



1. ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT (EPS) 2021 - 2027

1.1 Erasmus activities included in EPS

Erasmus Key Action 1 (KA1) - Learning mobility:	
The mobility of higher education students and staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Erasmus Key Action 2 (KA2) - Cooperation among organisations and institutions:	
Partnerships for Cooperation and exchanges of practices	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Partnerships for Excellence – European Universities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Partnerships for Excellence - Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Partnerships for Innovation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3):	
Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3) - Support to policy development and cooperation:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1.2 Erasmus Policy statement (EPS):

Trakia University (TrU) is an autonomous state institution of strategic importance for the provision and development of higher education in Bulgaria. TrU organizes its activities and realizes a number of goals aimed at anticipated training of specialists in accordance with the modern level of knowledge, real practice and dynamics of the labour market, with the main goal professional and personal development of specialists necessary for economic and spiritual prosperity of the country, the region and Europe. The mission, strategic directions, goals and main tasks are present in the institutional documents and are updated both in case of significant changes in the main spheres of the socio-economic and cultural life of the country and in accordance with the policies of the European Union, mainly in the area of education and science. TrU is managed by strategic guidelines, towards which it orients its overall activity: periodic in-depth assessment of strengths and weaknesses, risks and opportunities related to the activities and development of TrU in the new conditions and realities, ensuring stability and sustainability of the results of specific activities in TrU and its main units, achieving successful institutional and program accreditation of TrU, modernization and internationalization of the teaching and research processes, placement of students at the centre of the learning process, stimulating their creative activity and their activity in the search for knowledge for professional formation and development, introduction of innovations in teaching and research to increase the efficiency at TrU, introduction of new approaches, criteria and information technologies in the planning, implementation, stimulation and reporting of research, balance between basic and applied research, active experimental and innovative-entrepreneurial activity, construction of modern infrastructural and equipment suitable for teaching and research activity through max significant use of national and European funds. A key element of the overall policy of the TrU is to make its own contribution to the construction of the European Education Area through participation in the various key activities of the Erasmus + program. The vision of the Trakia University is that the Erasmus program is one of the leading EU programs in the area of education. TrU has been participating in the program since its inception in Bulgaria and with each passing year strives to improve the results achieved. The activities of the program contribute widely to the modernization, internationalization and international activities of TrU, as the number of signed bilateral agreements has increased over the years. The established contacts and cooperation with universities and organizations from a number of countries in Europe and around the world ever follow the mission, vision and priorities of the University during its various periods of development in education, science, staff development and improvement of university infrastructure. The policy of international cooperation of TrU closely relate to the priorities of Bulgaria as an EU member state in the field of education and science, for the construction of the European educational and scientific area.

The main goals set by the University for the implementation of the activities under the "Erasmus +" program closely relate to the priorities set in the overall strategy and the strategy for internationalization of the educational process in TrU and with the achievement of European priorities in the field of higher education: stimulating and supporting the participation of students in the forms of individual mobility through specific rules and measures as part of the general rules for learning activities in TrU; positively recognition of periods of student mobility and ECTS credits as a contribution to building the European Qualifications Framework; developing digital skills and key competencies for and through lifelong learning; stimulating and supporting the participation of teachers and experts in mobility as a form of professional and individual qualification and an opportunity for academic development; stimulating the increase of foreign language competences and the use of more than one foreign language other than the mother tongue; providing equal access to high quality education, regardless of the socio-economic background and status of students through various forms of support; equality in participation in mobility regardless of gender, nationality, religious affiliation, etc.; participation in the various forms of mobility needs to contribute not only to the achievement of educational goals, but also to the becoming of European identity, to the preservation and promotion of Europe's cultural heritage and its diversity.

The activities of the "Erasmus+" program are closely linked to the policy of internationalization and modernization of TrU and actively contribute to the achievement of the set goals. Building on the best practices of successful TrU projects on key activities such as KA103 and KA107, KA2 and KA3, we will continue to work on these activities and will actively participate in the development of projects related to activities such as Partnerships for Innovation, European Universities, Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees et al. Trakia University has been involved in the activities of the Erasmus program since its start in Bulgaria, with the first successfully signed mobility agreements with universities in Germany and has consistently followed the University's policy in the field of international cooperation. Modernization through internationalization, as a top priority and in the international cooperation of TrU, aims to support academic and research activities through active exchange of experience with foreign universities and participation in international projects and programs. European and international cooperation are decisive for the future development of TrU, the new lines of training and research, the exchange of good practice and the development of the university infrastructure. The internationalization of education is widely supported by the TrU and is an integral part of its strategic development plan. The main objective of the internationalization of TrU is to introduce a managerial approach in the field of education and research, in which international cooperation becomes a priority and integrates into all activities carried out within the University. The principles underlying the strategy of internationalization of Trakia University are: cooperation and interaction between participants in the process of internationalization - teachers, students, administration, users of personnel, partner institutions in the fields of human and animal health, agriculture, agricultural economy and ecology, education and qualification of pedagogical staff, technology and modern technologies; transparency of action by all parties involved and promotion of the progress made in the internationalization process; defining measurable indicators of progress in the internationalization process. The internationalization strategy also sets specific objectives related to education, research and international cooperation. In the field of international activity, the specific objective is to improve the infrastructure and institutional conditions for carrying out international activity and mobility. The following strategic tasks have been set up for its realization: increasing participation in international educational and scientific projects, building international partnerships, etc. ; development of a system of motivation of the representatives of the academic staff for participation in the international activity; developing a system of indicators for evaluating the international activity of teachers; optimizing the infrastructure and institutional environment for incoming and outgoing students and teachers; improving awareness and empowering students and PhD students for mobility and international exchange and providing conditions for improving their communication skills in a foreign language; increasing the number of inbound teacher mobility; increasing the number of realized mobility for traineeships; optimizing existing "Erasmus+" inter-institutional agreements, selecting and updating as far as possible to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of bilateral international cooperation; developing and deepening cooperation with international organizations and funds; expanding and deepening activities under existing agreements with foreign universities; developing and strengthening international inter-university cooperation; signing of new agreements for students and teachers exchange under other European programs; expanding cooperation with the countries of the Western Balkans, the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and others by concluding new agreements and attracting students to study at all educational levels; increasing the efficiency of the work of the TrU website and its multilingual version. Specific goals and objectives in international activities are inseparably linked to the fulfilment of specific goals and objectives in the field of student and doctoral education, in the field of research and applied innovation.

The "Erasmus+" program is one of the EU programs that targets young people as future European citizens and consumers in the European labour market. As the most successful educational program, it will continue to support internationalization in learning, provide new opportunities for participation in mobility projects and exchange of good practices, promote bilateral and multilateral partnerships, transnational mobility, in order to achieve the required high quality of systems for education and applied activities at European level. In the field of higher education, these are students, doctoral students and young teachers. On the other hand, the participation of teachers and experts in the various activities of the program is very important for the realization of youth mobility. Trakia University supports and participates in the activities of the program in order to achieve the set goals, aimed at anticipating the education of future specialists, in accordance with the current level of knowledge, real practice and the dynamics of the labour market. Each year the number of submitted project proposal and approved projects under the relevant key actions

is increasing. Significantly increased interest in TrU outgoing mobility for students, teachers and experts, more attracted funds, new agreements and contacts with higher education institutions and other organizations and enterprises, search for new and effective forms of awareness and dissemination of the acquired positive experience and good practices, higher number of realized student and staff mobility than planned and realized in previous years, higher number of incoming mobility in different educational areas - this is the result of very good work and coordination at the level of University and structural units. Good practices and positive experience are timely implemented to improve the quality and effectiveness of education, to expand international contacts and increase participation in joint educational and scientific projects. During their stay abroad, the TrU students have the opportunity not only to gain new knowledge and experience, but also to touch the culture of European countries, and foreign students who wish to visit our country and the region within the framework of bilateral agreements are facing the challenge of learning about the different aspects of life in Bulgaria. TrU endeavours to provide normal conditions for training, teaching and participation in the various program activities for all students and teachers, including for disadvantaged students, but depending on the specifics and requirements of the respective specialties and in strict compliance with the basic principles of University Erasmus Charter. The foreign students participate equally with the Bulgarian students in strict compliance with the selection requirements and procedures. The quality control system established at the TrU, of which the quality assessment of the implementation of international programs is an integral part, incl. "Erasmus+" program contributes to better management of the program at institutional and structural levels. The strategy for internationalization of TrU, where evaluation and monitoring have a significant role, sets out the main objective: promoting and transparency of achievements through continuous monitoring and quality assessment to achieve top positions in the rating systems. The objective is achieved through the implementation of the specific tasks: development and implementation of a plan for achieving the maximum level of indicators, in accordance with the methodology for ranking universities within the existing rating systems; obtaining international accreditation of educational programs, as well as validation of already acquired ones in certain specialties; development of information seminars for foreign partners and their academic units better recognition of the educational, scientific and administrative activities of TrU; achievement of qualification, competence and activity in servicing the process of internationalization of TrU; realization of international mobility for study and traineeships, exchange of experience in different spheres of administrative services. The mission, strategic directions, goals and main tasks are present in the various institutional documents and can be updated, both in case of significant changes in the basic spheres of the socio-economic and cultural life of the society, as well as in accordance with the interests and perspectives for the development of Trakia University.