

Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

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The Institution agrees to publish this overall strategy (all three parts) on its website within one month after the signature of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education by the European Commission.

Please describe your institution's international (EU and non-EU) strategy. In your description please explain a) how you choose your partners, b) in which geographical area(s) and c) the most important objectives and target groups of your mobility activities (with regard to staff and students in first, second and third cycles, including study and training, and short cycles). If applicable, also explain how your institution participates in the development of double/multiple/joint degrees. (max. 5000 characters)

Original language [EN]

The Agricultural University of Athens (AUA) is the oldest Greek HEI in Agricultural sciences and the 3rd oldest University in Greece. Among its main goals are to maintain and further improve the quality of mobility and to enhance the international dimension of its activities in order to strengthen its relative position amid the Universities at a local, European and international level, as this is set by the latest Act for Higher Education.

PARTNERS CHOICE

AUA chooses its partners mainly according to:

- I. Compatible academic studies, otherwise mobility and research activities are not possible
- II. Regular recognition/transfer procedures, to ensure that all mobility activities taken in the host institution are successfully implemented
- III. Easily accessed, comprehensive and updated website as regards the host institutional structure, course catalogues, detailed information on the minimum linguistic and quality requirements for exchanges and common basic time-lines as regards nomination and application periods.
- IV. Baring conditions that minimize any possible problems for mobile students and staff (accommodation, visa and insurance procedure, local student organizations)
- V. The geographical area positioned that defines the possible research and study activities and the travel costs

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA(S) OF INTEREST

At the moment AUA has concluded Erasmus bilateral agreements with over than 100 EU HEIs. As regards practical training, the mobility focuses on Italy, Spain, United Kingdom and Germany, probably because South Europe has similar agricultural activities to Greece and North Europe is more popular destination to continue postgraduate studies. As regards studies, mobility focuses on countries of East Europe, probably because they ran undergraduate study programmes in the English language.

Apart from this, AUA has concluded MOU with two Nigerian non-governmental organisations and with several HEIs of non-EU countries such as Egypt, Ukraine, Albania, S.Korea, China and USA.

AUA cooperates with National Technical University of Athens which is the National Coordinator of the International Association IAESTE. Thus, AUA provides annually paid technical training in its well equipped 42 laboratories to students from all over the world. At the same time AUA students have equal opportunity to be placed for training purposes to enterprises for sort terms worldwide.

AUA is partner institution in 4 TEMPUS projects.

In the near future, AUA intends to establish more cooperations with Central Asian Countries; it has already applied for EMA2 proposal as Partner University.

OBJECTIVES AND TARGET GROUPS

Among others, the objectives of the mobility activities following after the above mentioned collaborations are:

- a) Exchange of visiting academic staff and researchers
- b) Exchange of undergraduate and graduate students
- c) Organization of joint scientific conferences, training programs, seminars, workshops, science symposiums and academic meetings
- d) Exchange of science-technical information, publications, university editions, books and collaboration in communication networks
- e) Implementation of joint scientific research projects of common interest
- f) Sharing experience and information concerning methods of training highly qualified specialists, postgraduate students and doctors

DEVELOPMENT OF DOUBLE/MULTIPLE/JOINT DEGREES

At present, AUA does not take part in double/multiple/joint degrees, due mainly to language restrictions (only Greek), problem that has been already overcome with the recently applied new Act.

The administration of AUA acknowledges the key contribution of mobility activities and of AUA participation in European and international cooperations to the quality of the programmes and experience offered to its academic community. Thus, it has been planned to establish joint master programmes with countries of North Africa, Eastern Europe, Asia and Caucasus on one or more of the following disciplines:

Crop Science; Animal Science and Aquaculture; Agricultural Biotechnology; Food Science and Technology; Biosystems Engineering; Agricultural Economics and Rural Development.

In order to find new partnerships with Asian HEIs, both Vice-Rectors of AUA attended the Asemundus contact seminars that took place in Seoul, S.Korea in 2012.

If applicable, please describe your institution's strategy for the organisation and implementation of international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects in teaching and training in relation to projects implemented under the Programme. (max. 2000 characters)

Original language [EN]

The Institution's strategy for the organization and implementation of international cooperation projects in teaching and training has been determined in order to fulfill the five priorities of Modernization Agenda. As a consequence, AUA shall pursue the following specific objectives in the context of internationalizing:

- a) Mobility: establishment/participation in Erasmus Mundus projects, Intensive Programmes and Joined Degrees, extensive promotion of the mobility opportunities with emphasis to Persons with special needs and persons from lower socio-economic backgrounds, intensive dissemination of impact to students and staff, improvement of facilitations that will make AUA studies attractive, are some of the actions that will increase the number of incoming and outgoing EU and non-EU student and staff.
- b) Innovation and Knowledge: Intensive partnerships with HEIs, structure agreements with enterprises, establishment of knowledge alliances and promotion of the development of transnational cooperation projects with EU, Asian and African countries shall serve this aim and lead to excellence and local development.
- c) Reformation of HE: types of activities to support and facilitate the relevance, development, modernization and enhancement of higher education worldwide can take place through a wide dialogue between universal partners and concern seminars, study visits, development and implementation of EU transparency tools and utilization of Quality Assurance and Accreditation data. Falling in line to this, an MOU has been concluded between AUA and a private company based in Dubai according to which a University affiliated to AUA shall be established there on the field of agricultural sciences.

Please explain the expected impact of your participation in the Programme on the modernisation of your institution (for each of the 5 priorities of the Modernisation Agenda*) in terms of the policy objectives you intend to achieve. (max. 3000 characters)

Original language [EN]

AUA confirms that participation in the Programme is part of its own strategy for internationalization and will work towards achieving the five priorities of Modernisation Agenda by taking part in the above mentioned Key Actions in order to:

1. Increase the number of HE graduates and meet Europe needs: By joining international cooperation projects AUA anticipates to enhance quality of offered studies, research and specialization, so as to produce highly experienced scientists ready to cope with innovation knowledge-intensive jobs. This is a strong motive to attract a broader section of society into higher education, including underrepresented groups and potential students who otherwise would give up studies early
2. Improve quality and relevance of HE by: adapting quality assurance data to reform curricula, developing the relevance of teaching and training so as the knowledge acquired is directly linked to jobs, including practical training in courses to adjust curricula to labour market needs and foster employability and entrepreneurship, establishing industry-relevant doctoral programmes are some of the core points in AUA' s strategy
3. Strengthen Quality through mobility & international co-operation: By ensuring the efficient recognition of credits through effective quality assurance and by creating employment opportunities for students, researchers and teachers from other countries, AUA will provide more mobility chances to individuals to increase their professional, social and intercultural skills and employability. Joint study programmes that AUA is prepared to organize serve this aim. This is in accordance to the latest Act, where internationalisation and mobility are prerequisites to Quality Assurance and Accreditation for HEIs in Greece. All 6 Departments of AUA have been already successfully evaluated by external referees through the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency of Greece.
4. Strengthen the "knowledge triangle": By introducing new types of co-operation between other education institutions, research organisations and businesses, AUA intends to join together research results, innovative practices and education, and to take advantage of the potential for marketable products and services. At the moment, efforts are done to reduce narrow and managerial barriers to partnerships between AUA and businesses. Yet, AUA is already involved in the local and regional development, by organizing training seminars for the regional habitants, by elaborating entrepreneurial plans on all practical agricultural issues and by establishing Innovation and Entrepreneurial Center.
5. To create effective governance and funding mechanisms to support strategic choices: by expanding collaborations with other education institutions, research organisations and businesses, AUA will reinforce the knowledge triangle, and thus create opportunities for modernization of human resource management, development of centre of excellence and inflow of funds.

* COM (2011) 567 (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0567:FIN:EN:PDF>)