

# Erasmus Declaration on Higher Education Policy from the University College of Teacher Education Styria



Pädagogische  
Hochschule  
Steiermark

## Strategy

### European Education Area – European Higher Education Area.

The University College of Teacher Education Styria advocates and supports the initiatives of the European Commission to build a European Education Area and the associated vision of a Europe in which

- stays abroad for study and learning purposes become the norm,
- university degrees are recognised throughout the EU,
- it is common to speak two languages in addition to one's mother tongue,
- everyone has access to quality education regardless of their social and economic background, and
- people are fully aware of their European identity, Europe's cultural heritage and its diversity.

According to the draft of the National Strategy for Quality in Transnational Mobility and the Internationalisation of Teaching at Austrian Universities (HMIS 2020 – *Nationale Strategie für qualitätsvolle transnationale Mobilität und die Internationalisierung der Lehre an den österreichischen Hochschulen*), international mobility leads to the acquisition of key competences that enable the young generation to think in a globally connected and innovative way. These are of crucial importance in order to survive in the European and global competition. Therefore, comprehensively educated university graduates equipped with broad personal and intercultural competences are an essential basis for securing Austria as a centre of education, science and research.

The question formulated in the aforementioned draft, "How can we achieve quality-assured international and intercultural competences for everyone?", functions as an important guiding question of the internationalisation efforts at the University College of Teacher Education Styria.

The University College of Teacher Education Styria is committed to the principles and goals of the European Higher Education Area and the transparency instruments associated with it. The Yerevan Ministerial Communiqué (2015) refers to the special importance of the mobility of student teachers for the education of future generations of "Europeans".

### Internationalisation is an overall university process.

Internationalisation is a principle anchored in the profile of the University College of Teacher Education Styria and is an integral part of all areas of performance at the university college. In accordance with the definition of the European Parliament study "Internationalisation of Higher Education", it is understood as an inter-university, goal-oriented process that integrates international, intercultural and global perspectives, involves all members of staff working at the university college and contributes significantly to improving the quality of teaching and research, which can thus contribute meaningfully to society.

**The focus is on the continuous development of international cooperation and networks.**

The aim is to expand cooperation in mobility for teaching and learning purposes, for international projects and international research, as well as to implement a lively international everyday culture at the university college. The already existing network of more than 70 international partner university colleges with a focus on Europe is to be increased and expanded worldwide.

**We offer professionalization for educators and consultation for schools and other educational institutions addressing linguistic and cultural diversity.**

Future and current teachers as well as schools, other educational institutions and educational networks are professionalised through tailor-made educational opportunities for dealing with linguistic and cultural diversity. The mobility of student teachers is also supported as an essential contribution to promoting an open-minded attitude towards diversity among future teachers at the University College of Teacher Education Styria.

**Our profession-oriented research aims at internationality.**

The research work at the University College of Teacher Education Styria is oriented towards international scientific standards. The researchers ask diversity-oriented questions, among other things, and strive to cooperate internationally in their research projects as well as disseminate their outcomes in English publications and congresses.

**We promote mobility in teacher education in the Teacher Education Network South-East (EVSO)**

This is also done on a cross-national basis, whereby the University College of Teacher Education Styria, represented by the head of the Institute of Diversity Studies and International Relations, is in charge of the "Project Group Student Mobility" for teacher training in secondary teacher education, which was set up specifically for this purpose. Mobility-promoting measures, such as a uniform recognition procedure throughout the network, and the opening of student mobility to the Teacher Education Network South-East (EVSO) are examples of this.

**We participate in the EU education programme Erasmus+.**

Participation in the European Commission's Erasmus+ education programme is one of the most important mobility and cooperation measures at the University College of Teacher Education Styria.

**The Institute of Diversity Studies and International Relations supports and leads the internationalization of the university college.**

As a support institute, the Institute is responsible for the strategic management and operational planning of the internationalisation of the University College of Teacher Education Styria. Its services include consultation, organisation and evaluation of educational mobility for students and university staff, as well as consultation, documentation and participation in international projects. An important goal of the Institute's activities is a diversity-oriented opening at all levels. All fields of activity have an impact across the University College of Teacher Education Styria.

## **Implementation**

### **Erasmus Key Action 1 (KA1) – Learning Mobility**

Mobility for students and university staff

### **Erasmus Key Action 2 (KA2) – Cooperation between organisations and higher education institutions**

Partnerships for cooperation and exchange of good practice

Partnerships for Excellence – European Higher Education Institutions

Partnerships for Excellence – Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees

Partnerships for Innovation

Internationalisation is a principle anchored in the profile of the University College of Teacher Education Styria and an integrative component of the service areas of teaching, research, development and consultation.

As a European mobility and education programme, Erasmus has become a mainstay of the internationalisation of European higher education over the last three decades. The promotion of mobility and internationalisation of higher education will continue to be a priority in the coming years. The University College of Teacher Education's participation in Erasmus key actions 1 and 2 is one of the most important mobility, cooperation and internationalisation measures for teaching and research in initial teacher education and continuous professional development in teacher education at the university college.

All organisational units of the University College of Teacher Education Styria - institutes, centres, administrative departments - are supported in participating in the key actions listed. The Institute of Diversity Studies and International Relations offers the corresponding services such as consultation, organisation and evaluation of educational mobility for students and university staff, as well as consultation, documentation and participation in international projects. Networking and dissemination of results and products should ensure the sustainability of international cooperation. This is done, e.g., by incorporating findings from international cooperation projects into teaching.

Great relevance is attached to the Internationalisation of Curricula (IoC), e.g. through measures that are suitable to promote the international and intercultural competence acquisition of all university members in a quality manner. National framework conditions must be taken into account in this context, as well as sufficient institutional resources to support the achievement of this goal. Joint programmes, mobility windows, international networking e.g. in the area of Master's theses, integration of guest teaching, multilingual courses and publications, participation in and organisation of international conferences and congresses are examples of such measures.

Participation in Erasmus Key Action 1 also makes it possible to promote high-quality transnational mobility for students, teachers and administrative staff.

## **Implementation of the internationalisation strategy**

In order to implement the internationalisation strategy at the University College of Teacher Education Styria, the following objectives are pursued within the framework of participation in the Erasmus programme:

**Adherence to the principles stated in the Erasmus Charter** and implementation of the related measures concerning mobility projects and international cooperation activities at the University College of Teacher Education Styria;

### **Integration of internationalisation and mobility into the strategy of the university college**

The main aim of these measures is to enable as many groups of people as possible to acquire intercultural and international competences at the University College of Teacher Education Styria by – embedding mobility in the curriculum; – creating mobility windows (defined in terms of time or content); – linking mobility and scientific work, for example in the context of theses or by involving students in international research or cooperation projects; – integrating international and intercultural competences into the curricula;

**Targeted selection of cooperation partners** based on criteria such as geographical location (neighbouring countries), geographical distribution, study programmes and competence profiles of study paths, balance between incoming and outgoing mobilities, past performance in mobilities and cooperations, sustainability of cooperations...;

**Promotion of mobility and international cooperation through increased communication of the benefits** to students, university college staff, university college management, education administration and politics;

**Support and promotion of ecologically sustainable forms of mobility and international cooperation** as discussed under the heading of "Green Erasmus";

**Expansion of offers in the area of temporally and methodologically flexible mobility and cooperation formats**, taking into account the possibilities of blended learning and short-term mobilities;

### **Connection of internationalisation with the core mission of the different organisational units**

- Focus on staff development: Addressing staff mobility/international cooperation projects in staff meetings and employment agreements;
- Targeted coordination of continuous professional development stays/international cooperation projects with the tasks and needs of the organisational units;
- Job shadowing, study trips;
- Joint teaching / international cooperation projects with guest lecturers;

### **Visibility of internationalisation activities**

- Internally, through events that promote the exchange of experiences between homecomings and with future outgoings / incomings or on international cooperation projects.
- Externally, e.g. for cooperation partners, for example through the use of e-learning tools, in the context of video conferences and blogs;

**Visibility of the acquisition of important skills and intercultural competences (keyword "21st Century Skills")** by teaching staff, employees and students within the framework of mobility and international cooperation projects;

**Use of mobility and international cooperations to make the University College of Teacher Education Styria and its activities internationally visible**

### **Reduction of language barriers**

- Coaching for English or multilingual teaching/publications/lectures
- English or multilingual teaching for incoming students
- Language courses for outgoing staff
- Language courses for students (incomings and outgoings);

### **Improvement of the quality of mobility and international cooperations in teacher education**

- Establishment of a comprehensive quality management system for mobility, also to make mobility and its benefits visible;
- Evaluation and reflection of mobility and cooperation experiences, e.g. in the context of events and the support of mobility experiences.

### **Balance between qualitative and quantitative goals**

After the number of cooperation partners, student and university staff mobilities, as well as project participations has risen steadily in recent years, the focus in the coming years will be on a balance between quantity and quality.

### **Timeframe**

The internationalisation measures planned within the framework of the Erasmus programme will be implemented, evaluated and, if necessary, adapted in the period 2021-27 (P-D-A-C Cycle).