

## **ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT ECHE 2021-2027**

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In the part relating to international cooperation, the strategy of the Strzemiński Academy of Fine Arts Łódź mentions intensifying the mobility of students and employees within exchange programmes as one of its goals. Pursuing this goal is key to maintaining the pace of change in order to create a dynamic, international environment at the institution enabling cross-border knowledge transfer. The aim is to create environment in which students, employees, higher education institutions, cultural and art institutions and local authorities of individual countries will be able to cooperate and draw benefits from mutual cooperation. The Academy sees the participation in the Erasmus+ Programme as means to achieving the goal set in the strategy. Actions to be taken to make this possible include:

- 1) eliminating the elements which limit the mobility scale so that more participants could take part in all categories of mobility, effectively informing the community about the possibilities of the Programme and encouraging mobility, offering various types of support for disadvantaged participants, implementing and promoting digital mobility management, eliminating problems with the recognition of qualifications and, where possible, using the option of blended mobilities;
- 2) further modernization of study programmes which will allow students to include mobility in the course of their studies;
- 3) continued efforts to offer high-quality study programmes and increasing the number of educational components offered in languages other than Polish (further work on introducing selected subjects or modules in foreign languages, offering summer courses and internships, introducing the first study course conducted in a foreign language and, as the culmination of the process, introducing a joint study program in cooperation with another European university or participating in a project such as "European University"); these activities will also influence the number of mobilities by increasing the number of incoming students;
- 4) engaging new teaching and administrative staff members in activities related to the implementation of the Programme and encouraging them to take part in mobilities;

- 5) increasing the number of partners among higher education institutions in Programme Countries and attracting partners from non-associated third countries; expanding the pool of partners from the Programme Countries and enabling mobility to other continents will increase the attractiveness of the programme and encourage new participants to take part in it;
- 6) starting to realize mobilities to institutions from non-associated third countries; at the first stage of cooperation the offer will be addressed solely to the staff from the higher education sector (academic teachers and administrative staff) in order to learn about the specifics of different education systems and, if possible, to create a framework for student exchange in the following years after both parties reach organizational readiness. Before the Academy is prepared for exchanges related to studies, the first step may be to give students the possibility to carry out internships also in the institutions based in non-associated third countries;
- 7) increasing the number of foreign partners outside the higher education sector who operate in the field of art and design and can help introduce innovation in education.

The Academy recognises mobility as a key measure that will enable it to achieve the objectives that need to be accomplished to internationalize and modernize the institution. Mobility is also at the heart of working towards the European Education Area. By placing mobility in the centre of its involvement in the Programme the Academy commits itself to work towards the creation of the European Education Area as only through growth in mobility the objectives crucial for the scheme can be accomplished: increasing the number of participants of learning mobility, removing obstacles to the recognition of qualifications, modernising curricula, boosting language learning, driving innovation in education, fostering the sense of a European identity, laying the foundations for active citizenship, raising awareness of various types of threats, such as the rise of radical attitudes and environmental degradation. The Programme will not only help to increase mobility but also to open the Academy to exchange of good practices and cross-border cooperation with institutions of all types. International environment for experience and knowledge transfer together with the scheme of linking education with non-educational institutions, especially with business, will support our efforts to improve the quality and relevance of the offered study courses. The Programme will give students an opportunity to gain additional

skills during their studies and internships abroad. It will allow the Academy to equip its graduates with professional, social and multicultural knowledge and competences necessary for them to succeed on the labour market. Thanks to this action, the Academy will also contribute to increasing employability. The improved study programmes that can result from the Academy's activities under the Programme will address the expectations and needs of students to a greater extent. The intensified international cooperation is to prepare the Academy to increase the number of its students, including those from abroad.

As the participation in the Programme is planned for a longer period of time it is difficult to foresee exactly what activities will be undertaken in a particular academic year. Nevertheless, the Academy will use the potential of the Programme according to its current operation capacity in order to maximize the effect on the institution. After gaining enough experience from engagement in learning mobility the Academy is planning to initiate cooperation projects with institutions from the non-associated third countries. The Academy will assess its readiness to engage in cooperation projects, aware that new challenges in terms of cooperation and exchange of practices with higher education institutions, companies and decision makers in the field of education will contribute to sustaining its development. One of the goals of our strategy is to increase the representation of the Academy in international expert bodies. The participation of the Academy in activities under key actions 1 and 2 will be based on a prior analysis of the needs of the institution, which will help to select projects and partners appropriate for the institution guaranteeing the expected result of the activities. When committing itself to cooperation projects, the Academy will make sure that they lead to further development of its international involvement which implies that the results of such cooperation should be sustainable and balanced. From the very beginning the objectives of participation, the Academy's role in the project and the expected results must be clear. The organizational structure, schedule of actions to be taken, people responsible for tasks and monitoring measures should be planned in advance in order to secure controlled and efficient implementation. Once committed to a project, the Academy will support students and staff participating in it by providing them with administration back-up (e.g. nomination of the administration personnel, preparation of regulations and procedures, secure effective finance management, secures funding), allocate required and available

resources to help them carry out their project work. The involvement in projects will be seen as an important aspect of professional development of all individual participants and a key component to internationalization and modernization of the institution. The Academy will provide measures to promote the project and ensure dissemination and practical application of its results in order to maximize its impact on individuals, the whole academic community and participating institutions.

The Academy declares its willingness to take part in all types of actions in the Programme. We intend to continue realizing individual mobilities, initiating cooperation also with higher education institutions from non-associated third countries and making efforts to ensure the quality of the activities carried out. Participation in KA2 and KA3 actions will be reflected on before each call and the capacity to get involved in new transnational projects will be assessed. The institution's newly introduced structure allows central as well as departmental units to engage in projects which best respond to their needs. Each faculty and institute takes part in the internationalisation of the whole institution. Thus achieving objectives set in the institutional internationalisation and modernisation strategy can be possible by projects initiated on local and central level. Each unit will be able to choose the right time and the component that suits its needs and ensures achieving the results contributing not only to fulfilling its expectations but also to increasing the degree of modernisation of the whole institution.

In the case of the implementation of individual mobilities of students and staff members, the Academy plans to continue its good practices which proved effective in the past: constant promotion of the Erasmus+ will result in successful recruitment of participants, whose involvement throughout the whole process will be supported by appointed staff. The process will be further facilitated by the new digital tools offered in the Programme and new options opening up thanks to the blended mobilities. In the case of cooperation projects, only if a project is reviewed as a step towards fulfilment of the institutional strategy and its foreseen outcomes are assessed as sustainable and beneficial to all partners, a decision about participating in it can be made. Involvement in each action will be implemented in a similar way. The authorities will appoint staff responsible for particular tasks and will allocate relevant resources to support its realisation and dissemination from the very beginning.

The expected increase in the number of mobilities will intensify the modernization and internationalization thanks to the Programme participants' influence on the Academy through the skills they have acquired. Both mobility and participation in international projects are necessary to allow the Academy to offer high-level education that will equip students with the skills necessary to succeed on the labour market. Creating innovative study programs is impossible without the Academy's involvement in international cooperation. Participation in the Programme is necessary for the institution to have the tools to improve its offer, train employees, exchange experiences, modernize and use the good practices of its partners. The Academy sees participation in Erasmus+ as a key factor in its modernization and internationalization. Only academic employees operating in an international environment are able to present innovative solutions and engage in activities leading to changes and modernization of the Academy. We believe that the Programme will allow us to continue creating a dynamic international environment for the transfer of knowledge and experience, in which individuals and institutions actively cooperate, drawing benefits from it. Our main goal is to use mobility as a means of constant modernisation of the institution and its study programmes. Only by offering quality education and training will we secure success of our students on the labour market. As to quantitative indicators concerning mobility, our main goal is to balance the numbers of inbound and outbound students. In the previous phase of the Programme (2014 – 2020) the number of incoming students was approx. 50% higher than of outgoing ones. We will take measures to level the numbers within the first 3 academic years of the new Programme. Another task is to lower the disproportion between number of study exchanges and traineeships. In the recent years the percentage of traineeships did not reach 10% of the total number of study mobilities. We will devote the first period of the Programme to change the trend so after 4 years they can at least reach 30% of the number of study exchanges. In the next years the proportion should be further increased in favour of traineeships or at least kept even. We do not set any growth targets as to the number of hosted students as it is constantly higher than the number of outgoing students. We are determined to allow controlled growth of the number depending on our potential to receive more students. The number of outgoing staff is restrained by the Programme regulations. Every academic year we will monitor the data to fully spend the grant received for staff

mobility with the intention to steadily increase their number within the given conditions. We will make sure that every year there are staff members participating in the Programme for the first time. Currently the Academy sends more staff members than hosts them so we will focus on achieving an increase in this category to make the mobility numbers more balanced. The target will be to host staff in number corresponding with at least 80% of outgoing mobilities within the first 4 years and keep it steady throughout the Programme. We estimate that, unless there are unforeseen difficulties in the implementation of activities, the number of all types of mobilities should exceed one hundred per academic year during the first four years of the Programme. The numbers will increase once the measures applied will bring the envisaged results. To measure quality of the implementation and support for mobility participants we will use the individual participant reports. We set the target to receive over 70% of positive feedback from participants from all groups. Moreover, participants will be further encouraged to continue to contact the International Exchange Office to report any problems encountered during their mobility experience. We will monitor the reports and other notifications, verify them and if necessary, implement new solutions. Monitoring and responding to needs of participants will help us to maintain high quality of mobility experience for all. The Academy pays special attention to the support offered to participants on mobility. Outgoing participants receive help in language preparation through classes included in the curriculum, OLS, classes financed from various types of projects or interactions with incoming participants. Culture preparation is fostered through participation in the buddy system and meetings with former Programme participants during Erasmus Story meetings. Incoming and outgoing participants are supported during their mobilities by the International Exchange Office and appointed academic staff. Incoming students are offered Polish classes. Their integration within the academic community is supported by the buddy system and activities organized by the International Exchange Office (introduction week, exhibitions, updates on Facebook group and Facebook profile). After the mobility the returning students are supported through engagement in the activities of the Office (buddy system, exhibitions, Erasmus Story), which allows them to once again feel a part of the academic community, to use their newly acquired skills and share their experience. In the future the support of the Programme participants will be made easier and even more

intensive thanks to the Erasmus+ App. We will use our former experience to continue work on a good level and face new challenges connected with the implementation of the European Student Card Initiative. The Academy will take all the necessary steps to meet the requirements for digital mobility management and to make it easier for all participants to take part in mobilities. We are aware of possibilities offered by transnational cooperation projects. They are another element to stimulate and intensify progress through exchange of good practices and through working together on innovative solution. Once the institution's units reach the sufficient operating capacity, find right partners and projects that respond to their needs and secure long-term impact the new tasks will be undertaken.

The involvement in projects beyond KA1 may not take place in the first phase of the Programme but our target will be to diversify our experience. The Academy will secure sustainable and balanced results from participation in every project. Each of them should lead to further development of the institution's international involvement. The care for ensuring a long-term impact should be taken into account from the very first stage of planning of any such project. Then every phase of cooperation should be documented and the results should be widely disseminated so the already achieved effects could be spread and used for further development.