



Erasmus+



ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT

Vilniaus universitetas

Erasmus ID code: LT VILNIUS01

INTERNATIONAL (EU AND NON-EU) STRATEGY

The international strategy of Vilnius University rests on the values expressed in the university mission of “strengthening of cognitive and creative powers in Lithuania and the world as well as nurture academic, moral and social values...”. The concrete measures of the strategy are to: provide measures that support international outreach across the whole university community – students and staff; create opportunities for international long and short term mobility for study and internships/training at all cycles of studies; guarantee professional advisory and administrative support for the mobile students and staff; provide additional financial support where and when possible.

The Plan of University internationalization was adopted in 2009. It emphasizes the need to increase student credit and degree mobility with both EU and non-EU countries, to boost the number of international teaching staff including short term staff exchanges as well as emphasize the need to expand academic offer in foreign languages for the mobile students.

International cooperation in general and mobility in particular, are seen as basic values for the development of the institution and fulfilling its mission to society, region, and the world. Therefore, the university is open to cooperation with the institutions of comparable profiles when academic and scientific interests of the academic staff are met. The bilateral agreements or Memorandums of understanding might be instigated by Rector of the university or any university staff member provided that clear rationale and goals for future cooperation as well as correspondence to the declared values of Vilnius University – freedom of thought, diversity of opinions, innovativeness, trust and tolerance - can be demonstrated. All newly signed agreements are advertised within the institution and get financial institutional support. Erasmus study and placement agreement with the universities and enterprises are the sole responsibility of the faculty or departmental authorities and are based on the academic rationale.

The university has 780 Erasmus agreements and 125 bilateral agreements. 69 of the bilateral agreements are with the non-EU countries. The university tries to accommodate the demands for the exchanges with the non-EU countries and especially with Asian universities. It annually exchanges about 70 students with the non-EU countries financially supporting these activities. Nevertheless the need to boost exchange opportunities with USA, Canadian, Australian and Asian universities was named by students as a priority in the 2012 institutional survey. Closer cooperation with the

former Soviet Union countries is seen as political, historic and academic necessity by the university community.

The objectives of the mobility cover all possible activities for students and staff: studies, internships, teaching, learning, sharing of experience and good practices in both universities and enterprises as the main means to bring maximum impact on internationalization of the university studies, teaching and services. Mobility has strong influence on modernization and quality of studies, development of new programmes and support and service structures within the university.

The recent years have seen permanent efforts to boost the mobility of the main target groups so that the outgoing student mobility to EU countries under Erasmus has increased up to 609 students from all cycles in 2013 compared to 407 students in 2007. The number of incoming Erasmus students also shows the growth to 332 students in 2013 compared to 171 students in 2007. The more modest growth could be observed with the non-EU countries under Erasmus Mundus (action 2) programme and the institutional bilateral agreements: Outgoings: 13 in 2007 and 87 in 2013; incomings: 93 in 2007 and 203 in 2013. The main mobility target groups are the both-way exchange students and incoming degree students as well as teaching and administrative staff mobility which also displays growing numbers (outgoing: 50 total staff in 2007 compared to 143 Staff in 2013). The aim of the university is to preserve the impetus of growth by expanding geographical areas for mobility and look for the new means allowing reaching balanced both-way mobility.

The university offers 14 programmes in English language and 550 course in foreign languages. Joint/double/multiple degrees are prioritized and supported through the staff mobility grants for the programme development. The university offered 2 joint and 3 double degrees in 2013. The newly developed institutional guidelines for development of Joint/double degrees adopted by the university in 2012 are aimed to ease the way for creating joint programmes. The document aims to find favorable solutions between academic realities of different countries and national requirements adopted by the Lithuanian Ministerial decree. The university was the first institution in the country to issue a genuine Joint diploma.

STRATEGY FOR THE ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL (EU AND NON-EU) COOPERATION PROJECTS IN TEACHING AND TRAINING

During the 2007-2013 period Vilnius University has participated in 40 multilateral LLP projects, has coordinated one Erasmus Mundus joint master course, participated in 13 Erasmus Mundus LOTs and 6 TEMPUS projects. The 2013-2020 Strategic plan of the University emphasizes the need to further boost participation in the multilateral project. The university aims to take part in the projects emphasizing partnerships between the university and businesses under the Knowledge Alliance cooperation in order to promote innovative ways of developing and transferring knowledge and skills. The planned participation in Strategic partnerships' projects will give the opportunity to expand the national experience to the international one thus allowing strengthening the university's position as an important national and regional actor and extend the outreach of the

university. Likewise, participation in the Sector Skills Alliances projects will allow updating curricula and keeping in touch with latest developments in modern skills requirements in the relevant fields.

The university aims to strengthen its e-learning offers in order to widen accessibility to studies, promote mobility and expand lifelong learning opportunities. Therefore the opportunities offered by IT support platforms will be actively promoted and new partnerships sought.

The university plans to expand cooperation with the third countries by building up on the experience gained from the previous cooperation. Having faced a number of changes in its governance, structure, curriculum development approaches, as well as having played a leading role in the number of national initiatives and reforms the university is in a good position to share its experience and is eager to learn about different approaches and possibilities.

The university is committed to participate in the activities supporting policy reforms through supporting its involved staff and provide information and opinion on the relevant policy reform issues.

THE EXPECTED IMPACT OF PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAMME ON THE MODERNIZATION OF VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

As the leading university in the country Vilnius University aims to strengthen its position in the international milieu. The participation in the new EU Programme will increase the level of University's internationalization and serve as a tool to implement the Strategic plan of Vilnius University of 2013-2020. Its main priorities being: science, international level studies, university partnership, coherent society, and effective governance it also encompasses all 5 priorities of Modernisation Agenda.

The initiative of the "Children's university" triggered the activities geared toward attracting best students and increasing attainment levels of the graduates. The topic will gain more impetus under the new programme thus contributing to one of the strategic goals of the university. Measures and tools that help to promote and embed a non-discrimination policy and support the underrepresented groups, will be further refined, fine-tuned and brought into practice. Further development of lifelong policy and its support structures will expand study possibilities to the disadvantaged groups.

The quality issue is one of the pivotal themes of the strategic plan, which envisages implementation of concrete tools while preserving institutional commitment to quality culture. Sharing of experience and information on the newest developments in the field is provided through the international cooperation. International outlook will influence approaches to quality on institutional and academic staff level.

Mobility and cross-border cooperation is the hallmark of the University strategy as means to ensure its visibility and provide incentive for development. The plan envisaged a number of measures for increasing staff and student exchanges with all geographical regions, attracting international degree students and international staff to permanent positions. Institutional policy for fostering values of

multilingualism and multiculturalism while cherishing the less spoken national language will be refined through the strategies on the language of instruction. The Programme will offer opportunities for the development and implementation of these strategies. Cooperation leading to joint/double degrees on Master and doctoral level will be strengthened. Increased mobility and cross-border cooperation is expected to have at least a three folded effect: increase academic offer of international relevance, deepen the process of internationalization, ensure that quality measures are in line with the international trends.

The university implements a number of nationally supported initiatives aimed at linking education, research and business (e.g. The Sunrise Valley). The programme should provide international outreach and broader global approaches in the regional development.

The international experience, solutions and application of internationally developed tools will be adapted to the university's needs for the effective governance of the university.