D. Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

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 University of Graz looks back at a long tradition of international collaboration with more than 500 partner institutions world-wide. European and international cooperation in research and education are an integral part of the university’s Development Plan (DP) for the period 2013-2018 and will continue to remain in focus in the future. The strategic goals set out in the DP are implemented in strategic projects as well as in projects of departments and centers, fields of study, faculties and administrative units. These strategic goals represent a long-term perspective; the implementation will take place in three-year intervals corresponding to the budget cycle and performance agreement with the Federal Ministry of Science and Research. (DP: http://www.uni-graz.at/bdro/www_ep_13-18.pdf)

The university strives to further strengthen its position as an attractive and pro-active partner in the international research community and the European Higher Education Area and actively participate in the EU Research and Educational Programs (Horizon 2020 and the LLP-follow-up program). UniGraz is a partner in high profile European and international institutional networks such as the Coimbra Group, the Utrecht Network, ISEP, Asea Uninet, Eurasia Pacific Uninet, EUA, the Alpe-Adriatic and Danube Rectors Conferences and CEEPUS networks. The university aims to deepen academic cooperation within these consortia and to benefit from new opportunities, both through inter- and intra-network activities as well as on a bilateral basis.

Another internationalisation goal is to continue collaboration in the focus region of South Eastern Europe and further develop cooperation in North-, Central- and South America. The university supports activities in line with these geographical focus areas and where applicable institutional cooperation will be channelled through EU programs, projects and inter-network collaboration. Special attention is given to establishing consortia and agreements for mobility, developing joint programs/degrees, supporting exchange on all levels (BA, MA, PhD, graduates and staff), supporting graduates in linking with enterprises and industry and setting up international alumni networks, initiating and engaging in institution building projects which foster and develop sustainability and enhance the partnerships. The valuable experience gained in the recent years through exchange within ERASMUS MUNDUS projects forms a solid ground for building up future collaboration and successful exchanges. UniGraz will further strengthen its links with partners in the EU neighborhood region where collaboration within former ERASMUS MUNDUS projects has proved beneficial.

As for its research partners UniGraz is currently evaluating and streamlining its international institutionalised partnership agreements with regard to their contribution to the research and education profile. Based on the results of this revision a limited number of selected international strategic partnerships will be established to strengthen the research core areas and international profile of the institution. (ref. DP)

In addition to these strategic partnerships UniGraz will continue to support international cooperation within projects and mobility programs in all fields according to the specific needs of the faculties and their strategic plans. For the purpose of supporting this objective all current Erasmus inter-institutional agreements were reviewed in spring 2012 in order to adapt them to changed needs, re-balance mobility flows and prepare for future exchange within the new EU programs in the period 2014-2020. When renewing agreements special attention will be given to under-represented subject fields and geographical areas.

In general, new partners are chosen on the basis of their profiles, structure, international orientation, support services for students and staff and the compatibility of study programs and research fields.

Regarding mobility the participating countries in the EU programs remain a core target area. UniGraz will continue to offer a wide range of mobility opportunities at about 300 European Erasmus partner institutions in order to underline the European dimension. In parallel to these long-standing links UniGraz will draw on its recent experience with global partners within the ERASMUS MUNDUS program and enhance cooperation with institutions in regions of special interest (see above).

The University of Graz has developed a variety of joint programs and is currently running 12 Joint Degree Programs in cooperation with international partners (a.y. 2012/13). The further development of joint/double degrees remains an objective for internationalization. In spring 2013, the institutional implementation procedures for new joint/double degree programs are being reviewed and improved.

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 EU programs are a core pillar in implementing the European and international strategy into the institutional framework for international cooperation. The University of Graz has profound experience in implementing EU funded projects and using community grants to establish effective tools and instruments for high-quality mobility, to tie links with enterprises and regional partners, to build up new relations with less interlinked institutions and above all to increase the quality in education and research through multilateral collaboration. Good examples of successful project participation in recent years can be highlighted in several EU program action lines. Just to mention a few examples: JOIMAN, JOI.CON, EMQT, VALUE and a high number of IPs (LLP), JoinEU-SEE, MIND and EuroMachs (ERASMUS MUNDUS), INTERFACE, ILAB, JoinSEE and ACCESS (TEMPUS). Building on these beneficial experiences, UniGraz will use the future Program to expand its links with other institutions, enterprises and regional stakeholders and explore all options of mutual cooperation and sustainable development. UniGraz will continue the smooth cooperation with existing consortia and partners in the SEE region and deepen the more recently established relations with new partners in Latin America. As in former projects, the main objectives are to achieve sustainable and balanced outcomes and to exploit the results to maximize the impact for all participants. Institutional support is provided to all university members to encourage participation.

As outlined in the previous and following sections UniGraz will make a particular effort to use EU community grants to further develop and implement joint/double degrees, to boost innovation in education and research through multilateral cooperation, to offer motivating mobility opportunities to students, graduates and staff and to attract and welcome researchers and teachers to enrich the international community at the university.

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]
In line with the priorities of the Modernisation Agenda, UniGraz seeks to improve competitiveness by strengthening the international dimension and improving the „knowledge triangle“ by linking education, research and business in numerous strategic partnerships and initiatives such as BioTechMed, NAWI-Graz Research, Digital University, Bologna 2.0, etc. (cf. DP)

The successful positioning within the world-wide competition requires an intensive recruitment of highly skilled international academic staff. UniGraz strives to improve international recruitment and increase the number of scientists from abroad for new appointments, PhD and assistant positions. This supports Internationalisation@Home and also benefits non-mobile students and staff at UniGraz.

The improvement of PhD education by establishing additional doctoral courses and professorships particularly in the core research areas will make UniGraz more visible in an international context and attract early-stage researchers from all over the world. External fund raising from enterprises and the public sector will support this endeavor. (cf. DP)

Students, early-stage researchers, lecturers and administrative staff will be increasingly mobile through international mobility programs, and thus the range of programs is being constantly improved.

The internationalisation strategy in terms of study, training and teaching mobility focuses on the following objectives and target groups:
- Increasing the percentage of graduates with learning/training experience abroad that is relevant to their degrees, aiming to reach 40% by 2020.
- By 2020, at least 400 researchers will have completed one or more stays abroad. Academics in qualification positions will have used mobility offers at least once within their qualification period.
- Fostering the integration of doctoral students and early-stage researchers into international research communities through increased focused mobility.
- Offering institutional support for traineeships abroad.
- „Internationalisation@Home“ and raising the number of classes taught in English through special trainings for teachers (”Teaching-in-English“). This shall boost mobility and increase the opportunities of students, graduates and early-stage researchers on a global market.
- Improving career opportunities of graduates and early-stage researchers by strengthening existing mobility offers and engaging in projects to develop transferable skills and competences.
- Improving the implementation of „mobility windows“ in curricula and the identification and elimination of mobility obstacles.
- Offering joint programs (joint/double degree) at all levels.
- Increasing mobility of teaching staff, encouraging research stays abroad (short & long-term) and supporting training mobility of academic and administrative/technical staff. This aims at raising quality through knowledge transfer and exchange of experience.
- Offering equal opportunities in all mobility activities.