



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



ERASMUS HIGHER EDUCATION
Fostering Internationalisation at European universities
EUROPEAN SUCCESS STORIES

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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2010

ISBN 978-92-79-15510-9
doi: 10.2766/6499

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Printed in Belgium

PRINTED ON WHITE CHLORINE-FREE PAPER

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Table of contents

Foreword	5
Overview	6
Internationalisation through mobility	
Masarykova Univerzita – ‘Erasmus – there’s nothing comparable in size and scope!’	8
Universität Hildesheim – ‘Erasmus offers a unique chance to experience Europe’	9
Tartu Kõrgem Kunstikool – ‘Erasmus is highly beneficial for staff and students alike’	10
Πανεπιστήμιο Κρήτης – ‘Erasmus helps us to become a centre of excellence’	11
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona – ‘Erasmus fosters internationalisation at home’	12
Groupe Sup de Co La Rochelle – ‘Europe is our family and Erasmus brings us closer’	13
University of Limerick – ‘Erasmus is a catalyst for internationalisation’	14
Università degli Studi dell’Aquila – ‘Without Erasmus this cooperation would have been unthinkable’	15
Vidzemes Augstskola – ‘Erasmus pushes new ideas, creativity and innovation’	16
Vilniaus Universitetas – ‘Erasmus has opened doors for us’	17
Szegedi Tudományegyetem – ‘Summed up in a single word Erasmus is <i>opportunity</i> ’	18
L-Università ta’ Malta – ‘Erasmus is a key factor in our internationalisation’	19
Uniwersytet Warszawski – ‘Erasmus has accelerated our modernisation’	20
Universidade do Porto – ‘My life is an Erasmus life, and yours?’	21
Ekonomická univerzita v Bratislave – ‘Erasmus was the revolution, improving research and teaching!’	22
Tampereen Ammattikorkeakoulu – ‘Erasmus is a great tool for internationalisation’	23
Yaşar Üniversitesi – ‘Erasmus is a gateway for Turkey to Europe’	24
Internationalisation through university cooperation projects	
Univerza v Ljubljani – ‘Erasmus has been key in this whole process’	25
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven – ‘Without Erasmus support, Re.ViCa wouldn’t exist’	26
Università di Macerata – ‘With Erasmus we made the leap from teaching to research’	27
Annex – Mobility success stories pre-selected by the National Agencies	28

OPENING UP NEW HORIZONS FOR EUROPE'S STUDENTS AND UNIVERSITIES

Around 90% of European universities in 31 countries currently take part in Erasmus – and with good reason. Since its launch in 1987, the programme has had a huge impact on European higher education. In 2008-09 alone, Erasmus helped almost 200 000 students – more than ever before – to go abroad for studies and company placements. The feedback demonstrates that it is a highly beneficial experience, which students see as an opportunity to develop new skills and a sense of confidence and adaptability that helps them later in life.

The effects of Erasmus are not beneficial for the individual beneficiary alone. As well as promoting student and staff mobility, the programme has proved a catalyst for encouraging higher education institutions to modernise and become more international in outlook. By taking part in Erasmus, universities have become more open and accessible to the outside world, rethinking their courses, teaching methods and student support structures, in order to attract foreign students and establish new partnerships with institutions abroad.

This 'double-helix' effect of learning mobility – to the good of both student and institution alike – is now recognised by policymakers as having benefits that go beyond the pure education sphere. Education and training have been given a key role in the new Europe 2020 strategy agreed by EU Member States in June 2010. The strategy sets out how the EU can exit the economic crisis and become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy with high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion.

Ensuring that young people in Europe develop the skills and competences they need for today's rapidly evolving job markets is a crucial element of the strategy. The Erasmus Programme is a tool towards achieving these goals: studying or training abroad can help young people gain new skills, wider perspectives and the ability to adapt to new circumstances and systems – vital assets for finding a job and developing a career in the changing world of work, as well as for a Europe whose future will depend on the skills and inventiveness of its people.

This brochure highlights some of the universities which are at the forefront of Erasmus excellence. Their histories and situations may be very different, but the strength of their commitment and international engagement is the same. Among the success stories are also the first multilateral projects from Erasmus under the new Lifelong Learning Programme which bring together partners from different countries around a common aim.

I hope these stories will inspire students and higher education institutions alike to make the most of the opportunities available through Erasmus; the more we use and improve Erasmus, the closer we get to our goal of harnessing the benefits of learning mobility to give every young European a flying start in life.



Androulla Vassiliou
Commissioner in charge of
Education, Training, Culture
and Youth

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Androulla Vassiliou', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

OVERVIEW

The Erasmus Programme

Erasmus is the EU's flagship education and training programme, which enables students to go abroad to study or for a company placement and supports cooperation actions between higher education institutions across Europe. It caters not only for students, but also for professors and enterprise staff who are interested in lecturing in another country, as well as university staff who appreciate the benefits of being trained abroad.

Studies show that a period spent abroad not only enriches a student's life in the academic field but also in the acquisition of intercultural skills and self-reliance. Staff exchanges have similar beneficial effects, both for the people participating in the exchange and for the home and host institutions. In addition to mobility actions, the Programme also facilitates cooperation between higher education institutions through intensive programmes, networks and multilateral projects.

Few, if any, programmes launched by the European Union have had a similar Europe-wide reach. Around 90% of European universities in 31 participating countries are currently involved in Erasmus and more than two million students have participated in study exchanges since the initial launch of the programme in 1987.

The 2010 competition focus on internationalisation at the university – The Erasmus success stories selected for the 2010 edition show the commitment of the institutions for internationalisation by their active participation in the different elements of the Erasmus programme like student mobility for studies and placements, staff mobility as well as involvement in centralised activities either as coordinators or partners. The stories demonstrate not only general good practice but also have a unique or distinguishing feature which it is hoped will be of a wider interest and will provide a stimulus for further innovation.

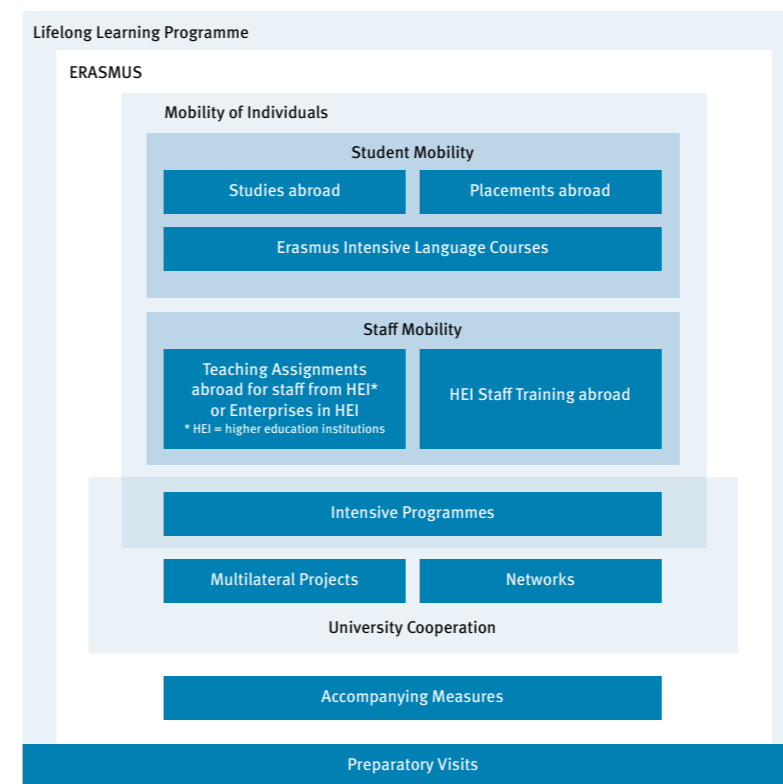
Erasmus student mobility started in 1987 with 3 244 mobile students and now offers almost 200 000 students every year the possibility to study or to do a work placement abroad for a period of 3 to 12 months. The objectives of student mobility are:

- to enable students to benefit from an educational, a linguistic and a cultural learning experience in other European countries;
- to promote co-operation between institutions and to enrich the educational environment of host institutions;
- to contribute to the development of a pool of well-qualified, open-minded and internationally experienced young people as future professionals and
- to help students to adapt to the requirements of the EU wide labour market.

Erasmus multilateral projects – Modernisation of Higher Education – promote the process of reform and modernisation of European higher education in order to play its full role in the Europe of Knowledge and to contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Modernisation of higher education is necessary in the areas of curricula (Bologna Process), funding and governance so that higher education institutions can face the challenges posed by globalisation and contribute more effectively to the training and retraining of the European workforce. Erasmus, therefore, provides support for projects involving higher education institutions (and other types of organisations from the public or private sector) from at least three countries participating in the Lifelong Learning Programme.

Erasmus multilateral projects – Virtual Campuses – support activities which are demonstrably embedded in global strategy for the effective integration of ICT in the participating higher education institutions (at least 3 from three different countries). The Virtual Campuses action within Erasmus seeks to support the development and mainstreaming of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practice for lifelong learning supported by sustainable organisational, educational and economic models in higher education institutions.

Graphic of the Erasmus Programme



Competition procedure and assessment. The European Commission invited all higher education institutions holding an Erasmus University Charter to apply for the competition of Erasmus success stories on internationalisation. The participating institutions submitted their applications to their respective national agencies. The national agencies held a pre-selection before passing the shortlisted applications on to the European Commission. Twenty-seven countries participated in the selection round with 64 applications (see annex).

All applications were assessed by three independent experts. The assessors were impressed by the high quality of the applications submitted. It is evident that these Higher Education Institutions are fully committed to the fundamental principles of the Erasmus University Charter and have set up engaged and proactive internationalisation strategies, which show an impressive concern for an overall quality.

In the field of Erasmus centralised activities the Executive Agency for Education, Culture and Audiovisual provided the European Commission with 19 projects which were the first of the new Lifelong Learning Programme, running from 2007-2009 and whose final reports had been qualified as outstanding by external evaluators. 3 projects were selected for this brochure, one modernisation of higher education project and two virtual campus projects.



With over 40,000 students Masaryk University is the second largest university in the country. In 2008-09 the university had 316 incoming and 711 outgoing exchange students and a further 91 students who completed placements. MU has developed an online database which provides information to international students and facilitates their access to services. Its International Student Club also plays a key role in helping integrate exchange students into the community. MU was awarded the ECTS Label in 2010 and the Diploma Supplement Label in 2009.

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‘Erasmus – there’s nothing comparable in size and scope!’ Masaryk University (MU), Czech Republic

‘Our success can perhaps be attributed two key initiatives,’ explains Mikulas Bek. He is Vice-Rector for Strategy and External Relations at Masaryk University, the second largest university in the the Czech Republic.

‘Masaryk University created a system that facilitates and speeds up the administration process of our international mobility as a whole,’ he says referring to a state-of-the-art online database, which contains an application form for incoming students and access to a range of services including help in finding student accommodation.

The second initiative is the International Student Club (ISC) which, in April 2010, was awarded the European Student Network Star Award for the most active student network at international level. It promotes the integration of exchange students in Czech student society.

‘Although we are the second largest university in the country, the first destination will always be Prague. So, we have to work harder if we want to attract international students,’ he says.

MU was among the first universities to introduce the ECTS system and has been involved in a number of Intensive Programmes, centralised actions and staff exchanges. But these activities are all quite recent. ‘Until 2005, we saw Erasmus only as a tool for student mobility but through our cooperation with other universities we realised that the exchange programme was only a part of it,’ explains Bek.

‘Erasmus is so much more, in fact there’s nothing comparable in size and scope.’

*Mikulas Bek,
Vice-Rector for Strategy and External Relations*



‘Erasmus offers a unique chance to experience Europe’ University of Hildesheim (UH), Germany

‘We couldn’t believe it!’ exclaims Elke Sasse-Fleige referring to her university being chosen as an Erasmus success story. She is Head of the International Office and Erasmus Coordinator at the University of Hildesheim (UH).

UH is among the top German universities for its high percentage (28-30%) of students going abroad. ‘All our students receive a lot of preparatory support, such as a website with information about our 130 Erasmus partner universities’ says Sasse-Fleige. ‘Also, the “Hildesheimer Sprachenforum” offers 120 language courses a year in 20 languages.’

For incoming exchange students, UH works hard to encourage full integration but Sasse-Fleige is keen to point out: ‘The students are active too with their initiatives, such as “Erasmus on Tour” and Go.Intercultural!, which help exchange students mix better with local students.’

All degree programmes at UH are modularised and work with ECTS credits. Although it is a useful system Sasse-Fleige believes it can detract from the Erasmus experience: ‘Students can sometimes be too focused on collecting ECTS points and that’s not the main aspect of going abroad.’

Erasmus is not just about students. Staff mobility is also high on the agenda at UH. ‘About 30 teachers and non-academic staff are exchanged each year,’ explains Sasse-Fleige. ‘It is a wonderful experience for them and they get to see things from another perspective.’

Summing up she says, ‘Erasmus offers a unique chance for students and staff to experience Europe.’

*Elke Sasse-Fleige,
Head of the International Office and Erasmus Coordinator*

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University of Hildesheim (UH) obtained university status in 1989 and became a foundation in 2003. UH had 5,300 full-time students who were taught by 87 professors and 326 academic staff in the 2009-10 academic year. UH offers several degree programmes with an integrated semester abroad and two double degree programmes. Around 350 students go abroad each year, including 240 as part of the Erasmus Programme. UH was also awarded the European Quality Label in Vienna in 2007.



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'Erasmus is highly beneficial for staff and students alike'

Tartu Art College (TAC), Estonia

'TAC is the number one educational institute in Estonia for the percentage of outgoing Erasmus students and we intend to hold on to that position,' states Riina Roomeldi the college's International Relations Coordinator.

The Estonian Ministry of Education and Research together with the Archimedes Foundation voted TAC the most successful higher educational institute for international relations in Estonia in 2009.

It has not always been an easy route to the top as Roomeldi explains: 'I had to do a lot of lobbying among students and staff to make them understand the necessity of looking outside Estonian's borders.'

Asked if the language had also been a barrier to attracting foreign students to TAC she added: 'Although we do not have courses in English we don't see this as a drawback. It's not really necessary for courses on textiles, furniture, painting and sculpture as the 'language of art' is universal.'

As well as the strong support for internationalisation that now exists among staff, taking part in the Erasmus Programme has been vital in helping TAC make the transition: 'The grants that our students receive help them enormously. We are only a small college, in a small town within a small country, but the opportunities we have been given through Erasmus are great.'

'We are so happy to have applied for the Erasmus Charter. It is a simple process, straightforward to manage, and highly beneficial for staff and students alike.'

Riina Roomeldi,
International Relations Coordinator

Tartu Art College (TAC) offers courses in seven fields of art. During the 2009-10 academic year, 293 students studied at TAC, including seven foreign students, while 26 Estonian students went abroad. The college first took part in the Erasmus Programme in 2003 and by 2009 was the most successful educational institute in Estonia in terms of international relations with the highest percentage of outgoing students and personal supervision provided in English, Russian or Finnish to support international students.



'Erasmus helps us to become a centre of excellence'

University of Crete (UoC), Greece

'We are active in all aspects of the Erasmus Programme and I think that's what makes us a success story,' says Kiki Thermos, Professor of Pharmacology & Erasmus Coordinator for the Faculty of Medicine, University of Crete.

UoC has seen a steady increase in student and staff mobility since it joined the Erasmus Programme in 1990.

'Back in 1989 the Faculty of Medicine and the Department of Chemistry were chosen for the first pilot phase of ECTS,' she explains. 'We started accepting students through the pilot scheme and the Inter Collegiate Programme networks in 1990.'

'In the early days it was a major goal to convince students of the benefits of going abroad,' she says.

Studying abroad is now a popular option throughout the UoC, however around a third of all incoming and outgoing Erasmus students are on work placements.

'Student placements are particularly valued in medicine,' points out Prof. Thermos. 'Our students can now experience what it's like to do a clinical clerkship in other European institutions. They can then use this experience when looking for postgraduate positions,' Prof. Thermos adds.

There is an imbalance between incoming and outgoing students which Thermos attributes to the fact that: 'Greek is one of Europe's less widely used and taught languages.' UoC is looking to redress this, 'by expanding the taught or tutored components available in English.'

'Erasmus helps make UoC a modern, exciting and state of the art institution,' concludes Prof. Thermos.

Kiki Thermos,
Professor of Pharmacology & Erasmus Coordinator for the Faculty of Medicine

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Established in 1973, the University of Crete (UoC) had 13,888 undergraduates and 2,471 post-graduates enrolled in the 2009-10 academic year. In the same period there were 100 incoming and 158 outgoing Erasmus students. UoC is very active in the Erasmus Programme and is involved in a number of activities including Intensive Programmes and Curriculum Development projects. The university is also applying to take part in virtual campus projects and in the Erasmus Mundus Programme, which will act as a further stimulus for internationalisation.



The Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB) attracted 42,852 students and 2,543 exchange students in 2009-10. The university is one of the five Spanish universities recognised as a 'Campus of International Excellence'. UAB conducts activities to advance internationalisation, such as an international welcome point that is a one-stop shop on mobility matters for all stakeholders, 'In&Out Days' where exchange students promote the Erasmus Programme, and an Erasmus Staff Training Week to increase knowledge exchanges with partner universities.

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'Erasmus fosters internationalisation at home'

Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB), Spain

'We are very happy to have been chosen as an Erasmus success story,' says Mercedes Unzeta adding, 'It is the recognition we need for all we are doing to further internationalisation.'

Mercedes Unzeta is Vice-Rector for International Relations at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, one of five universities in Spain recognised in 2009 as a 'Campus of International Excellence' as part of a government initiative to encourage academic and scientific excellence, entrepreneurship and innovation.

An intrinsic part of UAB's internationalisation strategy is to encourage more academic and administrative staff, as well as students, to go abroad as part of the Erasmus Programme. 'It makes them more open-minded and it's a great way to exchange good practice with partner universities,' says Unzeta.

'It was difficult in the beginning to convince everyone that a strategy on internationalisation was the way forward.' But she adds, 'Those who have gone abroad, staff as well as students, have spread the word.'

Unzeta also believes that, 'Erasmus fosters "internationalisation at home" by bringing local students and staff in contact with foreign nationals coming to the university.' This, she explains, 'is particularly important for those who, for whatever reason, cannot go abroad and ensures that they can still benefit from the whole experience.'

'Erasmus has done more for European Union than any other initiative,' believes Unzeta. 'I trust in the new generation to take Europe forward.'

Mercedes Unzeta,
Vice-Rector for International Relations



'Europe is our family and Erasmus brings us closer'

La Rochelle International Business School, France

'"Employability" is the key word in our internationalisation strategy,' explains Daniel Baudin, who is the Director of International Relations at La Rochelle International Business School, France.

This strategy has spurred growth in student mobility, which stands at 40% in just five years. Work placements are an important component of mobility. Baudin explains why: 'We want our students to be citizens of the world and for this they have to have an experience abroad.' He adds: 'Erasmus is a real asset in helping us to make this happen.'

Although La Rochelle is part of the Elite Business Schools of France (Grande Ecoles), the possibilities for going abroad are not elitist: 'With the grants from Erasmus it means all students, even those from less well-off families, can go abroad to study or work. So everyone benefits.'

Being a 'success story', he thinks, can be attributed as much to the school's unique programmes as it can to the dedication and hard work of the staff: 'Marie Hélène Wright manages the Erasmus programme at the school and has been instrumental in its success.' as Baudin is quick to point out.

Do the benefits of Erasmus outweigh the extra work involved? 'Definitely', he says before explaining why: 'Today an education institution has to have a policy for students to study or work abroad. A school that doesn't meet the needs of today's globalised world will get left behind.'

'Europe is our family, Erasmus brings us closer. Thank you Erasmus!'

Daniel Baudin,
Director of International Relations

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La Rochelle International Business School is a member of the Elite Business Schools (Grande Écoles) of France. The school joined Erasmus in 2000 and has experienced a 40% growth in student mobility in the last five years with over 2,300 students going abroad. In 2009-10 mobility was made compulsory for all students. Most students complete placements which are organised by a dedicated coordinator. The school is also developing double diplomas and exchange programmes with other European institutions in both business and tourism.



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‘Erasmus is a catalyst for internationalisation’

University of Limerick (UL), Ireland

‘UL is very proud of its successes under Erasmus,’ says Patrice Twomey, International Cooperative Education Manager at the University of Limerick.

At the heart of this strategy is INSPIRE (Increase in Numbers; Strategic plan; Partnerships; International academic programmes, Recognition by professional bodies; and External promotion). As she explains, *‘This initiative places mobility at the centre of UL’s most significant developments and has created an innovative environment conducive to sharing expertise and ultimately empowering graduates to shape Europe’s future.’*

As for the students, *‘They come back more resourceful, having developed skills that they probably wouldn’t have done if they had stayed at home,’* she says.

There is no better testimony to the importance of the Erasmus Programme than that of the students themselves. *‘The university is amazing. My Erasmus experience at UL is the highlight of my education so far,’* asserts Daniel Boros, an exchange student from Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, Hungary.

Boros has been so inspired that he plans to cycle the 1,800 miles from Limerick back to Budapest to showcase his Erasmus experience and raise funds for Irish and Hungarian charities along the way.

‘Without Erasmus the number of students studying or doing work placements within the EU would be severely curtailed,’ stresses Twomey adding, *‘Erasmus is a catalyst for internationalisation and a valuable tool in developing students’ skills.’*

Patrice Twomey,
International Cooperative Education Manager



The University of Limerick (UL) had 11,500 full-time students and 514 teaching staff in the academic year 2009-10. Incoming and outgoing student mobility increased by 9.4 % to 372 students and 13.5 % to 406 students (work placement and study) in 2009-10. UL has built up Europe-wide expertise in the area of international placements with student mobility rising as a result by more than 30 % in the last year. Student mobility is included in UL’s strategic planning and the university aims to further increase placements abroad by 25 % in the future.



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‘Without Erasmus, this cooperation would have been unthinkable’

University of L’Aquila (UNIVAQ), Italy

The University of L’Aquila has been selected for its part in coordinating two Intensive Programmes – MathMods (Mathematical Models in Life and Social Sciences) and MathNanoSci (When Mathematics Meets Nanosciences) – during 2008-09, which was perhaps the most difficult period in the university’s history.

‘Both projects are part of the Department of Pure and Applied Mathematics,’ explains Bruno Rubino, *‘and we have worked hard to establish international activities with prestigious partners.’* Rubino is the Coordinator of the MathMods Intensive Programme and is responsible for many other international activities in the field of Mathematical Engineering.

‘Our partners helped us in ways that we could never have imagined,’ explained Rubino referring to the earthquake that struck the city of L’Aquila on 6 April 2009.

‘It destroyed 50 % of the university’s buildings and made it impossible to teach during the second semester of 2008-09,’ he adds. *‘Thanks to our partners we were able to move many studies.’*

‘In some cases even professors moved for a short period to teach at our partner institutions. I taught L’Aquila students at Brno University of Technology, in the Czech Republic,’ he says. *‘Other universities doubled the grants available for students.’*

‘This show of solidarity is testimony to the close cooperation we have built with many partner institutions since joining Erasmus,’ says Pier Ugo Foscolo, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering.

‘Without Erasmus this level of cooperation would have been unthinkable,’ he says.

Pier Ugo Foscolo, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering
Bruno Rubino, Coordinator of the MathMods Intensive Programme, Mathematical Engineering Department



Established in 1952, the University of L’Aquila has 9 faculties and 18 departments and offers its 22,000 enrolled students 71 degree courses, 27 research doctorate programmes, specialisation schools, masters and vocational courses. UAQ is very active in the field of Mathematical Engineering and coordinates an Erasmus Mundus Masters Course and a range of Intensive Programmes. Partners for the Intensive Programmes include:

- Vienna University of Technology, Austria;
- University of Vienna, Austria;
- University of Hamburg, Germany;
- Imperial College London, United Kingdom;
- Cambridge University, United Kingdom;
- University of Oslo, Norway.



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‘Erasmus pushes new ideas, creativity and innovation’

Vidzemes University of Applied Sciences (ViA), Latvia

‘At ViA, 24 % of our graduates in 2009-10 had been abroad. This is ahead of the 20 % agreed in the Bologna Process for 2020,’ proffers Iveta Putnina referring to the university’s success in its internationalisation strategy.

Putnina is Head of Study, Research and International Relations at Vidzemes University of Applied Sciences. When she joined the university in 2003 the building blocks for Erasmus were already firmly in place.

‘ViA was established in 1996 and Erasmus came to Latvia in 1999 and so the first stages of the university’s development were influenced by Erasmus,’ she explains. ‘They have grown and matured together.’

She is in no doubt of the benefits that the Erasmus Programme brings. ‘For a small country like Latvia sharing good practice at EU level is vital for our continued development and Erasmus helps us to communicate and keep abreast of current trends in the labour market.’

Embarking on a period abroad can also lead to huge personal development. ‘Students come back more open, confident and creative. Staff gain a lot too by being able to exchange good practice with colleagues at partner universities. They come back brimming with new ideas.’

ViA’s internationalisation strategy is realistic. ‘Latvia will never be the number one destination for foreign students but as a small university we can offer our students a more personal approach.’

In summing up Putnina states, ‘Erasmus pushes new ideas, creativity and innovation internationally.’

Iveta Putnina,
Head of Study, Research and International Relations

Vidzemes University of Applied Sciences (ViA) is a relatively new and, with just over 1,390 students in 2009-10, small institution. The Erasmus Programme has been a significant tool in developing the university in terms of quality. ViA has achieved an impressive level of student mobility with over 24 % of graduates studying or working abroad. Mobility among academic and administrative staff has also increased with over 21% going abroad in 2009-10. Internationalism is further boosted by ViA’s participation in a number of Intensive Programmes.



‘Erasmus has opened doors for us’

Vilnius University (VU), Lithuania

‘It is a great achievement for our university to be recognised as an Erasmus success story,’ states Raimonda Markeviciene, Head of International Relations at Vilnius University.

‘Erasmus has opened doors for us. We had bilateral agreements before but Erasmus gave us a big push to look for new partners, enabling us to sort them out and find the most suitable ones.’

Vilnius University joined the Erasmus Programme in 1999 when they had just 9 incoming and 40 outgoing students. According to Vice-Rector Dr. Rimantas Viatkus: ‘Today, we have 226 incoming students and 479 outgoing. There are over 100 bilateral agreements with partners in exchanges and research, 269 Erasmus exchange partners and over 460 signed agreements.’

But there have been challenges along the way: ‘We are on the outskirts of Europe and were not even on the map for 50 years,’ explains Markeviciene. ‘But perhaps the greatest challenge of all was not the change in structures, or rethinking the teaching methods, but changing the mentality.’

The university has since overcome these obstacles and its recent success in implementing ECTS has led to the Ministry of Education in Lithuania asking VU staff to put the system into practice across the country.

This recognition shows the importance that VU places on internationalisation which has developed through its participation in the Erasmus Programme, as Dr. Vaitkus stresses: ‘Without Erasmus we wouldn’t be so international.’

Dr. Rimantas Vaitkus, Vice-Rector for International Affairs
Raimonda Markeviciene, Head of the International Programmes and Relations Office

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With over 24,000 students Vilnius University (VU) is the largest university in Lithuania. In the 2009-10 academic year VU had 226 incoming and 479 outgoing students. Over 450 courses are now taught in English, compared to just 50 in 1999 when it first took part in Erasmus. Studying abroad is an integrated part of all bachelor programmes, and the university participates actively in the work placement scheme which is also an integrated element of the curricula. VU is also the first coordinator of an Erasmus Mundus course in the Baltic States.



With nearly 30,000 students, including 2,000 from other countries, the University of Szeged (USz) is the second largest university in Hungary. USz currently has 620 bilateral agreements with 341 partner institutions in 27 countries, representing an impressive 128% increase in the last five years. The university was awarded the European Quality Award in 2006 and the E-Quality Label for its outstanding results in the implementation and organisation of mobility. It is also active in a number of networks and joint degree programmes.

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‘Summed up in a single word Erasmus is opportunity’ University of Szeged (USz), Hungary

‘Justice, courage and liberty, that’s what USz stands for,’ explains Prof. Andras Palko, Vice-Rector of the University of Szeged, Hungary.

It is perhaps a desire for liberty, coupled with the courage to look internationally, that has led to the university’s recent success. In just five years USz has seen a 128% increase in the number of bilateral agreements with partner institutions.

But it hasn’t always been easy. *‘We lived in an environment where international cooperation was very limited,’* says Palko adding a positive note, *‘Suddenly it was like the windows and doors opened up bringing new opportunities like a breath of fresh air.’*

USz first participated in the Erasmus Programme in 1998. *‘The initial phase was quite difficult because students were afraid to go abroad and didn’t know what to expect,’* he says. *‘But Erasmus is a well structured programme, which makes it easy for students and staff wanting to go.’*

It is not only the individuals who benefit. *‘It also enriches the university as a whole. Recently we started to reform the curriculum of general medicine because we realised, based on feedback from returning students, that the structure lagged behind and needed a more practical approach,’* he says, stressing, *‘This is a direct result of Erasmus.’*

In 2006 the Hungarian Ministry of Education awarded USz a European Quality Award for its excellent accomplishments in the Erasmus Programme.

‘Summed up in a single word, Erasmus is “opportunity”,’ states Palko.

*Prof. Andras Palko,
Vice-Rector*



‘Erasmus is a key factor in our internationalisation’ University of Malta (UoM)

‘We believed in the Erasmus Programme’s value and benefits right from the start and have kept up the momentum by continually expanding and improving,’ says Stefania Fabri, Director of the International & EU Office.

Internationalisation is high on UoM’s agenda and Erasmus is an important part of this. *‘Collaboration on an international scale is crucial for our development – not only as a university but also as a nation,’* explains Fabri. *‘We constantly seek to build and develop relations that are backed up with concrete projects and activities.’*

‘Erasmus is a key factor of our internationalisation,’ she stresses, but it is not just about student exchange. *‘It’s much broader,’* Fabri says, *‘and encompasses the harmonisation of courses, staff exchanges, interaction with other universities, joint degrees, research and curriculum development.’*

One of the most important milestones in the university’s development was the implementation of ECTS. *‘The creation and standardisation of procedures was, and still is, of great benefit to all incoming and outgoing students,’* states Fabri.

With over 400 incoming exchange students annually, ‘internationalisation at home’ is also working well, a fact Fabri attributes to: *‘Instruction is in English, the quality of the teaching is high and we offer a wide variety of programmes at all levels.’*

Summing up she says, *‘We certainly would not have managed to send out hundreds of students had we not been able to join this prestigious programme.’*

*Stefania Fabri,
Director of International & EU Office*

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UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
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The University of Malta (UoM) was established in its current form in 1988. Around 10,000 students were enrolled in the 2009-10 academic year. Over 200 students studied abroad in 2009-10 and UoM welcomed around 400 incoming students. Participating in the Erasmus Programme has helped the university to improve its cooperation with other higher education institutions across Europe, both on individual level via mobility and on organisational level thanks to Thematic Networks and Curriculum Development projects.



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‘Erasmus has accelerated our modernisation’

University of Warsaw (UW), Poland

‘Erasmus has considerably accelerated our modernisation’ points out Sylwia Salamon. She is Head of the International Relations Office and the Coordinator for Erasmus at the University of Warsaw, Poland’s largest university.

Every degree at the UW is now ECTS accredited, which has contributed to the increase in inward mobility as Salamon explains: ‘In the 20 years I have been working at this university there have been many changes. In 1998 a mere 23 Erasmus students came to study at our university. Now, that number has increased to over 500 today.’

Once at the university, every effort is made to make the foreign students feel welcome: ‘We try to be as flexible as possible, providing an “à la carte” service tailored to all our students’ needs. We listen to their feedback, which helps us to adapt and improve our curricula and teaching methods.’

It is not just the teaching practices and university systems that have changed: ‘I have noticed a real shift in peoples’ attitudes. They are more open and motivated than before, which, of course, is transferred to the students and the overall level of education.’ As Salamon puts it: ‘Erasmus has led to greater “internationalisation” at home.’

‘We have come a long way in 20 years but there is still so much more we can do to increase mobility and give our students the best opportunities possible.’

Sylwia Salamon,

Head of the International Relations Office & Erasmus Institutional Coordinator



‘My life is an Erasmus life, and yours?’

University of Porto (U.Porto), Portugal

The University of Porto celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2011 and it is hoped that there will be even more to celebrate. ‘We aim to be among the top 100 European universities next year and Erasmus is crucial in helping us get there,’ says Cristina Ferreira. She is the International Relations Director and Erasmus Institutional Coordinator at U.Porto.

U.Porto and the Erasmus Programme go back a long way. Luis Maia, went to Pavia, Italy in 1993 and was one of the first of the university’s outgoing Erasmus students. Since then, over 7,000 students from U.Porto have participated in the Programme.

‘We are constantly looking to improve our opportunities to work with the best universities in the world,’ says Ferreira. It seems to be working as U.Porto currently has 1,037 bilateral agreements with universities around the world.

For U.Porto mobility among staff is also a high priority. ‘We send 100 teaching staff abroad every year, mainly under Erasmus,’ asserts Ferreira adding ‘They benefit in so many ways. It develops their skills as they acquire new teaching methods which they can bring to those students who cannot go away.’

‘Erasmus has been a tremendous tool in this whole process over the last two decades but we recognise we still have much more to do,’ states Ferreira.

The rest lies in the words of Luis Maia, as relevant today as they were 20 years ago: ‘By participating in Erasmus, I’ve opened up new academic and professional perspectives. My life is an Erasmus life, and yours?’

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With 30,000 students and 1,860 academic staff across 14 faculties the University of Porto (U.Porto) is the largest university in Portugal. The university has a large, established international mobility programme and welcomes 2,200 international students each year from over 61 countries. U.Porto successfully underpins its internationalisation strategy with a range of mobility and multilateral project activities including participation in Curriculum Development projects and the coordination of Intensive Programmes.

Cristina Ferreira,

International Relations Director and Erasmus Institutional Coordinator



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‘Erasmus was the revolution, improving research and teaching!’ University of Economics in Bratislava (UEB), Slovakia

‘Erasmus has strengthened our relations with the EU and prepared our students for the international world of business,’ says Jana Lenghardtová, Associate Professor and Vice-Rector for International Relations at Bratislava University.

The latest figures for 2009-10 show that 228 of the university’s students studied abroad, while nearly 200 students were welcomed through the Erasmus Programme. Quite an achievement for a university that has undergone significant change in recent years as Prof. Lenghardtova explains: *‘Pre-1989 we were closed to the outside world. Even travel among other Eastern Bloc countries was difficult. Then in 1989 big changes took hold. All study programmes had to be redesigned and international cooperation started to develop although conditions were difficult due to the lack of financial resources. Erasmus was a revolution that improved our research and teaching.’*

The ECTS credit system has been crucial in providing the university with a structure to recognise studies abroad and as Lenghardtová puts it: *‘Without it our students wouldn’t be as mobile.’*

Despite initial setbacks in establishing contact with the outside world and attracting foreign students according to Lenghardtová: *‘The most important obstacles are behind us. Now we can start to enjoy the fruits of our labour.’*

As to the future, the university will: *‘Build on what has already been accomplished particularly in strengthening and improving relations with our partners abroad.’*

Jana Lenghardtová,
Associate Professor and Vice-Rector for International Relations



Established in 1940, the University of Economics in Bratislava (UEB) has 14,000 students and 650 staff. During the 2009-10 academic year nearly 200 foreign students studied at the university and 228 Slovak students studied abroad. In recent years UEB has made a tremendous effort to internationalise its curriculum and courses. Around 100 courses are now taught in foreign languages and to ensure standards remain high the university carries out a biannual quality survey of each using anonymous questionnaires.



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‘Erasmus is a great tool for internationalisation’ Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK), Finland

TAMK has chosen Erasmus Intensive Programmes (IPs) as one of the essential tools in developing international collaboration. *‘We are the number one university in Finland for getting IPs approved,’* says Tolvanen.

‘Since 2000 we have coordinated 34 IPs and in 2009-10 we coordinated four and we were involved in ten others,’ she adds. *‘Our staff work hard to write good applications and find partners who we can trust.’*

‘Nowadays internationalisation is the norm. All students and staff are involved in some level. Now it’s everyone’s business,’ says Kirsi Tolvanen, Head of International Services at Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK).

Students are awarded ECTS credits for participating in TAMK’s IP projects. *‘ECTS lends transparency to our programmes and all students graduating receive a transcript in English which stands them in good stead when applying for jobs abroad,’* states Tolvanen.

There were some challenges in implementing ECTS as the university’s Vice President, Päivi Karttunen explains: *‘Moving from teaching to learning outcomes has been a demanding task,’* she says. *‘It has taken time to change the mentality. Teachers used to talk about what they had taught. Now they talk about what the students have learnt and can do.’*

‘We have also managed to balance incoming and outgoing students and in 2008-09 there were 237 and 224 respectively,’ says Karttunen.

‘Erasmus is a great tool for internationalisation,’ she concludes.

Päivi Karttunen, Vice President
Kirsi Tolvanen, Head of International Services



Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK) has 10,000 students and 800 staff, which makes it the third largest university of applied sciences in Finland. In 2008-09 there were 237 incoming and 224 outgoing students. The university provides high quality services to its exchange students with outgoing students taking part in an ECTS-credited virtual orientation course. TAMK is also very active in Intensive Programmes, coordinating four and being involved in ten others. The university was also awarded a Diploma Supplement Label in 2010.



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‘Erasmus is a gateway for Turkey to Europe’ Yasar University, Turkey

‘Erasmus is a crucial part of our internationalisation strategy,’ states Ayselin Yildiz. She is the director of the European Union Centre, Yasar University.

Yasar University joined the Erasmus Programme in 2005, just four years after the university was established. As Yildiz points out: ‘Back then we had no international agreements. Today we have 75 “active” partners in 21 countries. So in just five years we have taken great steps in getting recognition at international level.’

She added: ‘Erasmus has brought universities together to share knowledge and experiences. This has to be a great thing.’

The staff at Yasar are actively encouraged to go abroad with Erasmus and as Yildiz explains: ‘Many of us have taught European students in Europe, which was hardly ever done before. It has been hugely beneficial as we now understand how European students think and work and they get an insight into the Turkish perspective.’

To aid mobility, ECTS was introduced systematically and is now the only credit system used at Yasar. As Yildiz states: ‘If Erasmus is our path then ECTS is the currency. Both provide us with rules, guidelines and a proper framework within which we can work.’

All this change has not always been easy to implement and there were, as she puts it, ‘a few teething problems.’ But she adds: ‘We are a strong institution with a good strategy and we have been able to overcome them.’

‘With Erasmus we have better exchange, better knowledge and it’s a gateway for Turkey to Europe!’

Ayselin Yildiz,
Director of the European Union Centre

Yasar University was established in 2001 and first participated in the Erasmus programme in 2005. In 2009-10, 3,961 students were enrolled at the university and 250 academic staff employed, of which 42 are professors. Around 40 foreign students follow courses every semester. The university has undertaken a series of successful activities within the Erasmus programme including the development of a website with state-of-the-art content that provides a wide range of useful information for international students and staff.



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‘Erasmus has been key in this whole process’ University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

‘The EU sees itself as an inclusive high-employment society. This will be possible only if the competencies of graduates match the current and future requirements of the labour market.’

As Slovenian Minister for Employment, Family and Social Affairs, Prof. Ivan Svetlik, has a good idea of what employers want from graduates. As the former coordinator of the project Higher Education as a Generator of Strategic Competences (HEGESCO) he also knows what universities can do to help their graduates be better prepared.

The project, in his view, has made a valuable contribution ‘in showing higher education institutions, companies and policy makers the importance of matching acquired competencies with what is required by employers.’

Dr. Samo Pavlin, Assistant Professor at the University of Ljubljana which coordinated the project, is proud that HEGESCO has been chosen as an Erasmus success story. ‘The project, which surveyed graduates across Europe five years after their graduation, has highlighted the central role that universities play in preparing students for the job market.’

‘It will continue to contribute to the modernisation of higher education curricula,’ Pavlin adds.

Prof. Miha Jihart, Vice-Rector, also stresses the impact of the Erasmus Programme, both concerning this project and for the university as a whole: ‘Erasmus has been key in this whole process and is especially important for students from a small country like Lithuania to get a taste of life abroad.’

Prof. Ivan Svetlik, Minister for Employment, Family and Social Affairs
Prof. Miha Jihart, Vice-Rector
Dr. Samo Pavlin, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Social Sciences

Erasmus project on modernisation of higher education Higher Education as a Generator of Strategic Competences (HEGESCO)

Univerza v Ljubljani



The HEGESCO project examined how graduates and employers deal with the mismatch between skills acquired at university and those needed for work. Together with the REFLEX project, it comprised data from a quantitative survey of graduates, conducted 4-5 years after graduation in more than 20 European countries, and integrated surveys of employers and representatives from higher education institutions. The University of Ljubljana coordinated the project together with:

- Maastricht University, The Netherlands;
- TÁRKI Social Research Inc, Hungary;
- Cracow University of Technology, Poland;
- Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania;
- Hacettepe University, Turkey.

Erasmus virtual campus project
Reviewing (traces of) European Virtual Campuses (Re.ViCa)

RE VICA

KATHOLIEKE UNIVERSITEIT
LEUVEN

The Re.ViCa project produced an inventory and systematic review of cross-institutional virtual campus initiatives of the past decade both on a national and regional level. The project produced a wiki, which contains a glossary, a list of available resources and details of experts in the field of virtual campuses. The Katholieke Universiteit Leuven AVNet, was the applicant organisation, while EuroPACE ivzw coordinated the project.

Partners included:

- ATiT (Audiovisual Technologies, Informatics and Telecommunications bvba), Belgium
- FernUniversität in Hagen, Germany
 - Teknillinen korkeakoulu, Koulutuskeskus Dipoli, Finland
- Université de Strasbourg, France
- Nyugat-Magyarországi Egyetem, Hungary
 - Università Telematica Internazionale UNINETTUNO, Italy
- Matic Media Ltd, United Kingdom

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B-3001 Heverlee, Belgium



‘Without Erasmus support, Re.ViCa wouldn’t exist’

Catholic University of Leuven (K.U.Leuven), Belgium

‘Re.ViCa looked not only at the current operational Virtual Campuses, but also at the legacy and the impact that previous virtual campus activities have had on higher education,’ explains Wim Van Petegem.

Van Petegem is Director of AVNet at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, the official applicant for the Re.ViCa project, which was coordinated by EuroPACE ivzw and involved nine partners.

Why are virtual campuses so important? *‘Virtual campuses provide an e-learning experience that can be enjoyed by everyone, including those who cannot go abroad for whatever reason,’* responds Van Petegem.

This will be especially important in the coming years he believes as, *‘the Europe 2020 strategy wants 20 % of all students by 2020 to have had an international experience. That’s about 10 % of students in Flanders in 10 years, which is unlikely.’* Virtual campuses can however offer an ‘international experience at home.’

‘We’re not just talking about a guest lecturer from time to time. This is a fully integrated learning experience in an international context,’ he states.

To ensure the project’s work lives on, the consortium created a Re.ViCa wiki which contains resources including country reports and in-depth institutional reports. This information can be accessed by anyone, anywhere.

‘Despite being a European project, Re.ViCa has a world-wide approach,’ states Ilse Op de Beeck from AVNet-K.U.Leuven who coordinated the project.

‘Without Erasmus support though, Re.ViCa wouldn’t exist,’ she adds.

Wim Van Petegem, Director of AVNet
Ilse Op de Beeck, Research and Development Manager



‘With Erasmus we made the leap from teaching to research’

University of Macerata, Italy

‘History On Line promotes integration between university history professors, researchers and students throughout Europe,’ explains Prof. Roberto Sani. He is the Rector and Scientific Manager of the project.

The University of Macerata coordinates the project, which is a consortium of 11 partners from eight different European countries. *‘The project fully complies with the “spirit of European initiatives” and reflects the requirements of any pan-European project today,’* he says referring to the increasing use of new technology in international cooperation.

He hopes that it will lead to greater cooperation in the future. *‘We are moving towards having whole archives and libraries at the click of a button and we want History On Line to be a repository where people can analyse and compare historical sources.’*

For the university History On Line provided an invaluable inspiration and experience. As Sani explains, *‘It forced researchers to question themes common to everyone throughout Europe. History can only be understood in the broader European context and this makes us all less provincial.’*

‘Erasmus has been an important part in helping us make the leap from teaching to research, which has been crucial for the success of this project,’ said Sani.

Prof. Angelo Ventrone, Director of the International Relations, confirms the importance of Erasmus. *‘It has contributed to raising the quality of our research and education in training the future leaders of our society.’*

Prof. Roberto Sani, Rector and Scientific Manager
of the History on Line project
Prof. Angelo Ventrone, Director of the International Relations

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Erasmus virtual campus project
History On Line

unimc
università degli studi di macerata

The History On Line project aimed to promote and help integrate different academic communities across Europe in writing, teaching and learning about history. The project included the development of a web portal containing a rich repository of resources, which can be searched and retrieved through a user-friendly search engine on top of a well-functioning database. The University of Macerata coordinated the project together with:

- Università degli Studi di Torino, Italy;
- Carl von Ossietzky Universität, Germany;
- Georg Eckert Institute, Germany;
- Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED), Spain;
- Académie de Strasbourg, France;
- TEI of MESSOLONGI, eBusiness Lab, Greece;
- Pixel, Italy;
- Easy Technologies, Italy;
- National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania;
- Fatih University, Turkey.

ANNEX

Pre-selected mobility success stories*

	Belgique/België	Facultés universitaires Saint-Louis – Bruxelles; Haute École Galilée – Bruxelles; Haute École Provinciale de Hainaut-Condorcet – Mons
	България	Химикотехнологичен и металургичен университет
	Česká Republika	Vysoké učení technické v Brně; Škoda Auto Vysoká škola – Mladá Boleslav
	Danmark	Aarhus Universitet; Handelshøjskolen i København
	Deutschland	Universität Bremen; Technische Universität Ilmenau; Hochschule für angewandte Wissenschaften FH Ingolstadt; Universität Konstanz; Technische Universität München
	Éire/Ireland	Institiúid Teicneolaíochta Chorcaí/Cork Institute of Technology
	Eesti	Tallinna Ülikool; Tallinna Tehnikakõrgkool
	Ελλάδα	Πανεπιστήμιο Δυτικής Μακεδονίας
	France	Lycée Jean Macé – Rennes; Université Toulouse 1 Capitole
	Italia	Università degli Studi di Pavia; Università per Stranieri di Perugia
	Latvija	Latvijas Universitāte – Rīga
	Magyarország	Budapesti Corvinus Egyetem; Óbudai Egyetem – Budapest; Pécsi Tudományegyetem
	Malta	Istitut Għall-Istudji Turistici – St. Julians
	Nederland	Gereformeerde Hogeschool – Zwolle
	Österreich	Pädagogische Hochschule Kärnten – Klagenfurt
	Polska	Politechnika Opolska; Politechnika Radomska im. Kazimierza Pułaskiego w Radomiu
	Portugal	Escola Superior de Enfermagem do Porto; Instituto Politécnico de Tomar
	România	Universitatea ‘1 Decembrie 1918’ Alba Iulia; Universitatea de Arta și Design din Cluj-Napoca; Universitatea de Medicină și Farmacie ‘Grigore T.Popa’ Iași; Universitatea ‘Stefan Cel Mare’ din Suceava
	Slovensko	Prešovská univerzita v Prešove
	Suomi/Finland	Metropolia Ammattikorkeakoulu – Helsinki
	Sverige	Högskolan Dalarna – Falun
	United Kingdom	The Robert Gordon University – Aberdeen; Stranmillis University College – Belfast; Middlesex University – London; The University of Sheffield
	Norge	Høgskolen Stord/Haugesund
	Türkiye	Hacettepe Üniversitesi – Ankara; Ege Üniversitesi – İzmir
	Fyrom	Universiteti Shtetëror I Tetovës

* Higher education institutions proposed by the national agencies but not considered under the top twelve.

European Commission

Erasmus Higher Education – Fostering Internationalisation at European universities – European success stories

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

2010 – 28 pp. – 21.0 × 21.0 cm

ISBN 978-92-79-15510-9

doi: 10.2766/6499

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For further information, please visit the following website of the Erasmus Programme:

<http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus>



ISBN 978-92-79-15510-9

