

ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT

The Križevci University of Applied Sciences (KUAS) is the oldest agricultural institution of higher learning in Croatia, founded in 1860. KUAS is organized as an integrated legal unit which delivers Bachelor and Master courses adapted to the Bologna process, as well as tailor-made short courses. The basic mission of the University today is to provide leadership regionally and internationally through professionally oriented higher education and training and to create and disseminate knowledge of agricultural, environmental and economic systems to students, industry and society.

Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, its Youth, Education and Erasmus+ - Higher Education Unit informed us that Visoko gospodarsko učilište u Križevcima (Križevci University of Applied Sciences) has been awarded the „ERASMUS+ CHARTER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION 2021-2027“.

Project: 101015245

Acronym: KUASECHE2020

Erasmus ID code: HR KRIZEVC01

PIC 949341523

OID E10086928

This policy statement forms part of the KUAS' s Application for the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education for the Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027.

1. ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT EPS

1.1 Erasmus activities included in your EPS

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 ☒

1.2 Erasmus Policy statement (EPS): your strategy

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 Area¹ and explain the policy objectives you intend to pursue).

Križevci University of Applied Sciences (KUAS) has embodied its aspiration towards internationalisation and modernisation into its Development Strategy by outlining a strategic goal by which it will become a dynamic and respectable interdisciplinary polytechnic institution actively involved in the EU and non-EU Higher Education Area, with an international visibility and full recognition of its qualifications and degrees.

As part of the KUAS Development Strategy, internationalisation including mobility and modernisation are among major priorities. The Strategy outlines the following objectives and activities that KUAS wants to achieve through international cooperation under the Erasmus+ programme: to sign agreements on cooperation with institutions which have strategic importance for the University; to achieve an appropriate level of incoming and outgoing staff and student mobility in order to develop one's own competitiveness; to adapt modules to similar ones at the agricultural or similar HE institutions abroad; to develop integrated, transnational teaching activities such as joint study courses / modules / curricula, double / multiple / joint degrees; to recognise the importance and to provide visibility to the results achieved by KUAS staff members engaged in individual mobility or in cooperation projects with strategic partners; to take into account the results of internal monitoring of international mobility and cooperation activities in order to further improve its international performance.

By signing the ECHE and participating in the Erasmus+ Programme, KUAS would like to further internationalise and modernise the University and to contribute to the goals of European Education Area laid down in the communication on "Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture". The Charter will enable to innovate the existing and develop new courses in order to achieve high international standards in teaching and in applied research.

Through internationalisation KUAS would like to promote and significantly increase student and staff mobility and encourage transnational cooperation projects within the European Community and beyond, especially for individuals with fewer opportunities respecting principles of non-discrimination, transparency and inclusion as well as ensuring equal and equitable access and opportunities to prospective participants from all backgrounds.

Thanks to the ECHE, KUAS will increase international cooperation and its competitiveness, which will in the longer-term facilitate development and harmonization of all KUAS education and research.

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.

By agreeing to the principles of the ECHE, KUAS would like to take part in the following activities:

- ☐ Key Action 1 "Learning Mobility": The mobility of higher education students and staff.
- ☐ Key Action 2 "Cooperation among organisations and institutions": Partnerships for Cooperation and exchanges of practices; Partnerships for Excellence – European Universities; Partnerships for Excellence – Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters Degrees; Partnerships for Innovation.

The Erasmus+ Programme will be a key component supporting the work towards a European Education Area. KUAS participation in these two actions will be based on identified needs and geographical and subject priorities. The focus of the new Programme is on inclusiveness, therefore KUAS intends to reach more students with fewer opportunities. This will allow more young people to move to another country to learn or work.

As the former ECHE holder that was active from the 2017 Erasmus+ call onwards, KUAS will stimulate and promote cooperation with institutions and organizations active in education, that will help equip its staff and students with the knowledge, skills and competences needed to face social and economic challenges and to increase their potential for innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship, in particular within the digital economy. Participation in Key Actions 1 and 2 will ensure positive employability outcomes for KUAS graduating students including skills and competences in foreign languages and digital skills and forward-looking fields, such as sustainable development, organic agriculture, climate change, clean energy, etc. The participation in these two actions will also enable to equip KUAS students with labour market skills and to improve their cultural understanding of Europe where people have a strong sense of their identity as Europeans, of Europe's cultural heritage and its diversity.

KUAS would like to implement the priorities of the new Programme: to undertake the necessary steps to implement digital mobility management in line with the technical standards of the European Student Card Initiative, to promote environmentally friendly practices in all activities, to encourage the participation of individuals with fewer opportunities in the Programme and to promote civic engagement and encouraging students and staff to get involved as active citizens before, during and after their participation in a mobility or project.

KUAS intends to recognize the importance of the results achieved by its staff members who participated in individual mobility or in cooperation activities and to make these results visible.

KUAS further intends to continue cooperating with its partners from the Programme Countries, but it will also work much harder to enhance cooperation with institutions from the Partner Countries (KA107) that deliver similar education courses, in particular to increase the number of staff and students incoming mobilities from the neighbouring countries such as Monte Negro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania. Furthermore, language barriers between these partners are less and communication is much easier. KUAS will continue to work on the international cooperation under Key Action 2 developing strategic partnerships. Finding a suitable work placement for traineeship will be much easier, and an increase in the number of incoming students for traineeship to KUAS is expected in the near future.

KUAS will continue with free language courses in order to increase the participants' foreign language skills and competences.

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.

Through to 2027, KUAS will continue to ensure that students and faculty and administrative staff have the opportunity to participate in the Erasmus+ Programme in order to increase their own professional, social and intercultural skills, learn from good practices, internationalise the curriculum and strengthen international partnerships.

The envisaged impact of participation in the Erasmus+ Programme is to ensure that KUAS increases the number of its staff and graduates in the 2021-2027 Programme to at least 20% of its population and to equip them with the skills needed in a society that is increasingly mobile, multicultural and digital.

KUAS had participated in Erasmus+ activities from call 2017 onwards and has more than 30 Erasmus partners from EU and non-EU countries which enabled successful cooperation to its staff and students. KUAS has partnerships with HEIs with compatible curricula and research interests and will continue to develop new and reinforce the old ones. The greatest number of inter-institutional agreements was signed with HEIs in France (6), the country with top quality agricultural education in Europe, which could lead to more sustainable and balanced cooperation between KUAS and French HE institutions in the field of agriculture.

KUAS will seek to significantly enhance the number of undergraduate students who experience mobility within and outside of EU during their undergraduate (bachelor level) and specialist graduate (master level) programme of study. At the same time, KUAS will seek to develop and increase opportunities for incoming undergraduate students from European partner institutions to experience work placements and traineeship in Križevci.

The inter-institutional agreements KUAS will sign in the next period will identify quality requirements indicating contact details of those responsible for their implementation, also criteria for nomination of students and teaching staff, including the necessary linguistic competences. In this way KUAS will ensure that outgoing mobile participants are motivated and well prepared for the mobility with the necessary level of foreign language proficiency.

KUAS will set up an International Relations Office to implement mobility and other international projects and to offer support for application processes, advice on resourcing and financial and reporting management.

The new Erasmus+ Programme will have a positive impact on KUAS as a whole and its individual participants. It will enable them to go abroad and enhance their personal and professional development. The University students will be the ultimate beneficiaries of positive experience that their teachers have acquired through the Erasmus. In addition, the students will have more and better opportunities to go and study at the institutions of the inbound staff from abroad. The very positive impact on the participating students will be reflected in their increased abilities to adapt and act in new situations, to cooperate with people from other background and cultures, to critically think and analyse information. They will become more confident and convinced of their abilities, open-minded and curious about new challenges. They will know much better their strengths and weaknesses. The positive impact of the Erasmus+ programme on the KUAS staff will be reflected in their increased job

satisfaction, pedagogical, social, linguistic and cultural competences, improved digital skills, tolerance towards other persons' values and behaviour, enhanced employment and career opportunities, improved teaching methods and students assessment, knowledge exchange about topics closely related to their professional and research work as well as new contacts and initiatives for future cooperation and international networking.

All the activities related to the new Erasmus+ Programme and their positive impact are in line with the KUAS strategic documents, the Erasmus Policy Statement and the Higher Education modernisation agenda.