



INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MARIBOR 2021–2030

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1 Introduction

1.1 introductory Words by the Rector

The University of Maribor is the second largest university in Slovenia. Seventeen faculties (Faculty of Economics and Business; Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science; Faculty of Energy Technology; Faculty of Civil Engineering, Transportation Engineering and Architecture; Faculty of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering; Faculty of Agriculture and Life Sciences; Faculty of Logistics; Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics; Faculty of Organizational Sciences; Faculty of Mechanical Engineering; Faculty of Tourism; Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security; Faculty of Health Sciences; Faculty of Arts; Faculty of Medicine; Faculty of Education; Faculty of Law) and other members of the university (University Library Maribor, Student Dormitories) act on 6 locations in Slovenia. Students and professors have the university library, Leon Štukelj Sports Centre, Post-Graduate Students' and Guest Professors' Guest House, as well as the Student Dormitories at their disposal.

The University of Maribor strives to become an open, sustainable and innovative eco-system, where all students and staff shall create with enthusiasm.

The University of Maribor's actions are based on values of honesty, creativity, free spirit, cooperation and exchange of knowledge in science, art and education.

With an ambition to become a globally visible innovation eco-system, the University of Maribor shall enhance its inclusion in the common European Higher Education Area and co-create and strengthen it by active participation.

1.2 Starting Points

In its strategic orientation, the University of Maribor follows the goals and principles of leading international organizations in the field of higher education and research. Thus, it strives for the realization of the goals of the EUA Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030, Incheon Declaration, the position paper by OECD till 2030, as well as the goals of UNESCO Sustainable Development Goals till 2030, the directives and declaration noted in the communique by the ministers of higher education from November 19th, 2020 (Rome Communique) and other papers relevant for the definition of higher education and research. In the field of mobility, the University of Maribor respects the rules and principles of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) and adopts the European Policy Statement for the realization of these as well as provides qualitative services for participants in mobility. The University of Maribor stands for respect of measures for a higher cohesion in the European Area mentioned by the Memo of the European Commission on Enhancing Innovation for a better development of less developed regions of the European Union.

On the national level, these goals are contained in the National Internationalization Strategy, the National Programme for Higher Education, the Strategy for Internationalization of Slovenian Science and Research (2018-2030), as well as the Research and Innovation Strategy of Slovenia (RISS).

The realization of the mentioned orientations and papers is contained in the Internationalization Strategy of UM as well as in the executive document European Policy Statement.

In the field of international relations, the University of Maribor follows the principles of openness, equal access to science and education, peace and respect for rights to sustainable and socially responsible development.

The work of the University of Maribor is based on the principles of quality assurance and development in the framework of the adopted model of a sustainable and socially responsible university. In the same way, the University of Maribor respects the needs of students and staff with less opportunities, especially handicapped students and students from socially inferior environments and supports them in the realization of their studies and other activities connected to their studies. The University of Maribor actively contributes to the fight against discrimination on any ground, but especially based on race, religion, gender, age, or opinion.

1.3 Main Objectives

In the field of internationalization, the University of Maribor follows three main objectives in line with the university's missions:

- development and conduction of an innovative, sustainable and development oriented qualitative education and research in the framework of mechanisms for strategic international cooperation,
- international study programmes attracting domestic students and students from strategic target countries,
- creation and constant improvement of an inclusive, friendly, and effective environment for all students and staff.

1.4 Long-term goals of the University of Maribor

To reach the main objectives and based on international documents and standards deriving from them, the University of Maribor sets the following long-term goals:

- strengthening international visibility of UM.
- development of different forms of education in international language(s).
- active co-creation of the European and global higher education and research area.
- fostering international mobility of staff and students.
- internationalization at home.
- harmonization of UM's services for domestic and international students and staff in line with the European principles and standards.
- cooperation in European university networks.
- the University of Maribor shall follow up on these goals with respect to horizontal priorities of the European Higher Education and Research Area, especially those deriving from sustainable development goals, as there are lifelong learning, equal rights, especially in the field of deficit STEM and KET professions, quality assurance.

2 Activities

2.1 Strengthening International Visibility of the University of Maribor

The University of Maribor shall actively be included in regional and European university associations and thus advocate the interests based on its main objectives. The University of Maribor shall provide means for the realization of an active participation at sessions of bodies of university associations and shall vote in the interest of its goals.

2.2 Development of different Forms of Education in International Language(s)

For the purpose of developing education in international language(s), the University of Maribor participated and shall participate in different European projects. Since 2020, UM has been a member of the European University Initiative ATHENA - Advanced Technology Higher Education Network Alliance. By active work in the mentioned alliance, it shall strive for setting aside obstacles for conducting of qualitative and internationally comparative interdisciplinary study programmes for talented and future oriented students and staff.

The University of Maribor is developing an international doctoral school that shall attract talented domestic and international students as well as successful professors.

Additional support shall be provided by the University of Maribor by inclusion in projects of the Erasmus+, CEEPUS and other Programmes, to which it gains access.

2.3 Active Co-creation of the European and Global Higher Education and Research Area

European Higher Education and Research Area is confronting competition mainly from American and developed Asian Higher Education and Research Areas. University of Maribor stands for university autonomy and the responsibility for participation in setting and creating conditions for actions and goals of European universities deriving out of it. By its human resources and infrastructure, as well as by running projects with strategic partners from higher education, science and industry from domains of the healthy and long-term active lifestyle in a green economy, digital transformation of society and resilience against a growing number of global crises (INNOVUM), University of Maribor shall establish better internationally and in this way productively contribute to added value in all fields of its actions. Special emphasis shall be put on associations, organizations and programmes:

- representing universities' interests (European University Association, Danube Rectors' Conference, Alps-Adriatic Rectors' Conference, UniAdriatic);
- dedicated to exchange among stakeholders for the societal development (working bodies of macro-regional strategies, as there are Steering and Working Groups of the Danube Strategy);
- dedicated to fostering cooperation with local, regional and international society (Enterprise Europe Network, Danube Transfer Centre, DEMOLA, KTT, DIH);
- dedicated to fostering connections between students and higher education teachers (Erasmus+ mobility projects and strategic partnerships, CEEPUS networks).
- Dedicated to support students in higher study levels, as well as researchers (Horizon Europe, multilateral and bilateral regional development programmes, ARRS, Joint Research Centre, EURAXESS).

The University of Maribor established its advantages and therefore shall concentrate on activities in the fields of (a) health, demographic change and well-being, (b) production of safe and qualitative food, sustainable agriculture and bio-economy, (c) climate actions, effectiveness of resources and raw materials, (d) smart, environment-friendly and holistic traffic as well as (e) an inclusive, innovative and secure society.

For the development of the University of Maribor, activity in the field of new cross-cutting technologies is important, as there are: ICT, digitalization with artificial intelligence, big data, energy-efficient systems, cybersecurity, internet of things and high performance computing.

In the international area, the University of Maribor shall seek resources by applications to calls of programmes and funds of the European Union (Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, ERDF, ESF, CEEPUS) and national programmes (ARRS).

2.4 Fostering International Mobility of Staff and Students

For the University of Maribor, international mobility of students and staff represents one of the key factors for development of a European identity and the fight against xenophobia and inequalities in society. Therefore, the University of Maribor, by participating in mobility projects of the European Union and regional programmes, as there is CEEPUS, as well as with the help of international scholarship funds, enable mobility for studies and placements to a maximum number of students and staff. With special measures in the framework of mobility projects and planning of human resource development, staff shall be motivated to longer term mobility in the framework of disposable means for reaching scientific excellence and a qualitative human resource development. For this purpose, the University of Maribor participates in the Erasmus+ programme and the international EURAXESS network.

Key activities for reaching of a higher number of student and staff mobility refer to realization of requests by the projects of Erasmus Without Paper and the European Student Card. Realization of these two projects is a condition for introduction of less demanding procedures of mobility management, a higher independence of students in the selection, organization and conduction of mobility as well as for an automatic recognition of knowledge and skills obtained abroad. The projects

shall contribute to an improvement of services offered to the University of Maribor's domestic and international students and to the disburdening from work in the conducting of mobility.

An important factor for student satisfaction with mobility is also cooperation between the University of Maribor with student associations, as there are for example Erasmus Student Network (ESN), IAESTE, AIESEC, ELSA, but within Erasmus+ Programme, mainly Erasmus Student Network.

2.5 Internationalization at Home

At the University of Maribor, we are aware that in the era till 2030, most of the students and staff will not take advantage of (multiple) international mobility. Therefore, the University of Maribor shall develop activities for internationalization at home, by opening access of domestic students to socializing with international students and professors, organizing learning of international languages and cultures as well as creating an international experience for students and staff at home.

At internationalization at home, special emphasis is put on transfer of international experiences to society. Thus, the University of Maribor shall organize visits of international students to elementary and secondary schools, where they shall present their countries and cultures. This way, internationalization shall overcome the framework of the university and contribute to a higher openness of the complete local society.

The University of Maribor develops an international doctoral school attracting best domestic and international students and professors.

The University of Maribor strives to become better visible, which it shall achieve also by organizing international scientific conferences to which it shall invite the best domestic and international scientists for speakers.

In the framework of the International Summer School, we intend to integrate already running or planned summer schools with a cultural and social programme as well as activities for international and domestic students.

2.6 Harmonization of UM's Services for Domestic and International students and Staff in line with the European Principles and Standards

Erasmus Charter for Higher Education is a right and obligation for the University of Maribor to cooperation in European internationalization projects. The University of Maribor has obliged to respect the rights of all participants in mobility and to realize equal treatment of domestic and international students. These rights refer to activities before, during and after mobility. Therefore, the University of Maribor shall constantly dedicate human and financial resources for reaching of access for all students to all services of the university. This refers to access to (physical and virtual) infrastructure, support of offices for international relations at the rector's office and the departments of UM, benefits for students (subsidized accommodation and meals) and access to education and research activities. Information support meant for students and staff shall be accessible through the EU master Portal and other websites (ALUMNI Club of the University of Maribor, student associations).

Thus, the University of Maribor shall take care that information support shall be harmonized with requests by Erasmus Without paper and the European Student Card.

3 Indicators

The University of Maribor conducts a quality assurance system of follow-up on set goals and the effectiveness of reaching these goals. Internationalization indicators are documented in the Action Plan of the University of Maribor 2021-2025 published on the university's website, on a short term also in annual work plans and annual reports by the University of Maribor as well as annual action plans.

