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Erasmus Policy Statement (2021 – 2027)

PAR University of Applied Sciences aspires to become an internationally recognized provider of higher education and research, which makes internationalization a key component that permeates all aspects of its learning, teaching, and research experience. The main goal of our internationalization and modernization strategy is to contribute to the development of premium education in Croatia and Europe through constant improvement of our study programs under European standards. The key instruments to reach this goal are student and staff mobility, close collaboration with similar institutions abroad, and participation in international projects. Mobility opportunities within the Erasmus+ program enable wide international experience and professional aspirations, improve language skills, embrace cultural diversity, and strengthen the sense of European identity. This is the reason why faculty and staff mobility plays a crucial role in PAR's internationalization efforts. In addition, special mechanisms exist to promote credit mobility for studies and work placements, as well as staff mobility for teaching and training, especially taking care of participants from under-represented and disadvantaged groups. For incoming students with disabilities, PAR provides special counseling and blended mobility possibilities within our distance learning courses.

In line with the institutional internationalization strategy, mobility opportunities are further enhanced by student internship programs and international project weeks aimed both at international students and internationalization at home. International Project Weeks are organized throughout the year, and because of the need for diversity and competitiveness, they cater to substantially different target groups. Among them are: Sail & Learn Summer School, INCASO Winter School, International Staff Week, and PAR Business Camp. Participation in the Erasmus+ program is of the utmost importance for improving the quality and relevance of our IPWs, attracting high-potential students from different regions, and for establishing an "international classroom at home". Internships are also an important mechanism for gaining practical skills according to the global labor market. PAR supports its students in finding suitable internships abroad via our Career Centre as well as our strong network of international partners. PAR also welcomes foreign trainees through membership in renowned international organizations such as the NHEI Consortium EuGen from Italy, the European Association of ERASMUS Coordinators (EAEC), the New Initiatives and Challenges in Europe (NICE) Network, and Businet. In addition, PAR University has forged a strong relationship with Lehigh University and Iacocca Institute (USA), placing American students in Croatian traineeships during the summer.

Mobility is regarded as one of the key elements for enhancing students' employability, civic engagement, and integration into multicultural business settings. This is why international experience is integrated into the curriculum at both study levels. For that reason, PAR has instituted a change in its undergraduate curriculum and introduced International Experience as a mandatory course. Moreover, the internationalization of curriculum provides an additional opportunity for faculty to infuse an international dimension into their courses and thus help prepare the students to be aware of global issues. PAR regularly reviews the syllabi and seeks to adapt learning outcomes to global economic issues and perspectives and keeps track of global trends and developments by sending its representatives to Erasmus+ TCAs.



Collaboration with European and international higher education institutions on mutual projects and through the co-creation of joint intellectual outputs, innovative curricula, exchange of good practices and efforts of capacity building through knowledge transfer outside of EHEA is part of our basic priorities and organizational values. PAR will continue to develop cooperation with partners in other EU and non-EU countries, to expand the number of international projects with increased student and staff participation rates. Keeping the competitive advantage intact cannot be done without proper linking of innovative solutions to the knowledge triangle; therefore, participation in teaching, training, and job-shadowing concerning projects implemented under the Programme is of the utmost importance. PAR's goal is to identify strategic partnerships that enable and intensify synergy between business and education with an added international dimension. To increase international collaboration and mobility opportunities, PAR actively pursues Erasmus bilateral agreements with HEIs all over the world. Up until now, has signed more than 90 agreements with HEIs within the Erasmus+ program and more than 20 bilateral agreements with HEIs from nonparticipating countries. New partner institutions are selected based on academic quality, as well as study program compatibility and complementarity.

By working on the said objectives, PAR will fulfill the following goals set out in its internalization strategy:

- 1) Development of international curricula and inclusion of mobility components;
- 2) Attraction of international student body and academic staff;
- 3) Expansion of triangular relationships between business, education and research;
- 4) Establishment of strategic partnerships and HEI networks for deeper involvement in international cooperation.

PAR aims to enhance its competitiveness by assuming an active role in developing a strong international profile while endorsing the following principles of the European Education Area in higher education:

- 1) spending time abroad to study and learn as the norm;
- 2) higher education qualifications recognized across the EU;
- 3) knowing two languages in addition to one's mother tongue as the standard;
- 4) equal access to high-quality education, irrespective of one's socio-economic background;
- 5) a strong sense of one's European identity, as well as Europe's cultural heritage and its diversity.

PAR has been actively promoting the development of international programs and cooperation as one of the institution's main strategic goals. Since being awarded the Erasmus+ Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) in 2015, PAR has been actively participating in the following Erasmus+ activities: KA1, KA2, and Sport. Additionally, since 2018 PAR has been the coordinator of the second accredited national consortium in higher education in Croatia titled "Knowledge Triangle", comprising four other Croatian university colleges, which fosters teaching and administrative staff training mobility. In the upcoming period, the institution will remain committed to supporting transparent, nondiscriminatory, and documented student and staff mobility (KA1), paying particular attention to the inclusion of individuals with fewer opportunities. Before mobility, participants can get acquainted with our Course Catalogue which is easily accessible from the PAR International Office webpage, and contains other relevant information and documents (Guide for International Students, Fact Sheet, Application Form). The Course Catalogue describes important information on courses taught in English and is updated yearly. During the mobility, PAR will continue enabling systems that foster mobile participants' integration into the society, such as buddy and ambassador schemes, and Erasmus days/Orientation week. During these events, foreign students get the necessary information for practical and administrative issues, undergo all the required course registration procedures, and



get acquainted with the daily functioning of PAR. In addition, PAR closely collaborates with the local Erasmus Student Network which provides support activities to incoming students to include them in the academic community and Rijeka's culture and everyday life (accommodation options, visa requirements, health insurance, and social events). Full language support for incoming mobile participants is provided by the PAR Language Centre. International students and staff can choose from a wide list of foreign languages and can select language courses for their Learning Agreement. Moreover, a course on Croatian for non-native speakers is offered each semester at the Elementary/Beginner's levels. The implementation of student and staff mobilities will focus on implementing digital mobility management under the European Student Card Initiatives, and on encouraging green initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable and responsible behavior among mobile participants. After the mobility, PAR will continue applying full automatic recognition of all credits – based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, gained for learning outcomes achieved during a period of study/training abroad, thus ensuring the quality and transparency of recognition procedures. The Transcript of Records, as a full and accurate record of students' achievements will be provided and expected to receive HEIs promptly (within five weeks). It is important to note that our International Office team provides full support to incoming students and staff before, during, and after the mobility. The same applies to PAR's outgoing staff and students who receive mentoring and support from our Erasmus Coordinator or IO Head.

So far, PAR University has been engaged in more than 25 KA2 projects – both as a partner and coordinator. In the next six years, the institution will continue to participate in European and international projects aimed at cooperation among organizations and institutions (KA2) and support to policy development and cooperation (KA3). Strategic partnerships will be formed based on subject area priorities, practical relevance, the opportunity to transfer results in the classroom, outcomes of previous collaborations, and institutional capacities. In the application and implementation phase strong emphasis will be placed on students' participation, adequate resource allocation, transparent professional recognition of staff as well as academic recognition for students

The defined objectives of our participation in Erasmus+ programs shall be reached by the following targets:

- creating joint semesters or short mobility windows with foreign HEIs that will be used as platforms for initiating double degree programs that will additionally enhance cross-border cooperation and regional development;
- establishing joint transnational courses within our planned project of distance learning virtual courses;
- improving existing and developing new short-term mobility opportunities for part-time students and students in degree programs where long-term mobility is not possible;
- developing 5-15 strategic collaborations with new partners, that would include student and staff exchange, research activities, and cooperation projects in key action 2 and key action 3;
- improving the employability of our students through the international experience;
- increasing language skills of our students and teachers;
- increasing student and staff mobility by 10%;
- improving the transparency, comparability, and portability of qualifications, thus facilitating their recognition.

In sum, our international strategy aims at providing all students with international competencies, improving staff members' international qualifications, supporting and incorporating high-quality and international skills in all curricula, participating in international projects, and cooperating with key partners.

