

## UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA - ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT (EPS) 2021/2027

### 1.1 Erasmus activities included in your EPS

In this section, you need to tick the Erasmus activities covered by your Erasmus Policy Statement. Please select those activities that your HEI intends to implement during the entire duration of the Programme.

#### Erasmus Key Action 1 (KA1) - Learning mobility:

The mobility of higher education students and staff

#### Erasmus Key Action 2 (KA2) - Cooperation among organisations and institutions:

Partnerships for Cooperation and exchanges of practices

Partnerships for Excellence – European Universities

Partnerships for Excellence - Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees

Partnerships for Innovation

#### Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3):

Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3) - Support to policy development and cooperation:

### 1.2 Erasmus Policy statement (EPS): your strategy

Your Erasmus Policy Statement should reflect how you intended to implement Erasmus after the award of the ECHE. Should you wish to add additional activities in the future, you will need to amend your Erasmus Policy Statement and inform your Erasmus National Agency.

What would you like to achieve by participating in the Erasmus Programme? How does your participation in the Erasmus Programme fit into your institutional internationalisation and modernisation strategy?

(Please reflect on the objectives of your participation. Please explain how you expect the participation in Erasmus to contribute towards modernising your institution, as well as on the

goal of building a European Education Area<sup>1</sup> and explain the policy objectives you intend to pursue).

Original language (and translation into EN, FR or DE if the EPS is not in one of these languages)

University of Rijeka (UNIRI) is a comprehensive University founded in 1973. It presently comprises of twelve faculties, four University departments, an Academy of Applied Arts, a University Library and a Student Centre. UNIRI joined the Erasmus program in 2009 and since then has signed over 620 Erasmus bilateral agreements with universities from the majority of programme countries. This cooperation includes students and staff exchange. In ten academic years, more than 1400 University of Rijeka students and 500 staff members participated in Erasmus individual mobility. Since 2011, when Croatia became Erasmus programme country, we hosted more than 1300 incoming Erasmus students and 500 incoming Erasmus staff members (both academic and non-academic).

Student and staff mobility (both within KA103 and KA107 projects) are considered to be necessary prerequisites for an open and dynamic European education area that will help facilitate European integration as well as employment market mobility. The University of Rijeka strongly encourages and facilitates mobility through the Erasmus programme.

In the forthcoming period, 2021-2027 UNIRI intends to participate in all three Erasmus key actions. UNIRI is already pro-actively engaged in a wide range of EU-funded activities, and fully commits to enhance its involvement in the period 2021-2027, increasing the mobility numbers and active participation in various projects within Erasmus+.

We are extremely proud that the UNIRI became a member of a major strategic partnership The Young Universities for the Future of Europe (YUFE), an alliance established between eight young research-intensive universities from European countries. The YUFE alliance, together with its associate partners (Maastricht University, Carlos III University of Madrid, University of Antwerp, University of Bremen, University of Cyprus, University of Eastern Finland, University of Essex, University of Rome Tor Vergata, European Entrepreneurs CMA-PME, Kiron Open Higher Education, Nicolaus Copernicus University of Toruń and The Adecco Group France), aims at bringing a radical change in European higher education by establishing itself as the leading model of a young, student-centred, non-elitist, open and inclusive European University. A unique ecosystem linking universities to communities, YUFE will be based on cooperation between higher education institutions, the public and private sector, and citizens across Europe. Participating in this strategic partnership will fully include UNIRI into European Educational Area, as European Universities are transnational alliances promoting European values, and working to revolutionise the quality and competitiveness of European higher education. Through the YUFE initiative, UNIRI will also contribute to building the universities of the future.

Being a YUFE member, UNIRI will contribute to the fulfilment of YUFE vision: YUFE European University will enable prospective students to compile their curricula, choosing from programmes offered at each of the eight YUFE universities. To allow access to all systems and facilities of these universities, the alliance will introduce a YUFE student card, valid at all participating universities. The official language of YUFE study programmes is English, but students who spend a period at a university in another country are encouraged and supported to learn the language of their host country. When they have successfully completed their studies, students receive a European diploma that will be valid anywhere in Europe. The diploma will not only acknowledge students' academic performance, but also acknowledge their effort in mobility, language learning, professional training, job shadowing and community volunteering.

To guarantee accessibility for as many students as possible, YUFE is preparing to set up a virtual European campus. Part-time students or interested citizens who want to follow a single virtual or physical course can also make use of the YUFE offer. For full-time students studying at one of the partner universities elsewhere in Europe, YUFE will develop housing solutions that facilitate cultural exchange, mutual support and integration with the local community. For example, an option YUFE is considering is furnishing special homes where students can live for free during their stay and in close proximity with local residents. They will be given the opportunity to contribute to the community in their neighbourhood, and to foster a culture of mutual support in all YUFE cities and communities. YUFE students will be immediately immersed in the local and regional society and will thus be the catalyst for further European integration.

UNIRI's openness towards internalisation and modernisation is a prerequisite for its development. Mobility and international cooperation projects are of key importance in UNIRI Strategic plans, foreseeing measures to fully integrate

<sup>1</sup> For more information on the priorities of the European Education Area, such as recognition, digital skills, common values and inclusive education, please consult the following website:  
[https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-education-area\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-education-area_en)



in ERA and EHEA and to contribute to building a stronger European Education Area. UNIRI aims to become one of those European universities recognized by quality in terms of internationalisation, organisation, teaching and research.

Internationalisation is one of the most important indicators for the University of Rijeka strategy and definitely a priority in our future institutional development direction and decision-making process. Becoming a part of the Young Universities for the Future of Europe (YUFE) alliance we strive to become student-centred, non-elitist, open and inclusive European University and with that mission we will plan our future projects. By participating in Erasmus+ projects we use great opportunity to connect with our European partners and to develop new approaches to our policy related strategies. Therefore, Erasmus+ programme is a valuable tool which helps us in achieving strategy indicators related to internationalisation and institution modernisation. Erasmus+ projects' results are being implemented in University curricula, practice and activity which proves the significance of Erasmus+ projects. With new partnerships, gained through Erasmus+ projects, we intensify our regional cooperation strategy and strengthen our position in university rankings.

The YUFE programme itself pays a lot of attention to the specific regions in which the eight YUFE universities are located. When it comes to internships, for example, every university will work together with local authorities, the business community and other organisations. These collaborations are based on challenges that are of great importance to the YUFE regions.

UNIRI is a HE institution aiming to become a research-intensive university. It established a number of links with other research institutions and business. Participation in the Programme will improve the knowledge transfer from the institution toward business and ease cooperation and joint activities with the business sector. It has to stress importance of partnerships for community development, and thus improve UNIRI public accountability and its contribution to sociocultural transition into a knowledge-based society.

Please reflect on the Erasmus actions you would like to take part in and explain how they will be implemented in practice at your institution. Please explain how your institution's participation in these actions will contribute to achieving the objectives of your institutional strategy.

Original language (and translation into EN, FR or DE if the EPS is not in one of these languages)

Erasmus actions UNIRI would like to take part in and its implementation at the institution:

University of Rijeka participates very actively in all activities of the Erasmus+ programme. There is a great interest in various actions but our constituents are most active in KA1 actions. We are keen to continue with active participation in all offered Erasmus+ actions / projects in the forthcoming period 2021-2027.

In order to increase general student and staff mobility, UNIRI actively pursues bilateral and multilateral agreements with HEIs all over the world. Up until now, UNIRI has signed 620 Erasmus bilateral agreements with European HE institutions and 76 bilateral/multilateral cooperation agreements with institutions worldwide. UNIRI has participated in Erasmus programme since academic year 2009/10 and over the last 10 years student and staff mobility numbers grew fast. At the moment, University of Rijeka is a partner in several successful KA3 projects some of them, thanks to their results represent great potential and will be submitted as new KA2 projects proposals. Thus, KA3 actions have proved to be a good ground for realisation of innovative and feasible policy tools at the university and European level.

When choosing partners, UNIRI focuses on HE institutions with similar study programs, in order to facilitate the student and staff mobility. Currently UNIRI has the strongest cross-border cooperation with Slovenia, Austria and Italy but we are keen to broaden our partnerships with HE institutions all around the world, in order to be acquainted with different systems of education and exchange experiences. As mentioned before, the University is a part of YUFE European University Network and the sustainability of this network relies on our future projects, Erasmus+ funded projects as well. Therefore, we see great potential within Erasmus plus program to achieve our goals set in YUFE Alliance (cooperation between higher education institutions, the public and private sector and citizens across Europe, student and staff mobility etc). Furthermore, in the next period we will build our institutional capacity to carry on the tasks that this alliance brings so we will be looking for partners and projects that can help us deal with that challenge.

Strengthening of international cooperation, mobility in particular, continuously raises the general quality of education at UNIRI, encourages the development of international qualification, language proficiency and intercultural competence among students and staff members and facilitates development and harmonization of curricula. Furthermore, UNIRI



considers student and staff mobility an excellent opportunity to initiate joint research projects, double, multiple and joint degree programmes and networking.

Openness and exchange of teachers, scientists and students of the University of Rijeka with foreign institutions grants access to comparability along with a critical evaluation of one's own goals and realizations. This paves the way for successful participation in bilateral and multilateral research programmes, exchange programmes of teachers, students and young researchers. Thus, the University encourages international collaborations in all ways, shapes and forms. It especially strives to create conditions for the advancement of international collaboration particularly in those areas where international relations were non-existent before.

These actions enable us to continuously update teaching methods and to recognize our shortcomings and needs but also our strengths and potentials that we can share with our partners. Strategic partnerships projects are very valuable for our faculties because they bring new knowledge, expertise and skills that we can implement in our practice.

We will continue encouraging mobility activities, to increase the number of UNIRI staff and students in first, second and third cycles involved in Erasmus exchanges. UNIRI will continue to produce brochures and leaflets on opportunities and hold presentations to promote Erasmus mobility program. We will continue to publish experiences from ex-Erasmus students and staff in the university's website. UNIRI closely cooperates with Erasmus Student Network Rijeka. ESN Rijeka and International Mobility Office provide all support activities to our incoming students in order to include them in Rijeka's everyday life (finding accommodation, dealing with administrative formalities, health insurance, organising outside-university time) in order to make UNIRI a popular destination for the Erasmus mobility.

Being aware of the fact that foreign students can only be attracted by quality of study programmes and by offering courses in foreign languages, UNIRI has been working on the development and promotion of study programmes in English. Today UNIRI offers several study programs in English and more than 400 courses held in English or other foreign languages.

Presently, UNIRI offers work placement for incoming students at the University Departments, some of the faculties, as well as at certain offices at the Science and Technology Park (Intellectual Property Protection, Technology Transfer, etc.).

Several student associations at UNIRI organize student placements in Croatia and abroad and UNIRI plans to extend those existing collaborations through Erasmus programme, since work placement will surely enhance students' future career development.

Aligning with the institutional strategic goals:

UNIRI has embodied its aspiration towards internationalisation into its previous strategic plans (2007-2013, 2014-2020) as well as into a new one (2021-2025) which is in process of development. We strongly outline a vision in which UNIRI is to become "internationally recognized as an open, inclusive and modern European University".

The ambitious goals set in the current Strategic Plan have been reached, and the goals aligned set for the forthcoming period will be even more ambitious. UNIRI will develop its policies to ensure reaching the set goals. Strategic goals for the forthcoming period are set in four areas: learning and teaching, research, internationalization and knowledge transfer. In internationalization, our goals are stated as: to increase a number of international students, to increase the number of study programs in English, to increase staff mobility, to widen and promote collaboration with international institutions as well as to stimulate and promote international activities.

What is the envisaged impact of your participation in the Erasmus+ Programme on your institution?

Please reflect on targets, as well as qualitative and quantitative indicators in monitoring this impact (such as mobility targets for student/staff mobility, quality of the implementation, support for participants on mobility, increased involvement in cooperation projects (under the KA2 action), sustainability/long-term impact of projects etc.) You are encouraged to offer an indicative timeline for achieving the targets related to the Erasmus+ actions.

Original language (and translation into EN, FR or DE if the EPS is not in one of these languages)

Regarding the qualitative and quantitative indicators in monitoring the impact of Erasmus+ Programme at the University of Rijeka (such as mobility targets for student/staff mobility, quality of the implementation), the UNIRI is currently in the process of creating a new institutional strategy for the period of 2022/2025. According to plans, the new UNIRI Strategy will be published by the end of 2020.

Within the strategy, UNIRI plans to set up clear targets for all Erasmus mobility participants as well as the plan of increasing the numbers of exchange students/staff in the period 2022/2025. The mobility numbers that will be set as goals for the next period shall be decided upon revising and agreeing the new UNIRI Strategy within the institutional bodies (University Senate etc.).

Internalisation is set out as one of four key / focal points of the Strategy. Monitoring of qualitative and quantitative indicators will be embodied in the new strategy as well.

Rector

Prof. Snježana Prijić-Samaržija, Ph.D.

