

## **Erasmus Charter for Higher Education 2014-2020**

### **European Policy Statement of the University of Szeged**

#### **EPS PART 1**

**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 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. (max. 5000 characters)**

The mission and strategy of the University of Szeged (USz) is to increase attainment levels in order to provide graduates and researchers Europe needs, improving the quality and relevance of higher education, research and innovation, strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border cooperation, linking higher education, research and business for excellence and regional development, improving governance and funding.

Furthermore our objectives are to meet the social and economic needs of the society, to broaden and reinforce the European and global dimension as well as to respond to the demand of national and international labour market.

One of the cornerstones of the internationalisation and modernisation strategy of the USz is mobility. We are striving for enhancing high quality mobility both in EU and non-EU countries, with special regard to Third Countries' nationals. Our Third Countries' policy is to afford attractive high-quality international joint master's and doctoral degree programs together with regular degree and part-time programs in foreign languages. Most of our European partnerships and international agreements have been initiated by academics, researchers working together and thus developing not only their personal professional cooperation but that of their institutions', too. Non-EU cooperation is initiated mainly by the relevant countries' embassies, consulates, ministries or university partners; in several cases USz recruits international students at study fairs abroad, too. What we consider as strategically target geographical areas and countries outside Europe are Asia (China, India), Arabian Peninsula (Saudi Arabia), Latin-America (Brazil), Balkans (Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania, Moldova).

From among the targeted cooperation activity forms the study and practical training (stage) mobility of students, staff, researchers at bachelor/master/doctoral level is on the first place. Applicants from Third Countries are invited to enrol for our degree programs mainly in medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, natural sciences and arts.

International joint bachelor, master and PhD programs should be developed as they are the most attractive forms of degree studies resulting in internationally acknowledged double, multiple or joint degrees. The USz's Erasmus Mundus Joint Master project attracts 17 international students to our university this fall.

The USz has 560 partner universities all around the world. The most intensive cooperation is the Erasmus program in which we have 424 partner universities in 30 countries and 818 bilateral agreements for the academic year 2013/2014. We have been participating in the Erasmus since 1998 and up to now 3631 students, 1684 academic and 86 administrative staff benefited from Erasmus mobility activities.

In CEEPUS program the USz is cooperating in 7 networks, with 65 universities, in 15 countries: the Balkans, Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland.

Erasmus teaching mobility provides an opportunity to cooperate in developing joint curriculum projects, intensive programs and thematic networks. Both outgoing and incoming mobility has greatly contributed to the modernisation of our curricula and teaching methods

and to the continuously increasing number of courses offered in foreign languages by guest and home Erasmus academic staff. Capacity building in teaching activities therefore should be continuously enhanced through mobilities and by developing joint courses, modules and curricula resulting in double, multiple or joint degrees.

Mobility is of vital importance for internationalisation and modernization so special attention should be paid to non-discrimination policy and measures ensuring fair and equitable opportunities and to the improvement of infrastructural and student services, the already existing special services for disabled such as counselling and on-call system should be expanded also for visually/hearing impaired and physically disabled students. We strive for enhancing social and economic cohesion, combat xenophobia and racism, and respect gender equality. We invite all under-represented groups like students and staff with disabilities, from lower socio-economic backgrounds, with family responsibilities and/or part-time jobs to apply to mobility programs.

At the USz, in accordance with Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, there should be no discrimination based on sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation.

## **EPS PART 2**

**PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR INSTITUTION'S STRATEGY FOR THE ORGANIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL (EU AND NON-EU) COOPERATION PROJECTS IN TEACHING AND TRAINING IN RELATION TO PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED UNDER THE PROGRAMME. (MAX. 2000characters)**

USz citizens are fully committed to perform the university's internationalisation and modernisation strategy as a main tool of development and integration of the institution into the global and European Higher Education Area enriching also individuals' professional, social and intercultural skills and their employability. International activities are based on prior agreed, signed, valid inter-institutional agreements based on a comprehensive understanding of the partners, compatibility of academic profiles, adequate levels, standards, quality, responsibility, trust and transparency. The organizational and management scheme is transparent and clearly indicates the university policy and the decision making levels by defining personal responsibilities in the corporate structure. It is well-communicated on webpage: <http://www2.u-szeged.hu/erasmus/doc/flowchart/index.html>. There are institutional/faculty measures to support staff and students to successfully accomplish the international programs. Assistance is given to all programs' participants in communication, administrative and financial management, in accreditation procedures, dissemination. Additional financial grants are allocated from the University Scholarship Fund for study or traineeship abroad to all students. International activities and results are broadly disseminated and considered key components in staff evaluation. We are committed to respect the principles and guidelines of the Charter in all our international activities, operating and accomplishing mobility programs, developing strategic partnerships, knowledge alliance, capacity buildings with neighbouring and EU and non-EU countries. USz takes measures to cooperate with non-academic strategic partners, stakeholders such as diplomatic corps, regional enterprises, chambers of commerce, regional authorities in order to strengthen relations between the university and its external environment and to explore traineeship opportunities for the benefit of students and staff.

### **EPS PART 3**

**Please explain the expected impact of your participation in the Programma 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. (max. 3000 characters)**

Recognizing the importance, benefits and outcomes of the participation in the Programme the USz has set out strategic objectives and defined expected impacts to be achieved in accordance with Europe 2020, the EU's growth strategy for the coming decade, and the European Commission's new agenda for Modernisation of Europe's Higher Education Systems. In order to increase the number of graduates, to attract a broader cross-section of society into higher education and to reduce the number of students dropping out without completing their courses, the USz organizes courses and lectures to prepare students for cultural, intercultural, communication, linguistic and professional challenges for gaining relevant knowledge, skills and competences. Teachers, members of administration, mentors of ESN, Students' Organization and Alumni should be involved into these activities. To sustain and extend the university grants system supporting talented students, students with low socio-economic background or disabilities is the responsibility of the university. It is a prerequisite that the university be engaged in international projects in order to improve quality, to enhance personal development of students and staff, to stimulate and motivate modernisation of curricula and teaching methods based on achievements and international academic and linguistic proficiency gained by teachers. New curricula are to be developed to meet the demands of the society and the labour market, as well as students' career expectations. Results and outcomes have to be implemented and disseminated enhancing the institution's national and international performance. Staff mobility should be encouraged, and performance shall be acknowledged as part of the regular workload. International teaching and training mobility activities need to be recognized as components in any evaluation. Excellence in teaching and research should be rewarded at all levels. More opportunities are to be provided for students and staff to acquire additional skills through study and training mobility abroad by exploring further possibilities of regional and cross-border cooperations and fostering links with research, industry, business and other stakeholders. Excellence of education, research and innovation shall be promoted and supported as key factor for the future development of society, industry and economy. It is a need to create more effective governance and funding mechanisms in support of excellence. The USz has been awarded the "University of Research Excellence" title in 2010 and in 2013, and in 2013 by government resolutions it received the "University of National Excellence" qualification for its considerable educational and research capacities, its outstanding scientific results, as well as for its position in world university rankings and excellent participation in international student mobility programs. These achievements, the strategy and vision of the USz demonstrate our strong commitment to be one of the leading universities of excellence in global higher education and research.