

APPROVED
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ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT

European Humanities University is one of a few private universities in Lithuania, bearing an exclusive history of an exiled university. EHU has been operated in Minsk, Belarus, since 1992 until political restrictions and forced closure in 2004. EHU was founded in Minsk in 1992 with the intention of creating an educational institution designed after western-style colleges and universities, rooted in the foundational study of Humanities and Social Sciences. Its primary purpose was to prepare young men and women to assume responsible roles in the future societal development of a free and open Belarus as thoughtful professionals and civic leaders in their respective fields. Because of these aims and respective way of teaching, in 2004 EHU was closed in Belarus. Having secured support of international donors and Lithuanian government the university has been moved to neighbouring Lithuania and established here as higher education institution corresponding to the Lithuanian legislation in 2006. Since then EHU is an organic part of the Lithuanian system of higher education, though, at the same time, it remains a Belarusian University, and not only for the reason that 95% of students and near 60% of the faculty at EHU are Belarusians. In correspondence with its mission, EHU uses its potential for the development of a European intellectual space without borders, return of knowledge to Belarus, establishment of innovative social partnerships, development of civic education and broadening of human rights and potential through freedom of speech, thought, and research. All these goals, being fundamentally European, are especially valuable to promote Belarus' transition to openness and democracy, and are very important for the other states of the Eastern European region.

Having celebrated its 10th Anniversary in Vilnius and preparing to celebrate the 25th Anniversary, EHU adopted the new Strategic Plan for 2016-2020 years. This plan is adjusted to the new situation in the world and European policy and economics, to modern challenges in the educational sphere, to the most recent innovations in the Common European Higher Education Area, while keeping in focus needs of Belarus.

One of the main points of this strategic document is the EHU Internationalization Strategy. It stresses, first and foremost - the main aim of the internationalization – to make of EHU a real hub of transforming the post-soviet experience in democratic development into system of tools helping the post-soviet states in their further changes. Being a platform for such transformation, EHU tends to use its main advantages: good knowledge of the soviet and post-soviet conditions, situation in Commonwealth of Independent States and other Eastern European and Central Asian states, their needs, as well as its good experience of operating in the EU, under democratic conditions and values.

Playing the role of the point of transmission of the European values and democratic principles via education is the main strategic target of the EHU internationalization. This target is

the first starting point in the implementation by EHU of international cooperation, in particular, in the choice of partners and identification of specific forms and areas of cooperation.

Positioning itself as an analyst of the experience of the development of Western European states and being an element of the European educational system, EHU regards the EU Modernisation Agenda for Higher Education as the second starting point of its international cooperation. Accordingly, EHU builds channels and priorities for international cooperation, following the Agenda's priority objectives: increasing attainment levels to provide the graduates and personnel according to European needs; improving quality and relevance of higher education; strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border cooperation; linking higher education, research and business for excellence and regional development, and improving governance and funding.

The main focus of EHU is to carry out projects of different kinds that support the institution's development strategy, and are in line with the EU Modernisation Agenda for Higher Education. International programmes and projects are among priorities in the scientific and educational EHU activity. This has been indicated by the participation in the 7th Framework Programme, and in the Erasmus Programme (as part of the Lifelong Learning Programme) and is clearly stated by the current active involvement in the preparation of project proposals and the implementation of projects in the framework of the Horizon2020 and Erasmus+ Programmes. The bulk of the EHU faculty is involved in actions targeted at internationalization via these European Programmes, and the idea has been expressed in the documents pertaining to the University's mission and strategy. Via Erasmus+ Programme EHU aims to develop additional course offerings (for example, joint master degrees) and to undertake research projects addressing specific needs of its stakeholders. The Academic Development Unit, one of the main EHU structural units, is responsible for facilitation and coordination of planning, drafting and submitting applications for international projects in teaching, training and research, supporting project management and reporting of teaching, training and research related projects, as well as for international mobility organization.

Today, among other projects, EHU is implementing a number of Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership projects and the project "Jean Monnet Chair"; it is a partner in several project applications. In recent years EHU is also an applicant within the framework of Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education projects.

EHU academic partners are mostly HEI's from European countries (both EU members and non-EU). The contacts are based on framework bilateral agreements as well as the Erasmus+ Programme agreements and EHU membership in the European University Foundation (EUF). The list of collaborating Universities is also determined by the proximity of our profiles. EHU partners in project and mobility activities among EU members are mostly (although not only) Universities – EUF members. As for non-EU Universities, EHU holds partnership with HEI's mostly from Eastern European states – member of the EU Eastern Partnership, where priority is given to Belarus (cooperation is centred mainly around personal contacts and partnership with NGOs, Universities in Belarus are not active in this process for political reasons), Ukraine, Moldova. The other region of EHU interest is the states of Central Asia, where priority is given to Kazakhstan and Kirgizstan. One more EHU priority partner is the Russian Federation, where EHU has a long lasting cooperation with Saint Petersburg State University, National Research University "Higher School of Economics" and some others, though today EHU develops further the network of its partners from the Russian Federation.

A number of cooperation agreements with HEI's of the named states is growing, which enables exchange of teaching staff and students, as well as joint educational and research projects.

Establishing structured, intensive and long term cooperation with carefully selected partner institutions is closely connected and practically impossible without mobility activities for staff and students. Moreover, this European dimension, added to the traditional curriculum of students and academic and administrative staff, not only reinforces their professional and scientific skills but also enhances their personal development.

The general quality framework for mobility is provided by the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education, which provisions are laid down into the Inter-institutional Agreements with the partner Universities. One more document, through which the quality framework is established, is the EHU "Regulation on the International Mobility of Students and Staff of the EHU".

EHU works according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). Periods of studies carried out by the students under Erasmus+ framework are fully recognized and do not

increase the lengths of the studies. Incoming students receive the Transcript of their records in order to be able to accomplish the recognition of their credits at the sending institution.

At EHU both, the incoming and the outgoing students, carry out their mobility under supervision of the Institutional Erasmus+ Coordinator, the Erasmus and Study Abroad Mobility Coordinator and academic coordinators, who are in charge of giving all the necessary academic support and provide information and help if needed.

The selection of students, as well as the procedure for awarding them a grant, is fair, transparent, coherent, documented and is available to all parties involved in the selection process. The necessary measures to prevent any conflict of interest with regard to persons who may be invited to take part in the selection bodies or process of students' selection are taken.

The main selection criteria for students of the first and second circles are: academic performance of a candidate, previous mobility experiences, motivation, etc., and are made public, because the rules are available at the Universities web site. Lower priority is given to those who have already participated in mobility actions.

Erasmus incoming students are enrolled and become a part of the University community, having equal academic treatment, the same rights, as well as the chance to participate in the Campus activities, as all the students at our University. Incoming students are supported by Buddies, helping them in the educational process and adopting them with the new conditions of living. At the department level the students are supported by departmental mobility coordinators. Students are supplied with the possibility to use all the Universities facilities, including libraries, computer classes, housing service, student canteen, sport facilities etc.

Staff applying for mobility have to justify in the application how their mobility will be beneficial to their research, also how the visit can contribute to reforms in their country, as well as at EHU, making a contribution to teaching methods, quality assurance, joint research and international cooperation development. An activity plan has to be uploaded: the applicant – in consultation with his / her home and host authorities - has to draw up a plan of the courses and/or planned teaching/training/ research activities at the host institution.

Our goal is to improve the awareness of all the international opportunities giving the students and staff the chance to take advantage of planning their experience abroad in all the

areas: studies, training and teaching. Students and staff are informed about their options via informative talks, info meetings, videos and online assistance. Persons who have already accomplished their mobility share their experience at our University via blogs, social networks, articles and interviews published at the EHU Weekly. Their reports allow to identify problems and to analyse any kind of issues with partner institutions.

The impact of this mobility project is always regarded and assessed from different points of view: from the point of view of students, staff that participated in the mobility, EHU, partner institutions, as well as from the point of view of the impact on the states and regions where the Universities are situated.

The institutional impact of the Erasmus+ mobility concerns the possibility to sign bilateral agreements with Universities after having some work experience and understanding better the possible profit from deeper cooperation, its possible level and forms (certified modules / double degrees / joint programs / collaborative research etc.). Moreover, mobility helps to understand the legislative restrictions of all the states on the possible cooperation.

Mobility between Universities, having different dimensions and spheres of good experience, promotes lifelong learning development, distance learning studies improvement and dissemination of modern approaches, student-centred learning.

As for the impact of mobility at the local and national levels, it is possible to say that it will give the new point of view on the possibility to develop cooperation of different cultures, including the culture of education, where each culture retains its identity, but bravely and friendly enters into a dialogue with other cultures.
