



*European
Polytechnical
University*

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**THE "EUROPEAN POLYTECHNICAL
UNIVERSITY"'S INTERNATIONALISATION STRATEGY
FOR THE PERIOD 2021 – 2027**

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1. Introduction and conceptual framework

Processes of internationalisation of higher education institutions are multifaceted and multilayered and represent the movement and interaction of people and ideas between higher education institutions in different countries and regions with different cultures. The present strategy of the European Polytechnic University has been developed in accordance with documents approved and integrated at European level, namely:

European Higher Education Modernisation Agenda
Digital Education Action Plan
European Green Deal Communication
Universities without walls. A vision for 2030
Erasmus+ without paper
European Student Card Initiative

At the national level, this strategy follows the principles and objectives set out in the Strategy for the Development of Higher Education in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2021-2030, adopted by the National Assembly on 17 December 2020.

At the institutional level, this strategy is in line with the European Polytechnic University Development Strategy (hereafter referred to as EPU for short) for the period 2021 - 2025 and the Regulations on Academic Mobility, which aim to build, maintain and upgrade a smart, sustainable and inclusive learning environment in higher education.

Internationalisation is enshrined as a key pillar in the development and modernisation of HEIs in the European Higher Education Modernisation Agenda. Internationalisation implies the integration of HEIs at an international and intercultural level through the objectives, modus operandi and management of teaching and learning, research and knowledge transfer processes. Internationalisation helps to improve the quality of higher education, provide and expand access to training and strengthen international cooperation, which enhance the competitive position of the HEI, promote the acquisition of knowledge and language competences. In this sense, internationalisation is an approach in the field of education in which international cooperation becomes a priority and part of all activities of the HEI - teaching, learning, research, academic projects, mobility of curricula, students, faculty and administrative staff, overseas placements, academic service and the creation of favourable conditions for the development of an intercultural working and learning environment.

Internationalisation processes are a driver of innovation, a source of inspiration, an opportunity to work in a multicultural environment and a tool for achieving high quality education.



The internationalisation of HEIs is a possible strategy for their development, which will help them to become modern, competitive and well-recognised HEIs. Modern HEIs strive to reflect the processes taking place in society and to train young people who will fit in and be useful to themselves and society. This can be done by taking into account global and regional trends, developing an understanding of the global dimensions of societal development and education, and purposefully developing skills to communicate in a multicultural environment, including overcoming stereotypes. It is the commitment of the modern university to adapt its curricula in line with these trends.

2. Mission and Vision of the European Polytechnic University

2.1. Mission

"European Polytechnic University is a multinational centre of higher education, modern learning in all established forms, research and innovation, international academic and business cooperation. The University personalizes its relationship with its students, takes into account their individual

The University is committed to the personal, social and professional fulfilment of its students in the market environment of a changing world.

The mission is the distinguishing criterion of what is intrinsic and appropriate for University and what is not, both in the formation of its educational and scientific policy and in the intentions and actions of the leadership, faculty, and students in the ongoing daily life of the University. The structure and regulations of the EPU are built in accordance with its mission and vision.

2.2. Vision

The vision is the primary, overarching and long-term goal of the University for the planning period. In our case, it answers the question "Where do we want to be in 2027?" The vision of the European Polytechnic University for development by 2027, defined in accordance with its mission and with the approval of the academic staff, is:

The University's vision is to become a successful working model of private engineering education in South East Europe, to reach the level of the best European universities in its academic profile and to be a desirable partner with competitive advantages.

The European Polytechnic University will achieve this vision through a development in which innovative electronic products and services offered through ICT in distance learning and research have a significant share.



The current Internationalisation Strategy of the European Polytechnic University is fully in line with the mission and vision of the University, because they are based on the principle of striving for success in the context of internationalisation.

3. Internationalisation - strategic objectives and planned initiatives

Strategic Objective 1: Stimulate international mobility of students, academic and administrative staff

The mobility of the students, academic and administrative staff of the European Polytechnic University is a conscious choice, set at the very opening of the University. The development of programmes in English, the attraction of lecturers from abroad, the opportunities for training foreign students are traditional for the University and are reflected in the current strategy.

Planned initiatives

- Participation in the Erasmus+ programme to enable students, staff and administration to benefit from the advantages of mobility;
- Automatic recognition of credits acquired in other HEIs at home and abroad;
- Expanding partnerships with Erasmus+ institutions
- Upgrade mechanisms for the organisation, administration, reporting and control of mobility;
- Encourage inward and outward mobility of faculty, students and administrative staff;
- Implement inward and outward mobility of students, faculty and administration;
- Incorporate academic mobility into the curricula by having one semester of study or the thesis and internship period take place at a partner university abroad or an appropriate foreign business organization.

Strategic objective 2 Promote the international dimension of the "European Polytechnic University" (internationalisation at home) through internationalisation of the academic community and the curricular content

Planned initiatives:

- Development of new programmes in English



- Digitalization of the teaching content and methods used.
- Periodic assessment and enhancement of the language competence of students, faculty and administration through the Online Language Support (OLS) platform
- Organization of periodic meetings to exchange experiences and to enhance the communication skills of the ESP faculty to work in an intercultural environment.
- Attracting international students for the entire period of study
- Establish and support joint educational programs.
- Participation in the creation of consortia of two or more HEIs with interdisciplinary curricula and programmes, including through joint training, in which the EPU has a relevant participation.
- Involvement of ETUs in national and international long-term research programmes

Strategic objective 3 Participation in international projects

Planned initiatives:

- Improve the effectiveness of international cooperation with national and international structures in the field of engineering, information technology, green economy in the context of broadening the professional experience of students and faculty, new perspectives in their career development;
- deepening the strategic partnership with "... quote the German university we cooperate with" in the direction of exchange of good practices and knowledge transfer;
- Participation in Erasmus+ projects to upgrade the University's capacity in partnership with Bulgarian and foreign universities and businesses;
- expanding international recognition through registration in various international, educational and professional organizations in the field of engineering, information technology and green economy
- encouraging faculty and students for individual memberships in such organizations;

The implementation of the present Internationalisation Strategy of the "European Polytechnic University" represents a commitment to which the entire academic community is committed: students, academic staff, management and administration.



4. Analysis of the situation and baseline

The purpose of the analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) is to identify the state of the ESP and the starting point of the Internationalisation Strategy, which takes into account the context.

The European Polytechnic University is the youngest university in the higher education system. It was established in 2010 by a decision of the National Assembly on the project of a group of prominent Bulgarian scientists on the initiative and with the capital of private investors and is supported by representatives of business and public practice.

The academic profile of the University is shaped by in-demand engineering sciences and innovations in advanced technologies in the fields of civil engineering, green energy and informatics and computer science.

The main characteristics of EPU are:

- The only private higher education institution in Bulgaria with the rank of a university, which is Technical and English-speaking.
- Particular attention to the student, his personality, his satisfaction and his desires, which is part of its mission.
- Orientation towards foreign and Bulgarian students, English speaking.
- A specific formula for achieving and maintaining the high quality possible in a private higher education institution.
- Organic inherent academic and business collaboration built into the university fabric.

SWOT analysis:

EPU is the only one in Bulgaria private engineering university with an up-to-date technical profile, from which specific competitive advantages arise. - EPU is a multiethnic, multicultural university with teaching in English, which can attract international students. - Cooperation with leading	Underdeveloped own technical infrastructure for research and social infrastructure; - Insufficient assets in international research projects, - Insufficient effectiveness of international cooperation and
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<p>foreign universities and mobility between them is an organic component of the institution itself, anchored in the its regulatory documents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EPU is in partnerships with BAS, with foreign HEIs and established business companies in its field, has experience in cooperation. - The programmes are developed in English; - Foreign lecturers in the academic staff. - Practical orientation of training - Modern forms of training, including distance learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insufficient in-house capacity to develop and manage large international projects. - Temporary interruption in Erasmus+ participation - Relatively high tuition fees
<p>Recognised the need for renewed participation in Erasmus+;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Favourable conditions for student life in Bulgaria - Horizon Europe funding secured for R&D and innovation in the green economy, ecology and ICT - areas in which EPU works - Expected strengthening of business and government commitment to higher education and research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of recognition of the EPU worldwide; - Presence of stereotypes about Bulgaria; - Strong competition from public universities with greater capacity, international experience and lower tuition fees;

5. Actions to achieve the objectives of the internationalisation strategy

Strategic objective 1 Stimulate international mobility of students, academic and administrative staff

ACTIVITY	DIRECT CONTRACTOR
Obtaining the Erasmus+ Charter	
Inclusion of academic mobility in the curricula.	
Introduction of automatic credit recognition	
Building on existing Erasmus+ partnerships	
Establishing new Erasmus+ partnerships	
Administration of the Erasmus+ programme	
Implementing outgoing mobility	
Implementation of incoming mobility	

Strategic objective 2 Promote the international dimension of the "European Polytechnic University" (internalisation at home) through the internationalisation of the academic community and curricular content

ACTIVITY	DIRECT CONTRACTOR
Development of new programmes in English	
Digitalization of the learning content and methods used	
Assessment of language competence through the Online Language Support (OLS) platform	
Foreign language training	
Training to work in an intercultural environment	
Attracting international students	
Joint educational programmes	
Establishing consortia	
Inclusion of EPU's in long-term research programmes	

Strategic Objective 3 Participation in international projects, administration of international contracts;

ACTIVITY	DIRECT CONTRACTOR
Establishing strategic partnerships	
Participation in Erasmus+ projects	
Erasmus+ project development	
Registration in international educational and professional organizations	

6. Indicators for measuring progress in the modernisation and internationalisation processes

The definition of indicators to measure progress towards the objectives set out in the Internationalisation Strategy is important in the context of the processes of self-assessment, benchmarking and, consequently, determining the place of the EPU in various ratings. Self-assessment is a process internal to the organisation through which progress in a given area is noted and measured according to predefined indicators and milestones set by the organisation to be achieved within predefined periods. Benchmarking has become a method of managing higher education institutions that tracks and compares progress in processes internal to the organisation with similar



processes taking place in other institutions. In this sense, benchmarking provides an external view of processes internal to the organisation.

Benchmarks are formulated in this strategy by strategic objectives, reporting is planned to start at the end of the academic year 2022 - 2023 on an academic year basis.

Strategic objective 1 Stimulate international mobility of students, academic and administrative staff

INDICATOR
Erasmus+ Charter obtained
Percentage of curricula including academic mobility
Automatic credit recognition introduced
Number of Erasmus+ partnerships
Number of new Erasmus+ partnerships
Number of outgoing mobilities
Incoming mobility broilization

Strategic objective 2 Promote the international dimension of the "European Polytechnic University" (internalisation at home) through the internationalisation of the academic community and curricular content

INDICATOR
Number of new programmes in English
Percentage of courses with digitized learning content.
Introduction of the Online Language Support (OLS) platform



Number of students and lecturers who have assessed their language knowledge using OLS
Number of participants in a foreign language course
Number of lecturers involved in training for working in intercultural environments
Number of foreign students
Number of joint educational programmes
Number of consortia with participation of EPU
Number of long-term research programmes involving the ESP

Strategic objective 3 Participation in international projects

Administration of international contracts;

INDICATOR
Number of strategic partnerships;
Number of Erasmus+ projects in which the ESP participates
Number of Erasmus+ projects developed
Number of partners involved in projects developed by the EPU
Number of registrations in international educational and professional organisations