



Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

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.

The aim of RSU Erasmus Policy is to promote a European dimension in the study process, make it open and accessible, and to provide scientists with new opportunities to integrate in the European academic and research environment.

Rīga Stradiņš University has set the following aims:

- 1) to maintain internal harmonious environment within the institution;
- 2) to raise the level of internationalisation of higher education and provide competitive and quality opportunities for those involved in higher education and those who are planning to get involved in higher education;
- 3) to hold a strong position in the single European higher education system;
- 4) to take part in cooperation projects both with EU and non-EU countries (as a coordinator or/and a partner);
- 5) to provide current and prospective students, both local and international, with high quality services;
- 6) to provide incoming exchange students and staff with high quality services within the Programme and its activities;

The overall objective of Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU) with regard to life-long learning programme is to continue and improve successful student and staff (both academic and administrative) mobility and to increase the number of people having chance to take part in Erasmus programme and its activities, such as intensive programmes, staff training weeks etc. This shall be ensured by providing students with exhaustive information about mobility possibilities, continuing and expanding co-operation with current foreign partners, as well as establishing contacts with foreign higher education establishments of similar profile. With an aim to maintain and promote the interest of incoming students, RSU offers courses in English, comparable credit system, housing assistance, linguistic preparation and effective student integration, such as organisation of orientation week and buddy system. More emphasis should be put on increasing the number of incoming students and this shall be accomplished by offering more study courses in the English language, in line with the internationalisation policy of RSU.

In order to support the new frame of Erasmus policy, RSU's priority for the next years is to provide students with placement possibilities abroad as well as actively support teaching staff mobility in regard to the exchange of experience. Besides, the University is currently striving for offering more possibilities for clinical placement for incoming Erasmus students in health care programmes, such as Medicine, Dentistry, Rehabilitation at Bachelor 's and Master's level. RSU is open to cooperate with institutions of participating countries and new partners with compatible curricula to meet the requirements of bilateral cooperation. Still, RSU is open to consider all offers, if

applicable to the particular situation. RSU is looking towards expanding the scale of cooperation initiatives all over the world, especially with the United Kingdom, India, China, Brazil, Central Asia.

The most effective way to give publicity to Erasmus activities and EUC and the EPS is by attracting and informing more and more students and teaching staff about the possibility to spend time abroad within the programme. This information is disseminated by making presentations, distributing printed materials around the university (i.e. references to Erasmus exchange programme are included in brochures about RSU) and publishing information on our homepage. Experience sharing from the part of former Erasmus students and staff is the best way to advertise the Erasmus Programme. Thanks to their positive experience which is spread among their fellows more and more people are determined to take part within Erasmus programme. To give the publicity to the EUC, upon leaving for the mobility, each student receives a brochure on Erasmus Student Charter which serves as guidelines and states the rights and responsibilities of the student. Participants are welcome to get to know about the meaning of EUC by visiting the Erasmus Coordinator. The EPS is going to be published on University's homepage as well. At the moment Rīga Stradiņš University is not implementing any double degree/joint degree programmes. Still, the Faculty of Social Work is involved in developing joint Master study programme "Social Work with Children and Youth" in collaboration with Porto University (Portugal) and Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania), which shall be introduced and launched from autumn semester 2014. Besides, in 2012, RSU was the coordinator and host of the intensive programme "Arts Therapies for Different Client/Patient Groups", which was successfully organised from 30 June to 9 July 2012 in consortium with 6 HEIs.

In 2013, new application for the Erasmus Intensive programme in the field of Rehabilitation was submitted in consortium with 12 partner HEIs (among them, Turkey, as EU candidate country). Rīga Stradiņš University submitted the application as a coordinating institution.

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.

Rīga Stradiņš University is currently working on the development of guidelines for organization and implementation of cooperation projects with EU and non-EU countries. At the moment two departments are in charge for central monitoring of the implementation of the cooperation projects - Department of Academic and Foreign Affairs and of Development and Project Department.

At the moment part of the projects have not been supervised centrally – they have been monitored at faculty and departmental level (in both cases – whether RSU is a coordinator or a partner). However, International office receives basic information about on-going projects and, if necessary, provides the assistance. University is highly interested to participate in Intensive Programmes both as a coordinator and a partner. Still, overall policy for organisation and implementation of the cooperation projects is in force at Rīga Stradiņš 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.

In line with the development of higher education and increasing of competitiveness, the university has to meet the current trends by fostering the internationalisation of the institution and providing students and teaching staff with possibilities to gain new skills enabling them to integrate in the higher education area and meet the requirements of the labour market. Rīga Stradiņš University is convinced that taking part in the Programme and its activities is a self-evident step towards development and modernization of the services offered to students and staff of RSU, as well as would benefit the development of the higher education of the country in general. Programme is a part of the internationalization policy of Rīga Stradiņš University. Students and staff are actively

encouraged and motivated to take part in the Programme activities to raise their awareness about the educational and scientific processes at the institutions all over participating countries. Also, participation in the Programme contributes to the implementation of the Bologna process within European Higher Education Area. To meet the 5 key priorities of Modernisation Agenda for Higher Education, Rīga Stradiņš University will take the following steps:

Quantity: widening access and routes in, reducing drop-out.

Rīga Stradiņš University will work on several levels to increase the number of graduates, attract a broader cross-section of society into higher education, and reduce the number of those who drop out without completing their courses by increasing quality of programmes of higher education, services and accessibility of the qualitative and diverse study programmes and possibilities taking into account socioeconomic conditions of the country

Quality and relevance: programmes, teaching and teachers.

Rīga Stradiņš University will work towards improving the quality and relevance of higher education to ensure that curricula meet the needs of individuals and labour market, as well as fostering the successful teaching and research

International cooperation and mobility:

Rīga Stradins University will constantly search for new opportunities for students and staff to gain additional skills through study or training abroad, and to encourage cross-border co-operation at different levels. Linking education, research and innovation Rīga Stradiņš University aims at strengthening the links between education and research to promote excellence and innovation, training more researchers for the industries of tomorrow meeting the contemporary demands.

Targeting funding and tailoring governance:

Ensuring that funding is efficient and used to raise the level of quality- freeing up higher education governance and investing in quality education to match labour market needs.

Prof. Jānis Gardovskis

Rector of Rīga Stradiņš University