

## 1. ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT (EPS)

### 1.1 Erasmus activities included in your EPS

In this section, you need to tick the Erasmus activities covered by your Erasmus Policy Statement. Please select those activities that your HEI intends to implement during the entire duration of the Programme.

#### **Erasmus Key Action 1 (KA1) - Learning mobility:**

The mobility of higher education students and staff

#### **Erasmus Key Action 2 (KA2) - Cooperation among organisations and institutions:**

Partnerships for Cooperation and exchanges of practices

Partnerships for Excellence – European Universities

Partnerships for Excellence - Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees

Partnerships for Innovation

#### **Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3):**

Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3) - Support to policy development and cooperation:

### 1.2 Erasmus Policy statement (EPS): your strategy

Your Erasmus Policy Statement should reflect how you intended to implement Erasmus after the award of the ECHE. Should you wish to add additional activities in the future, you will need to amend your Erasmus Policy Statement and inform your Erasmus National Agency.

What would you like to achieve by participating in the Erasmus Programme? How does your participation in the Erasmus Programme fit into your institutional internationalisation and modernisation strategy?

(Please reflect on the objectives of your participation. Please explain how you expect the participation in Erasmus to contribute towards modernising your institution, as well as on the

goal of building a European Education Area<sup>1</sup> and explain the policy objectives you intend to pursue).

Original language (and translation into EN, FR or DE if the EPS is not in one of these languages)

Internationalisation is an instrument in support of providing excellent education and research, taking up a wider social and societal responsibility and delivering open-minded graduates with world citizens' skills. Since 2009 Internationalisation has been, and continues to be, a strategic priority for VUB with a focus on the internationalisation of research and curricula, the recruitment of international students (I@H purpose), the increase of student and staff mobility (joining communities for enhancing respect and understanding) and the expansion of structural partnerships with foreign universities (joint contribution to global issues). This has led to an important increase in international/European research projects, English taught programmes, strategic exchange agreements and the number of international students.

VUB's most recent strategic plan (2018-2021) identified the following objectives regarding internationalisation:

- encouraging VUB students to develop their intercultural skills by increasing both incoming and outgoing student mobility.
- the development of a more reflective internationalisation policy, while keeping in mind the ethic and social dimensions of internationalisation, based on the values of the VUB.
- promote inclusion of all students and staff
- strengthen the structural international partnerships and networks and the recognition of VUB.

VUB's vision on education is based on 5 pillars, in line with the internationalisation policy:

- deliver open-minded students
- students get engaged in a sustainable humanistic society
- students become world citizens
- students adapt an inquisitive attitude
- students are prepared for their future function in society. VUB continuously invests actively in expanding international internship opportunities as a first work experience.

Since 2019 the VUB is part of the European University Network EUTOPIA together with CY Cergy Paris Université, University of Gothenburg, University of Ljubljana, Universitat Pompeu Fabra Barcelona and the university of Warwick. EUTOPIA aims to become a fully federated inter-university campus alliance. In order to establish the foundations of a federated university by 2025, EUTOPIA will focus on five core areas bringing modernisation and digitalisation to the forefront as a pilot to then empower the whole university with new findings and best practices to become the university of the future:

- Prepare students, staff and learners to be empowered European citizens in today's disruptive world
- Adjust the university organisation and practices to lead the challenges of the 21st Century
- Increase and intensify the Europeanisation of programmes on offer
- Catalyse place-making by the universities in partnership with their regions, engaging with all agencies to embed and empower the transformative effect of universities
- Serve as an example for other universities, across Europe and in the wider international arena, in order to share and develop the focus on building transformative, challenge-driven and contemporary universities.

For all activities, a quality assurance framework is put in place. Mobility is supported by exchange agreements, to accommodate student and staff exchanges. These agreements are evaluated based on a number of criteria to ensure strong and high-quality partnerships. Professors guiding the exchange mobility explore matching interests in research, which often leads to joint research projects, or vice versa.

Please reflect on the Erasmus actions you would like to take part in and explain how they will be implemented in practice at your institution. Please explain how your institution's participation in these actions will contribute to achieving the objectives of your institutional strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the priorities of the European Education Area, such as recognition, digital skills, common values and inclusive education, please consult the following website:  
[https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-education-area\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-education-area_en)

languages)

The VUB takes part in the following Erasmus actions: KA1 (The mobility of higher education students and staff and Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees (EMJMD)), KA2 (Partnerships for cooperation and exchanges of practices; Partnerships for excellence – European Universities; Partnerships for excellence –; Partnership for innovation) and KA3 (Support to policy development and cooperation), Sports and Jean Monnet.

In the framework of the E+ programme VUB coordinated and participated in projects in all 3 Key Actions, Sports and Jean Monnet. In the new framework programme the strategic commitment to actively participate in these and new project types to support our strategic goals will remain.

The VUB strategy for participating in projects falls under the general internationalisation policy and objectives as mentioned above. We are convinced that the competences, experience and knowledge within one single university are insufficient to understand the complexity of some subjects and global problems, to model them and to design solutions. Therefore, we gradually develop the university network as the basic instrument to fulfill our functions and to which our individual university belongs. In such a network, sustainable partnerships are extremely important to realise more than just individual in- and outgoing student mobility and exchange, but also to build, next to occasional synergies, sustainable cooperation structures such as international joint educational programmes, joint research laboratories, joint and dual degrees, embedded in a system of quality assurance that transcends the boundaries of the own university. Participation in projects allow for extra funding to achieve these goals.

Projects can be initiated by academics or centrally by initiative of the Council for International Policy. When designing a project, (preferential) partner universities are considered in first priority to become partner in the project. Complimentary expertise in the considered domains presented in the project is key, so different universities take up different work packages. When it comes to larger consortia, a mix of existing partner universities and new ones are considered to expand our network. Synergies between projects is always considered since different projects can reinforce each other in the collaboration and create more sustainability.

The International Relations office is responsible for the communication, information dissemination on calls and guidelines, providing university administrative data as part of the proposal, annexes and submission, or works out projects under the supervision of the vice-rector internationalisation.

For the implementation, support is given centrally for contract management, financial management and financial reporting (Financial department), scholarship payments (if applicable) and welcoming and informing the scholars (if applicable). Procedures are in place to follow up on the projects. While each project has it's own particularities that are being taken into account, there are no separate strategies for EU and non-EU projects.

What is the envisaged impact of your participation in the Erasmus+ Programme on your institution?

Please reflect on targets, as well as qualitative and quantitative indicators in monitoring this impact (such as mobility targets for student/staff mobility, quality of the implementation, support for participants on mobility, increased involvement in cooperation projects (under the KA2 action), sustainability/long-term impact of projects etc.) You are encouraged to offer an indicative timeline for achieving the targets related to the Erasmus+ actions.

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An international campus with a good interaction between local and international (exchange) students is one of the goals within each curricula as well as during extra-curricular activities. This interaction and diversity on VUB-campus, based on tolerance towards diverse philosophies, is the direct implementation of the Universitas thought, essential in the education towards independent world citizens. The same experience is aspired for VUB students going abroad on an exchange.

Both student exchanges and Internationalisation@Home play an important role in the development of students into open-minded world citizens with respect for other communities. The VUB strives to meet the EU-target of 20% students with an international experience of 15 ECTS upon graduation as well as the ambitious Flemish target of 33% students graduating with a 'mobile' diploma of 10 ECTS. The mobility policy, put in place by VUB (sustainability, CO2 compensation,...) will be implemented.

In parallel, I@H is elaborated using new digital techniques to bring international groups virtually together. Bringing the local student body and the more than 20% international student body together in groups to work out academic assignments allows for ALL students to experience I@H.

Staff mobility plays a key role in the further internationalisation of our university and the pursuit of excellent education and research. VUB encourages staff mobility by offering financial support to all the faculties for both teaching and training staff exchanges. International-minded staff will encourage the interest of students for going abroad and/or internationalisation and strengthen international contacts and cooperation. A lot of collaboration starts from student

exchanges and is strengthened by staff exchanges. VUB is aiming to have at least one mobility per year per academic and administrative staff, although it's not about the numbers. Staff exchanges aren't the goal, but a means to improve the VUB's network and knowledge and to increase the international collaborations and the sustainability of these collaborations. It is a given that the VUB works very hard on increasing the overall number of Erasmus projects with international partners. The different Erasmus programmes help strengthen the collaboration and form the basis for sustainable and long term partnerships.