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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 internationalization is a priority in the NBU strategic plan for the period till 2020. As a part of the international university network NBU follows the model of an academic institution preparing students of high academic competences and adequate practical skills based on a flexible curriculum with multiple choices. NBU brings together scholars who are able to create up-to-date programmes/courses and to experiment new educational methods, communicate actively with national and international education institutions and develop a number of international projects. Among the NBU research priorities is to become popular as one of the international research centers with specialized laboratories and a number of competitive projects. The University was involved as a partner in many international projects financed by the EU 6-th and 7-th FP, NATO SP, ESF etc. NBU is now in the last phase of a research project on the Balkans approved and supported by the ERC. NBU aims to integrate its research and educational activities and to further develop research skills of its students based on different project and IP activities.

Main objectives for internationalization are:

- curriculum development on undergraduate and postgraduate levels – joint programmes, programmes in foreign languages, Diploma Supplement
- further development of the accumulation aspect of the ECTS credit system
- further development of the quality assurance, with comparable criteria and methods
- encouraging the mobility by providing better preparation and diminishing the administrative obstacles.

The foreseen actions are:

- exploring new possibilities for international accreditation;
- expanding active participation in international research projects and networks;
- elaborating new international graduate and PhD programmes which attract prominent foreign professors;
- transfer of know-how in other Balkan countries and conduct research in migration processes, cognitive models and modern history of the Balkans.

Since 2000 more than 100 students are admitted in NBU each year for undergraduate and graduate studies. The university is supported by its official representatives in Turkey, Israel, India, China, Cyprus, etc. In order to develop its public and international activities NBU intends to offer individual study programmes for Bulgarians living abroad aimed at attracting prospective students from Bulgarian diaspora in Moldova, Serbia, Macedonia, Romania and Greece. This is a component of the holistic approach for improvement of the university administrative services for foreign students. It also includes publications in English (of leaflets, brochures) and dissemination of electronic materials. Thus NBU works on optimizing its system to publicize within and outside the country its educational, scientific and creative activities and popularization of the academic achievements of its teachers and eminent students.

The academic profile of NBU includes humanities, natural sciences, technologies and arts. Among the most widely covered fields of study are political sciences, economics, arts, computer sciences, cinema and communications. NBU operates with more than 200 Erasmus Bilateral Agreements – they cover most of the LLLP countries. The departmental coordinators conduct meetings with their students and present their partner universities. Special attention is being paid to less popular destinations like Romania, Slovenia, Greece, Cyprus. As a result last and current academic years 4 NBU students studied in the University of Ljubljana.

Majority of the signed bilateral agreements are bound with specific personal contacts. Sending a random e-mail to a university proved not efficient way to make partnerships. This is one of the reasons behind the interest in teaching/staff mobility expressed by our academic staff. Signing an Erasmus agreement is usually a starting point for future international projects and initiatives.

Important objectives of the Erasmus mobility in NBU are:

- to avoid signing agreements which are not going to be active;
- to attract more incoming students;
- to expand the number of agreements for student placement mobility.

The Erasmus Programme is open for students who have completed their first year of study with a very good grade and their foreign language level corresponds to at least B1 Level. The academic staff should speak fluently the respective foreign language and constantly contribute to the development of Erasmus partnerships on all levels - projects, IPs, CDs etc. NBU has several multiple degree programmes (2 graduate and 1 PhD). The initiative for developing a programme comes from the departments - they define its terms with the partner university. An institutional supervision is made to ensure the quality of the new study programmes.

NBU is a full member of the Francophone University Agency. This membership enables students and lecturers to attend numerous events organized by this network and to improve their qualification.

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]

In 2010 the so called Projects Bureau was established within the NBU structure for providing information and consultations on all open calls under the EU and non-EU programmes. It incorporated the previous 3 separate university units, incl. the Educational Section responsible for the LLP projects. This management change aimed at overall harmonization of the administration and monitoring of the university application process and better coordination of all aspects connected with different types of university projects (information dissemination, partnership development, financial issues, organizational capacity and team building etc.) In order to support the development of the EU and non-EU projects in teaching and training and to improve the international cooperation, the Project Bureau publishes once weekly information on the open calls, provides consultations to the project managers and coordinates the preparation of the project documentation. The average number of approved projects that NBU operates on yearly basis is 25 and 50% of them are in the sphere of training and teaching. NBU participates each year in the Erasmus IPs - both as a coordinator and as a partner. Based on NBU practice up to now the most relevant investment in cooperation projects seems to be:

- strategic partnership with regional/national authorities and other (EU and non-EU) educational and research institutions as well as with social partners, relevant business structures and other educational sectors (internships, field research, cross sector initiatives/needs assessments and events)
- capacity building sphere aimed at different components of support the modernization and internationalization of higher education both in EU and non-EU countries (through Tempus projects)

NBU invests its own funds in co-financing a number of projects. In addition, the International Relations Office is engaged to promote international cooperation of NBU based on signing framework contracts with non-EU universities.

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]

The Erasmus Programme is a very good thing and I am proud to be a part of it. I have been involved in the programme since 2004. I have been a coordinator of several projects and I have been a partner in many others. I have been very happy to see the results of the programme and I am sure that it will continue to be a success for many years to come. I have been able to see the impact of the programme on the modernisation of my institution and I am sure that it will continue to be a success for many years to come. I have been able to see the impact of the programme on the modernisation of my institution and I am sure that it will continue to be a success for many years to come. I have been able to see the impact of the programme on the modernisation of my institution and I am sure that it will continue to be a success for many years to come.

- Priority 1 – NBU aims to form entrepreneurial spirit in its students, to prepare them as socially responsible individuals who are ready to live in the modern world. It puts its academic potential at the service of the society and establishes new practices and contributions so as to be able to react to the market and social circumstances – both on national and European level. NBU education combines distance and direct education, provides constant ongoing student assessment and is bound to participation in research projects, internships and international mobility. When going abroad during their final semester students have the opportunity to broaden their vision and to work closely with international lecturers and researchers while writing their theses – same is relevant for NBU lecturers and researchers who exchange experience with their colleagues;
- Priority 2 – to provide the progress of the university education, NBU's objective is to work for/maintain its image as a recognized European centre of excellence with high achievements in research and art activities on an international level and to constantly raise the potential of its own scientific and teaching staff. In order to improve the quality of its curriculum NBU keeps on introducing of new programmes (in fundamental scientific fields as physics, mathematics, biotechnologies and not only) and strives to be flexible in updating its current programmes – mainly in the direction of making them more practically oriented and relevant to up-dated requirements of European higher education;
- Priority 3 – mobilities help all individuals to improve their professional, social and intercultural skills and contributes to raising their employability. It is challenging to form international teams of experts to work on interdisciplinary topics of common interest. NBU proved already its readiness and competence to work on the following priorities: the Balkan region (projects related to transferring of innovations), different aspects of migration issues, implementing of new methodologies in teaching and training (enhancing interactivity and e-learning) and art management. Being aware of the importance of international collaboration NBU supports financially and administratively its students and lecturers to participate together in the development of projects (incl. IPs);
- Priority 4 – NBU tries to enhance the internships and placements as an integral part of students' education. It also participates in projects related to the development of the so called Danube strategy and the Balkan region, hence providing experts of rare competences who can contribute to the elaboration and implementation of European regional policy;
- Priority 5 – Increasing the level of competences and know-how of the personnel reflects on the level of governance. NBU provides financial support to the process of meeting higher standards in education and governance and to exchanging of experience which could be capitalized.

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



E

Endorsement of the application

I, the undersigned, legal representative of the applicant institution,

certify that the information contained in this application is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge. All Programme activities will be implemented on the basis of written agreements with the relevant authorities of the partner institutions;

agree to the content of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) application outlined above and commit my institution to respect and observe these obligations;

agree to the publication of the Erasmus Policy Statement by the European Commission

Place: NBU, Sofia

Name: Plamen Bochkov

Date (dd/mm/yyyy): 13/05/2013

I have read and accept the Privacy statement

Original signature of the legal representative of the Institution (as identified in section A.2 above)



Original stamp or seal of the Institution

