Questionnaire, hoping that it would show current employability trends. Its results will be used to design new study programmes;

3) strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border cooperation;

The two main objectives concerning cross-border cooperation are as follows:

- gaining more European partners, especially those who are ready to collaborate with the university beyond the basic mobility areas,
- attracting non-European partners, especially from Asia and South America (China, Brazil) in order to increase the number of students and researchers whose expertise will undoubtedly contribute to the quality of its activities;

4) Linking higher education, research, and business for excellence and regional development; Having close links with the Eastern Chamber of Commerce, Zentis, and the Sokolow Meat Company, the university will try to link with other business sectors. On the initiative of the Sokolow Company, a new study programme will soon be launched at the Faculty of Natural Sciences, targeting future workforce for the company. An agreement has been signed with the Association of International Road Carriers and Forwarders, stipulating student placements, competitions aimed at students, and scientific research.

5) Improving governance and funding:

European funds for teacher and student mobility are used efficiently. The best applicants are chosen and mobility effects are investigated carefully. When holding annual conferences and workshops, different organizational units of the university have relied on private sponsoring and will keep trying to obtain private funding for its activities. In the next years the university intends to take further steps in the modernisation of education and internationalisation, intensifying and extending all its international activities.