

UNIVERSITY OF ZADAR

STRATEGY 2011 - 2017

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION IN THE EUROPEAN AREA

Still at the end of the 14th century when it was founded as *Studium Generale Sancti Dominici Jadre*, the University of Zadar was, in the spirit of the times, primarily internationally oriented, regardless of the meaning of the term nationality in the last century of the Middle Ages. The Faculty of Arts and Humanities, the unofficial father of today's University founded in the middle of the last century had no *international* luck. The international cooperation at today's University of Zadar is seen as one of its most important strategic goals and more importantly - it seems that all the conditions are present to achieve this goal. The announced integration into the EU in 2013 should only contribute to that. All forms of cooperation that are already in place show that there is a huge interest of European and of the global academic community and its institutions for our University and that the condition is already such that if we look at it objectively, we are unable to cope with it in respect to the dynamics of the cooperation achievement. The international cooperation and its different aspects should now get diffused to the departments, interested individuals and projects; because not even the professional service organized in the best possible way couldn't compensate the interest that should be expressed by individuals. Already today at the University there are brilliant examples of international cooperation, both at the departmental level and at the level of individuals and projects, which proves that such cooperation is possible.

Strategic goal

To continue the development and improvement of all forms of international cooperation, primarily within the incoming and outgoing mobility of students, teachers and staff, followed by joint study programmes at all levels, joint international research and other projects and involvement in European programmes and projects.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION – INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The Study, adopted at the foundation of the University of Zadar in 2002, a prominent place was awarded to the international cooperation as a field of special interest for the development and affirmation of the University. In *Strategic Guidelines of the University until 2010*, it is also stated that the development of the international cooperation is one of the priorities of the University.

Following these determinants, in the *Erasmus Policy Statement* the University of Zadar adopted the European educational policy worked out for the most part in the Bologna process and expressed its willingness to participate in the changes that lead to the *European Higher Education Area* - EHEA. In the implementation of the Bologna Process major obstacles in the next six-year period will be: the lack of teaching and administrative staff, lack of space for education and accommodation of students and teachers in mobility. In the past years, the lack of staff was gradually resolved with the developmental work places. One should

hope that this model of staffing the universities will return to practice again. The lack of space will be permanently resolved only by building the *New Campus*.

Task 1.1.

Continue the international cooperation with countries in the immediate geographical environment.

Task 1.2.

Continue the establishment and execution of the joint study programmes (for the students in the region) at master and doctoral level.

Task 1.3.

Intensify the participation in the European university bodies where further guidelines for the improvement of the Bologna Process are created.

Task 1.4.

Systematically build the awareness at the University (through workshops, conferences, promotional material) on the importance of international cooperation for the quality of teaching and research at the University.

COLLABORATIVE UNIVERSITIES AND MOBILITY

The University of Zadar has signed bilateral international cooperation agreements with 53 foreign universities. The signing of bilateral cooperation agreements with the following institutions is under preparation: University of Central Oklahoma (USA), Alabama State University (USA), Teacher Training School Sv. Pius X in Tatum (Cameroon), University of West Hungary in Sopron (Hungary), the University of Johannesburg (South Africa) and the University College Loughborough (UK).

In the past year, the bilateral agreements regulating the Erasmus exchange students, teachers and administrative staff were signed. Bilateral agreements are the basis for the signing of the Erasmus bilateral agreements and up to the date of completion of this strategy were signed as follows: Austria - five, Bulgaria - one, Czech Republic - three, France - one, Ireland - one, Italy - five, Hungary - one, Germany - three, Poland - one, Portugal - one, Slovakia - one, Slovenia - two, Spain - four, Sweden - one, United Kingdom - one. Signed Erasmus bilateral agreements testify to the already agreed and achievable exchange programmes.

The mobility of students, teachers and administrative staff at the University of Zadar is constantly increased. For the academic year 2011/2012 the University was approved 80% of the requested budget for the Erasmus mobility. Mobility has increased in number from three involved in all forms of the mobility in the academic year 2005/2006 to 45 in the academic year 2010/2011.

It can be stated with reliability that the initial reluctance of students and teachers from engaging in the mobility programmes was the result of lack of knowledge about the possibilities and benefits offered by such programmes. Another reason was that student scholarships in some programmes do not cover the full costs. However, the coverage of all costs is not the primary reason for not involving, as CEEPUS programme covers all costs, and there is not much interest either.

Since the strategic objective of the European Commission is that by 2020, 20% of students participate in mobility and that the funds for that are provided to be allocated on the basis of annual competitions, the University will motivate and inform students and teachers about the benefits of the outbound mobility, because mobility is an important indicator of the excellence of the individual and the University. It is generally accepted that the excellence at all levels, with an attractive location of the University, is the most important element of inbound mobility.

Task 1.5.

Tend to come near the planned mobility rate of 15% of students by the year 2017.

Task 1.6.

Increase the outbound student mobility for 15% and the inbound student mobility for 10% every year with regard to the current state.

Task 1.7.

Encourage outbound teacher and professional administrative staff mobility by informing, educating and additional financial support (targeted funds).

Task 1.8.

Continue to use all the available mobility programmes outside the Erasmus programme and apply to the calls for applications that offer the financing of mobility.

Task 1.9.

Sign the future cooperation agreements with the universities that are ready and capable of signing the Erasmus bilateral agreements as well as ready to cooperate in forming the joint study programmes and to prepare together and apply for the research projects.

Task 1.10.

Plan to offer the courses in English language in every scientific field containing the total of 30 ECTS in one semester.

RECOGNITION OF STUDY PERIODS

The teacher and student exchange and mobility started even before the university policy documents were made. In this regard the University was flexible and cooperative to the individual interest for the period of study spent at the University. The documents required for the recognition of periods of study and for making provisions for mobility (Application Form, Learning Agreement and Transcript of Records) are used for two years already, both in English and in Croatian. Their content and visual identity was approved by the Senate. The Office for the academic recognition and recognition of the international study period was established at the University for candidates who wish to continue their education at the University. The Board for Academic Recognition and the Recognition of the International Study Period is acting as an advisory board. The Departmental councils and the ECTS coordinators are dealing with the recognition of periods of study at the university units.

Task 1.11.

Formalize the study period recognition, because there is no mobility without the recognition.

Task 1.12.

Inform the teachers, students and staff about the advantages of the mobility and about the rights and obligations deriving from it for all the participants.

UNIVERSITY OF ZADAR – INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

The University of Zadar is member of several university associations: EUA (*European University Association*), DRC (*Danube Rectors' Conference*), UniAdriatic, Alps-Adriatic Rectors' Conference (the University of Zadar presided in the academic year 2005/2006), IUC (*Inter University Centre*) in Dubrovnik, and from 2004 the University is the signer of the *Magna Charta Universitatum*. The University participates in several CEEPUS networks, and it has participated in 17 Tempus projects so far (four are still ongoing).

Task 1.13.

Keep the membership in the associations where the University is already a member, but at the same time strive that the teachers of the University become members of the governing and the working bodies of those associations.

Task 1.14.

Actively participate as a partner with AARC (*Alps Adria Rector's Conference*) and DRC (*Danube Rectors' Conference*) in development of the Danube Strategy.

JOINT PRAGRAMMEMES

In the field of development of joint studies, several departments have already gained experience working on projects financed by the Croatian Science Foundation and the European Union through TEMPUS projects. The work on developing several joint programmes is in the progress. Previous experience tells us that the new programmes are implemented if the formal and financial conditions were created. It is expected that the best cooperation will be achieved with our neighbouring countries, because it was very intense so far. The University will work on starting new teaching programmes from bachelor to doctoral level in the neighbouring countries through the projects with the Erasmus partners in order to build the teaching core in the less developed countries so that they could become independent in the future. There is a significant emphasis on regional cooperation.

Task 1.15.

Bring together all the data and coordinate the work on the joint programmes.

Task 1.16.

Enhance the team of the Office for ECTS in order to ensure the collection, analysis and the dissemination of all the information as well as formal and legal provisions on joint programmes.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TEAM

The internationalization of administrative staff, teaching staff and students is currently in various stages. In the future we will strive to achieve the balanced realization of the mobility in all three groups. It is assumed that it will take several years until these relations **are brought into equilibrium**. Given the current availability of personnel working with the international exchange programmes, primary consideration will be given to the exchange of students. More intensive exchange of teachers and staff could be realized only when the International Office staff is enhanced. Until then, the individual initiative of teaching and administrative staff mobility will be encouraged. In that area it is necessary to reach an agreement with the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports first. The student organizations should be more included in the process of internationalization – for example in the organization of the *Welcome days* for foreign students.

Task 1.17.

In the next six-year period the conditions for opening a new position in the International Relations Office should be created.

Task 1.18.

Organize intensive programmes on a regular basis to inform the students, teachers and administrative staff about the benefits of participating in international cooperation programmes.