



ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT

Participation in Erasmus+

Participation in the Erasmus+ program is one of the basic pillars of the internationalization of higher education. International exchange of students and staff is an integral part of academic life, and our Academia Rerum Civilium became part of this program shortly after its establishment. Since the first years of our involvement in the program, we sent an above foreign mobility compared to other institutions with a similar size and professional orientation. Unless the situation was complicated by external and uncontrollable factors (e.g. terrorist attacks in Brussels or the coronavirus pandemic), our students and staff participated in mobilities and we want to continue this trend. When the pandemic restrictions end, we want to immediately resume our foreign exchanges and continue to offer Erasmus+ activities. In the near future, we want to expand the offer of institutions, where it will be possible to send our students and staff. We are already ready for this expansion, because during the pandemic we proactively established cooperation with a new partner (Netherlands Business Academy in Breda), where we plan to conclude a mutual agreement in the Erasmus+ program by the end of 2021. We want to improve our participation in the Erasmus+ program by offering our students and staff new attractive partners with a specific professional focus. We already have enough contractual partners to ensure mobilities for all our students and staff who will be interested in them. However, in context of the evolving European integration process, we expect that the interest in study abroad will increase, and therefore we want to offer more opportunities for student mobility.

Strategy, objectives and impact

The main goal of our participation in the Erasmus+ program is to support and implement foreign mobility for students and staff of our college. We want to offer our students the opportunity to complete part of their studies at a foreign university, where they will gain not only new knowledge and expertise, but also experience with studying abroad. These mobilities will lead to an increase in the quality of their education, the acquisition of the necessary and enriching social competences and skills, which will be an important part of their future success on the labor market in the European Union. Stays at foreign academic institutions enable our staff to improve their educational competencies and language skills, gain international contacts and increase their interest in the internationalization of our college. Our participation in Erasmus+ program engages our university into international bilateral cooperation. Incoming students will be able to participate in our research projects and incoming staff can introduce our students to new, alternative and international perspectives in the educational process.

Through our college provides only first cycle program, our graduates take second cycle program at other HEIs. Being able to participate in mobilities, their chances of successfully completing the graduate degree and move on to academic ranks increase. Also, mobilities of academic staff support the quality of education procedures in our college, thus providing the students with improved chances of their future academic careers. We also expect that our participation in the

Erasmus+ program will attract more talented students, possibly even from disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

We expect that our participation in Erasmus+ program will allow our college to respond more quickly to the demands of labor market. Through our recent graduates have not problems in finding quality employment we are aware that such situation might change due to the expected economic problems that will result from the coronavirus pandemic. As a professionally oriented college we believe that student mobilities, especially in training placements, provide important feedback regarding the quality and relevance of higher education and will enable us to foster necessary changes in our study program.

As a private institution, we closely understand the necessity of having close, effective links between education, research and business. Through our participation in the Erasmus+ program, both its incoming and outgoing participants, we seek to build such link, create room for entrepreneurial, creative and innovation skills development in the region and educate professionals that will be able to find good employment. We want to contribute to the fulfillment of the goals of the European exchange program by emphasizing that our well-prepared students with a good knowledge of foreign languages take part in study stays abroad. We want to prepare them well for their study stays, so that they can only get positive and desirable results from them.

We want to achieve the goal that all our full-time students will have the opportunity to participate in foreign mobility during their studies, which would be in accordance with their professional interests. At the same time, we also want to ensure higher participation of students of our part-time study in exchange programs. At the level of staff exchange, we want to ensure that our employees go primarily to such institutions that are related to the long-term trends of their academic and research activities.

Since the beginning of its existence, our college has focused primarily on international cooperation in Central Europe. Most of our research projects and scientific plans are implemented together with partners from the Visegrad countries, especially Slovakia. It is therefore logical that most study exchanges take place within the V4 countries. However, as part of the wider internationalization and implementation of the results of V4 research projects, we want to expand the range of our cooperating institutions to countries outside the V4, such as the Netherlands (as already mentioned). The exchange of students and staff is part of our internationalization, especially in gaining professional experience and new skills of students and staff and the subsequent implementation of this experience in academic life in our college. At the same time, incoming students and staff inform and provide their experiences on teaching methods, implementation of research and the operation of our college at their home institutions. Modernization and new types of information channels (e.g. in the form of distance learning) significantly expand the number of students who are interested in gaining experience abroad. We are already implementing the study of some lifelong learning courses for students of foreign universities, and our participation in the Erasmus+ program is only a natural extension and addition of opportunities to get to know our university and its operation in a real way and not only in a virtual space.

Each new experience from a study stay abroad increases the qualitative development of staff and hence the whole institution. Knowledge of foreign academic environment, their focus, discussions on modern and innovative forms of the educational process or on complex forms of internationalization and modernization will contribute to the internal development of our

university. Knowledge of foreign academic institutions, their focus, discussions on modern and innovative forms of the educational process or on complex forms of internationalization and modernization, will contribute to the internal development of our college. For example, our college has already carried out comparative evaluations of academic and research activities with our foreign partners. Student exchanges lead to new opportunities not only for the students themselves (new knowledge, networks, contacts, etc.), but also provides incentives for the self-evaluation of the higher education institution and for the improvement of its existing practices and teaching. Ongoing cooperation with foreign partners in the Erasmus+ program also contributes to the continuous quality control of our college, because every international comparison increases the preconditions for improving our working practices.

Participation in Erasmus+ gives us the opportunity to set clear and measurable benchmarks for our educational development. A higher number of outgoing and incoming students and staff will naturally lead to an increase their interest in events across Europe, to reduce the risk of nationalism and xenophobia, to a higher rate of interest on European civic values and to a higher rate of their participation in the European democratic process. From our experience we know that international exchanges are also a means to improve the independent and responsible work of students and staff. The study itself is thus also extended to the European dimension, associated not only with declaratory elements, but especially with practical application in the implementation of the study program.

Indicators

We send and receive several students and staff every year. In the overall summary of numbers, however, due to the size of our institution, the number of outgoing students was up to 20% of the number of full-time students and employees. We want to keep these numbers because they demonstrate the high interest of our academic community in study stays abroad.

As part of our participation, we expect that interest in study stays abroad will continue. Only new and unexpected safety or health risks could again jeopardize this interest. Otherwise, the overall strategy to maximize the number of mobilities will be successfully implemented.

Our goal is to offer the opportunity to study abroad for the majority of our college students, especially for all full-time students. In the case of our staff, our stated goal is that each of them has the opportunity to participate in foreign mobility at least once per three years.

To achieve these goals, we will continue to directly support student and staff mobility. Our students participating in a foreign exchange will continue to receive discounted tuition fees as well as the maximum possible financial support for their stay. Staff will continue to be supported by higher personal evaluation and financial contribution for the stay.

The Academic Council of our college (i.e. its main governing body) will annually monitor and evaluate the implementation of these goals and regulate or revise them according to the evaluation of success or interest in mobility. We want to continue cooperating with all our partner institutions on a long-term basis and we want to expand our cooperation to other areas as well. We will add new institutions to the list of our existing partners and we will evaluate the fulfillment of mutual agreements and conditions of cooperation every year.