

# **JOSIP JURAJ STROSSMAYER UNIVERSITY OF OSIJEK, CROATIA**

## **ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT**

Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek (UNIOS) was established in 1975. Today it has around 18700 students and 1458 members of academic staff. UNIOS main strategic objectives are focused on development and assurance of high quality research and teaching, internationalization and promotion of student and staff mobility, promotion of international ties with partner institutions, involvement in European trends (ERA, EHEA), contribution to social, cultural and economic life of the region and further infrastructure development. UNIOS assures academic atmosphere that welcomes students, teachers and staff irrelevant of their national origin, gender, religion, ethnic background, sexual orientation or physical disability. Non-discriminatory policy is incorporated in the University Statute and pursued in everyday university life. Any behavior in favor of xenophobia and racism is strictly forbidden and punished, as foreseen in the University Ethical Codex. Students are enrolled by faculties on the basis of entrance exams, students of low-income groups are given priority in the selection procedure by student dormitories, teachers are given equal opportunities for academic advancement on the basis of set criteria, physically disabled students and staff are provided access to university facilities (elevators and ramps at most of the faculties). With eleven faculties, four departments and one Academy of Arts, our University offers studies in all scientific fields. Since the academic year 2005/2006 it carries out studies fully revised according to the Bologna principles. Nowadays, there are 31 university undergraduate studies, then 35 university graduate studies, 3 integrated undergraduate and graduate studies in the field of Medicine, Law and Teacher Education, 23 postgraduate professional studies within the lifelong learning program and 11 postgraduate doctoral studies. One of UNIOS main priorities is development of international cooperation. The International Relations Office at the University level has a significant role in establishment, promotion and furtherance of ties at international level. International relations with institutions abroad usually relate to organization of joint curricula, exchange of professors and students, joint symposia, seminars, exchange of publications and information related to scientific and research activities. There is cooperation at bilateral level with universities in 16 European countries, in Turkey, USA and Russia. Among them, we would like to emphasize successful long-term cooperation with the University of Augsburg (Germany), University of Pecs (Hungary), University of Tuzla (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and University of Maribor (Slovenia). Participation in Erasmus is seen as a main tool to promote student and academic mobility and to achieve objective related to promotion of international ties.

In the framework of multilateral cooperation, University of Osijek actively participates in the activities of the Alps-Adriatic Rectors' Conference directed towards intensification of cross-border co-operation in Alps Adriatic countries, organization of joint study programs and promotion of life long learning. Our University is also an active member of the Danube Rectors' Conference, and Cross-Border Cooperation initiative that connects universities, cities and counties in the cross border area of Croatia and Hungary. In the efforts to stimulate student mobility, the University of Osijek joined the CEEPUS network, attracting students from Central and Eastern Europe and enabling home students to study abroad and to experience other European cultures and educational systems.

In the period 2001-2008 UNIOS participated in 26 TEMPUS projects, which helped a lot in the efforts to promote European dimension in higher education, to reform curricula and advance academic and administrative services.

Through different measures the University aims to accelerate involvement of researchers in the 7th Framework program as it sees this Program as efficient tool to assure high quality research and the only way for the University to become a part of the European Research Area. Our researchers have already participated in several Framework projects, however more intensive participation is stimulated through assistance offered by the University Research Office and the Research Committee. In order to assure high quality teaching, UNIOS set up the Quality Assurance Office at a central level, as well as offices at each faculty.

For the purpose of promoting Erasmus activities, UNIOS has established a web site on which all relevant information, strategic documents, calls, etc... will be published. Erasmus Policy Statement and Erasmus University Charter will be also announced and disseminated to faculties. Students and staff will be informed on Erasmus mobility schemes also through a network of contact persons at each faculty. Detailed information on each call within Erasmus program will be announced on web pages and info panels at each faculty. Information days will be organized for all interested students and staff. Handbook for outgoing students and staff will be printed and disseminated. Exchange students will also be provided access to information via web page.

Pursuing goals of the Bologna process, and preparing to accept exchange students, all study programs offered at UNIOS are carried out in line with Bologna principles. ECTS has been introduced to all curricula subjects and modules. In order to promote lifelong learning, different measures were taken in order to assure full transferability of credits to different levels of study. University Guide is published for every academic year, listing all courses taught at the University. It is published in Croatian language, however, efforts are made to publish the Course Guide in English in order to have information prepared for foreign students. In order to prepare for participation in the Erasmus program, the University International Office has prepared International Student Guide, a brochure that provides information for foreign students, such as pre-arrival arrangements, visa, arrangement for accommodation, etc. International Student Guide is published also on UNIOS web page. Documents for incoming students (application form, Transcript of Records, info packages), and for outgoing students (selection procedure, Learning Agreement) are ready to be used.

Up to now, the University has appointed Erasmus contact persons at each faculty who will be in charge of the incoming and outgoing students and teacher mobility.

Within the University there are three Student Centers, two in Osijek and one in Slavonski Brod. Student centers provide services for students, regarding food, accommodation and part-time employment. With different clubs and other facilities such as fitness center, grocery shops, bars and theatre, Student Centers are also centers of students' social life. As a part of preparatory measures for participation in the Erasmus program, UNIOS will reserve rooms in student dormitories for the purpose of accommodation of incoming students. Students' Conference Students within the Students' Conference will be actively involved in the acceptance of incoming students. Their duties will refer to tutoring, integration activities and organization of social events. All faculties agreed to organize cultural and orientation programs to better meet the needs of exchange students. Intensive course in Croatian language will be organized for foreign students for free by the Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Croatian Language and Literature.

In coordination with Erasmus contact persons at faculties, staff in the International Relations Office already provides support to outgoing students and teachers. Teaching activity abroad is one of the preconditions for academic career advancement, as set in the decision of Croatian Rectors' Conference IRO staff gives information on available funds and scholarships for mobility, help with travel arrangements and other practical issues. In future, IRO staff will be

responsible for organization and coordination of both student and teacher mobility within Erasmus program and for dissemination of information on Erasmus mobility possibilities through the network of contact persons and through organization of information days for students and staff.

University of Osijek accepts fundamental principles of the Erasmus program: mobility will be realized within bilateral agreements; University fees will not be charged to incoming Erasmus students; all Erasmus students will be guaranteed full recognition of completed activities as specified in the Learning Agreement, all documents (Transcript of Records, Statement of Host Institution) will contain accurate information on the mobility period.

University of Osijek dedicates itself to make all information about admission and curriculum up to date, transparent and easily accessible via web pages; to ensure that all incoming students will be equally treated, socially integrated and given the same opportunities as home students; to follow non-discriminatory University policies, to provide high quality administrative and academic services for exchange students and teachers, to promote activities supported by the Erasmus program and to stimulate the use of English language as a language of instruction.