



WP2_HUMAN CAPACITY BUILDING

(WP2.7) PRACTICAL TOOLKIT ON ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT OF IROs

VERSION 1 June 2020

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Coordinator: Prof. Maurizio Cisi

Editors: Francesca Alice Centrone and Barbara D'Agati

Contributions by: all UNICAC partners and from Cristina Barettini and Oreste Calliano UNITO



1. Introduction

Why a toolkit: goals and strategy in the framework of the WP2

The objective of WP2 is to provide the staff of partner countries - PC - International Relations Offices – IROs - (technical coordinators and technicians) with managerial expertise and specific skills and tools in several thematic areas related to the efficient administration of IROs and development of IR and Intellectual capital -IC- policies and services. This will be achieved through specific trainings prepared and delivered by the EU High Educations Institutions – HEIs - staff members participating in the project. Each of the 3 Training Modules has been carefully prepared taking into account PC HEIs needs and EU partners' expertise, as well as the intercultural dimension and according to a Train the Trainers approach.

The training period has been carefully phased along Y1 and it was supposed to finish with a practical training in May 2020 (currently postponed due to the COVID 19 pandemic), which also included an online workshop about the management of International Mobility for training and research purposes (delivered by INCOMA on June, 3 2020). After theoretical trainings, participants are supposed to accomplish short learning mobilities to EU HEIs to test the knowledge learned in a job shadowing programme. Such mobilities are currently postponed due to the COVID 19 emergency.

The WP2 foresees also the development of a Manual on the Organisation and Management of IROs, a practical working toolkit to be continuously updated and improved and disseminated in the different workshops and conferences scheduled at national level in each PC to spread and maximise the impact of the UNICAC project.

1.1 Criteria and methodological approach

The internationalisation applied to higher education institutions (HEIs) can be described as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education” (Knight, 2003, p. 2). According to Knight (1997), internationalization requires two complementary strategies to enhance the international dimensions of the HEIs: programme strategies and organisational strategies. The former include the more “conventional” education, research and university services, and the latter involve organisational initiatives to facilitate the international dimension through management issues (Delgado-Márquez et al., 2011).

In the framework of the UNICAC project in order to collect feedback, expectations and contributions



from all partners we first used the UNICAC platform, then we drafted and shared a specific questionnaire, finally we dedicated also a section of the platform PADLET (which is apparently more easily accessible by all countries and HEIs) to collect useful inputs.

The main desired and expected goals and outcomes firstly related to the WP2 of the UNICAC project can be synthesized as follows:

- Define criteria and methodological approach for improving of functions of IRO;
- Improve the capacity building of University in internationalization of education;
- Provide quality of education and prepare for International Accreditation;
- Increase the number and the quality of the international mobility of students and staff;
- Improve and provide recommendations on staff selection for IRO with abilities of working with foreigners and projects;
- Quality control and feedback mechanisms;
- Knowledge transfer among partner universities in Internationalisation of university;
- Improve Internationalisation of research activities, participation on International programs/projects;
- Develop joint PhD programmes;
- Increase international student recruitment – Dissemination of Pamphlet;
- Improve the development of research and educational activities;
- Enhance the capacity building of HR at International relations and improving office work.

1.2 Human capacity building in HEIs: challenges and implications between human capital (HC) and intellectual capital (IC) issues.

Worldwide most nations and institutions increasingly view higher education institutions (HEIs) as crucial to providing the human capital to allow countries to be (or become) more competitive in the global economy (Fairweather, 2006; Jongbloed, 2010). Quality and access are two important key words in relation to human and intellectual capital and HEIs, and they are strictly connected to the growth of quality assurance, accreditation and other mechanisms of quality in mass higher education systems (Huisman & Westerheijden, 2010). The Bologna Process and Lisbon Strategy in Europe can be considered an interesting ‘case study’ for their intention to create greater access to and mobility within HEIs through international cooperation and academic exchanges. The Lisbon Strategy of 2000 officially declared the crucial role of HEIs in the economic future of Europe. To promote student mobility, key components of the Bologna Process were a common credit system for student work



and a common structure for bachelor's and master's degrees. Many EU HEIs increased their offer of courses in English to encourage greater student mobility (Huisman et al., 2015).

2. Partners needs and expectations

This section of the toolkit is aimed at highlighting expectations and orientations made by the UNICAC partners about the better and suitable product and format to be follow for the elaboration of the WP2.7, collecting also the main practical suggestions came from the consortium.

Here we can find a selection of the first inputs collected by the partners:

- Student exchange platform (software), instruction how to implement International mobility for students and teachers;
- Knowledge transfer in joint/dual/double degree program development with partner universities (case studies);
- International ranking systems QS, THE. How to implement Academic/Employment reputation (case studies);
- Research/Education funding opportunities in EU for developing countries. What are the requirements and how to apply for grants, how to write good application, project proposals;
- Organizing international events: conference, seminar, symposium (case studies);
- Access to Information Resources in EU partner universities (Library resources, ex. CAREN);
- Organizing training courses on International Accreditation of university. EU university experience;
- Organization of training courses on Quality Assurance in university education based on EU experience.

An important issue to be considered for further developments of this toolkit but also to improve the future communication channels used by UNICAC is that many partners asked for a more digital way to implement the toolkit as a website, APP or some platform, more simple and efficient, where members can clearly see the needed information, without being be confused by a variety of messages.



3. The UNICAC project: main contents and outcomes from the implemented trainings

The 1st Training: Organisation and Management of IROs

Tashkent (Uzbekistan). Delivered by UNITO and focused on objectives of internationalisation in Higher Education, building partnerships and networks, and sharing of knowledge amongst the participants. The main benefit of the 1st training module was the direct communication with foreign university staff for the development of international relations. The experience of other universities was studied. Participants were accompanied in how to create a strategy and goals for internationalization in their own universities. A specific part of the training has been dedicated to sharing with practical experience of UNITO, reviewing the structure and organization of SME IRO, the History of developments and critical analysis. The participants also appreciated the practical advices received during the training sessions.

The training topics included: methods of setting goals and for determining the status of internationalization of own university, kind of partnerships and aims of partnerships. This training helped the involved IROs to enhance knowledge on the following topics:

- How partnerships developed at your university and by whom?
- What kind of obstacle exist in making partnerships?

The main contents of the first training have been as follow:

- ☐ Action plan of Internationalization;
- ☐ Analysing current status of the internationalization of own higher education institution;
- ☐ Building partnerships and networks, preparing international cooperation agreements;
- ☐ Domestic and international funds. How to develop successful proposal?

The 2nd training: International Cooperation Agreements and Networks

Khujand (Tajikistan). This training was provided by Laurea and served to provide the staff of International relationship offices with managerial expertise and specific skills in thematic areas related to the efficient administration of international relationship offices and development of internationalization. Throughout this learning module, the participants discussed topics such as the international networks and cooperation agreements, as well as financing opportunities for cooperation programs.

The theoretical part about Internationalization objectives and International cooperation – different forms of cooperation at HEI level and practical part about building networks between HEIs using



different tools, in particular the case and experience of Laurea has been considered particularly interesting. Also, the experience of the PC HEIs from Tajikistan, China and Uzbekistan about funding opportunities was a useful information. In the framework of this meeting the other opportunities of cooperation between partners was discussed and agreed about signing a Memorandum of Understanding – MoU- between all consortia members

During the training were considered issues such as: identification of potentials, and development of national recommendations for international cooperation, development of a cross- regional network for a structure dialogue on internationalization, transfer and promotion of HEIs in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and China.

The 3th training: academic teaching and research cooperation related tools, methodologies and best practices

Northwestern Polytechnical University (China). This training has been provided by University of Sevilla - US. Fostering Quality Teaching in Higher Education: Methodologies and Good Practices. Quality Research of Higher Education Institutions: Goals, Strategies, and Achievements. Conclusions and Recommendations.

all the members introduced their own universities firstly. Then, each university shared their approaches about the quality teaching. They presented the good practices and policies like joint international degree and exchange students. As the leader, Mr. Angel introduced the good strategies and practical cases in US like flexible length of schooling, online classes and full credit system. After that, all the members discussed the question about how to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Also, they discussed the academic university rankings.

Thanks to the training the partners HEIs have identified some main important topics for the development of HEIs:

- Implementing the Bologna Process in the European Higher Education (US)
- Teaching & Learning: Best Practices in European Higher Education Institutions (US)
- Approaches to Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Competences based Degree Programmes in China Universities:
- Opportunities to cooperate with Chinese HEIs
- Comparison between national research priorities



The fourth training: EU - Central Asia - China cooperation with special focus on HEIs

This training was expected to be done in May 2020 at the University of Torino and partially delivered by INCOMA. Simultaneously, the practical missions of some IROs representatives from the partners countries would have been arranged in the central and department IROs offices (including strategic visits and the concrete involvement of the participants in the daily activities) of the EU HEIs. However, such activities have been postponed due to the COVID 19 emergency and according with the future developments of the COVID 19 emergency, they will be ideally planned in autumn 2020.

Despite the impossibility to carry out the expected 4^o training in Torino due to the COVID 19 emergency, the partners feedbacks have allowed to identify some main key points to be stressed when the training on EU- Central Asia- China cooperation with special focus on HEIs will take place as follows:

- the development of cooperation strategy between Uzbek-Tajik-Chinese universities using the experience of EU universities;
- the analysis of the possibilities of future exchange programs and double degree programs among the participating universities
- trends in Internationalization in HE in EU
- HEIs cooperation in EU: best practices
- the theory and objectives of Strategic Partnership, Knowledge Alliances in EU HEIs and the potential of third countries (including Central Asia) to be involved in these opportunities
- different types of mobilities VET learns and adult education for HE and the potential of third countries (including Central Asia) to be involved in these opportunities
- EU-Central Asia-China platform for maintaining and expanding cooperation in HE



4. Best practices from EU and extra EU partners

BEST PRACTICES AND LAUREA'S PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL STAFF MOBILITY

Internationality at work

Laurea's staff has a key role in the internationalisation of our institution.

The development of international competence of Laurea staff is supported for example by mobility programmes. The objectives of staff mobility initiatives are:

- competence development: to provide staff arriving or going on international mobility initiatives (exchanges, projects, events) and, through them, other staff and students at Laurea and Laurea's operating region with opportunities for internationalisation and sharing of expertise between partners.
- to market Laurea and export Laurea's competence.
- to promote Laurea's international networking.
- to offer staff opportunities for professional and personal development.
- to improve the multiculturalism and language skills of staff.

International staff mobility includes both teacher and staff exchanges to and from Laurea's partner institutions as well as enterprises, conferences etc. Laurea's extensive partner network supports the internationalisation.

Internationality and internationalisation are also supported by offering training in English language and cultural competence through different networks.

Moreover, it is the responsibility of all Laurea staff members to make sure that Laurea is and stays functionally a bilingual university of applied sciences, which aims to generate all relevant information in both Finnish and English. Producing the text in both languages is the responsibility of the original producer of the information.

Staff mobility from Laurea

Participation in international exchanges and projects forms part of Laurea's pedagogical, regional development, R&D and service. International activities should be included in everyone's personal



development plans. International staff mobility and project participation should generally be known of at the time of making work plans, and approved and included in these plans.

- ☐ case study: International Calendar, where we collect information on international weeks and conferences from our partner institutions.
- ☐ case study: Encouragement video interviews and blog writings from mobile staff
<http://showcase.laurea.fi/blogi/henkilokunnan-blogit/international-laurea/>

Staff mobility to Laurea

Participation in the planning and implementation of mobility to Finland will also be an opportunity to develop one's international competence and that of students and Laurea as a whole. The process for international staff mobility to Finland are described on the staff's intranet.

- ☐ case study: International Week(s) Laurea organizes to its partner institutions annually

Principles of international staff mobility in Laurea

One of the objectives of the Finnish Ministry of Culture and Education policies on promoting internationality in higher education and research 2017–2025 “Working together for the world’s best education” <http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/79438/okm11.pdf?sequence=3> is: A genuinely international higher education community coaches students for the mobility period and to operate and work in culturally diverse, global environments. The international competence and connections of staff in higher education institutions enhance the quality of research and teaching. One of the tasks of a higher education institution is to ensure that teaching staff have opportunities for incorporating international mobility periods in their work.

In accordance with one of the objectives of Laurea’s strategy, the vocational competence generated at Laurea is unique and meets the needs of the international working life. As our students graduate, they will enter an international world – internationality is a natural part of work and studies for everyone. Laurea’s staff have a key role in the internationalisation of our UAS.

The development of staff’s international competence is supported by means of international mobility programmes, among other things. The objective of international staff mobility is to:

- develop competence: provide staff participating in international mobility to and from Finland (staff mobility, projects, international events) and, subsequently, Laurea’s other staff and students as well as the Laurea region with an opportunity to increase



internationalisation and competence-sharing among partners

- market Laurea and export Laurea's competence
- promote international networking for Laurea
- provide staff with opportunities to develop their vocational expertise and personal competence
- improve staff's multicultural and language skills

International mobility is part of Laurea's pedagogical, regional development and research, development and service operations. The international operations should also be part of the personal development plan, which is drawn up in the development discussion. When drawing up working time plans, international trips and participation in projects, exchange etc. by staff are, as a rule, known and approved and included in the plan. The person travelling is obligated to keep their supervisor up to date throughout the process, from planning to implementation.

Drawing up shared principles of international mobility has been deemed necessary for several reasons. Staff should have equal opportunities to develop their competence in international settings as well.

From the perspective of Laurea's operations, it is important that resources are allocated to operations that are in line with Laurea's internationalisation objectives. The strategic development project "Laurea International Partners 2020", which identifies the key international partner institutions, was carried out in 2017. The goal is to deepen the partnership with these higher education institutions, in particular.

Principles of international mobility by mobility type

Erasmus+ mobility - Teaching and training abroad

"Staff of higher education institutions can teach or obtain training during an international mobility period. Correspondingly, staff from foreign higher education institutions can come to teach at higher education institutions in Finland. Funding for the mobility period is granted by one's own higher education institution.

The teacher and staff exchange should be goal-oriented and linked with the strategies of the higher education institutions.

Staff mobility for teaching

Teacher exchange targets foreign higher education institutions and is based on bilateral



partnership agreements signed by the institutions. In addition, a representative of a foreign company may be invited to teach in a Finnish higher education institution.

- The minimum duration of teacher exchange is 2 working days and the maximum is 2 months.
- The minimum weekly teaching obligation is 8 hours during teacher exchange. The 8-hour requirement also applies to exchange which lasts less than one week.
- The teaching to be provided is included in the regular curriculum of the target institution.
- A work plan including the content and objectives of the visit will be prepared in advance.

Staff mobility for training

The Erasmus+ programme provides the staff of a higher education institution with an opportunity to develop their vocational competence. An on-the-job learning period or a visit to a higher education institution or other private or public organisation in another country to obtain training are possible for any staff members of the higher education institution. The nature of the exchange can, for example, be a study visit, a workshop or an on-the-job learning period. Attending conferences is not supported through the Erasmus+ programme.

- The minimum duration of staff exchange is 2 working days and the maximum is 2 months.
- The nature of the exchange is training, development of one's own organisation, and sharing experiences.
- A work plan including the content and objectives of the visit will be prepared in advance."

Laurea's principles:

- Exchange activities primarily target higher education institutions that are identified as key partners and are either a scheduled international week or a separate teaching or training programme designed jointly.
- An application process is used in Erasmus+ Global mobility.
- The contents of the exchange should be closely connected with the person's work.
- The goals and content will also be agreed with the destination institution and they



will be included in the mobility agreement. A brief description of the goals of the exchange will also be included in the travel plan.

- The experiences gained during the exchange will be shared in events organised by the campuses, unit or Laurea or in a blog, for example.

Other exchange with partner institutions

- The aforementioned principles also apply to the externally funded exchange activities organised under other mobility programmes, such as Nordplus or FIRST, taking into consideration any special requirements of the programmes.
- Depending on the academic year and the destination, Erasmus+ Global Mobility funding may also be available for mobility to partner institutions outside Europe. The application periods are announced separately, and the participants will be selected jointly with the destination higher education institutions. The aforementioned principles apply to these exchange programmes as well.

Conference attendance

- As a rule, external funding from a project, for example, should be secured for conference attendance.
- A conference trip can also be combined with Erasmus+ mobility by visiting a partner institution for a minimum of two days during the trip, observing the principles of the Erasmus+ programme during the visit.
- Conference attendance without external funding requires a presentation (an introduction, a poster, etc.) and the publication of an associated article. The supervisor will make the final decision once the poster has been approved.
- The experiences gained during the conference trip will be shared in events organised by the campuses, unit or Laurea or in a blog, for example.

Trips with a student group

- A trip that is part of a course and taken with a group of students, who will earn credits from it, will be agreed with the supervisor.
- Erasmus+ funding or funding from other mobility programmes can be used if the trip meets the funding criteria



- Project funding may also be used.

Trips associated with projects

- The project manager and supervisor will make the decision within the scope of the project funding and resources.

Trips associated with international business operations / education export

- The trips may concern marketing, planning or implementation of business operations. The supervisor will make the decision within the scope of the business operations and the unit's funding.

Teaching, lectureships or other work abroad by invitation

- To be agreed on a case-by-case basis; the supervisor will make the decision after consulting the HR services.
- This type of mobility can be carried out so that the person participating receives compensation from the partner institution and takes time off (leave, holiday, unpaid leave) from Laurea for the duration of the trip.
- This may also be included in Laurea's working time plan so that the work compensation paid by the destination institution is submitted to Laurea. If the destination institution only compensates for a portion of the working time, the share of the total working time will be determined and the remaining working time will be planned accordingly.
- An employee taking time off from Laurea in order to work abroad will pay for all expenses associated with the trip (including travel insurance).
- If a portion of work is carried out abroad, the supervisor, employee and HR will jointly agree the process for handling travel expenses and per diem allowances.

Best practices with practical information Student mobilities in Laurea

We have gathered guidelines and instructions through the whole mobility process, and they are divided in to three sections before, during and after the study exchange:



BEFORE STUDY EXCHANGE

Discussion

- When you want to start planning your study exchange make an appointment with your head of student affairs/tutor teacher and discuss with him/her the suitable contents and timing of your exchange/traineeship.
- The study exchange can take place during the second or third year of study.
- There is no set time for going on international traineeships; you can apply according to the schedule of your personal study plan
- When the contents and timing of your exchange have been agreed upon with the head of student affairs/tutor teacher contact the intl. planning officer in order to find a suitable exchange destination for you.

Information sources

- Information about Laurea's international cooperation partner institutions as well as former exchange students' experiences are in the mobility platform
- The [International Student Mobility map](#) gives an overview of Laurea's partner network around the world.
- Brochures and other printed material are available from the offices and/or International bulletin boards, libraries, the international services.
- You can also visit international events organised on Laurea's campuses for further details.
- Laurea does not send students to high risk areas so please check the [Foreign Ministry's news](#) regarding the country. If you are uncertain about a specific area/country, please contact your international planning officer before deciding on the destination.

Criteria for study exchange

- Good language skills, which imply that the student is able to manage in the language academically and various professional situations. Erasmus+ destinations have their own requirements for language skills
- Flexibility, initiative, ability to accept diversity and good interaction skills.
- Awareness and knowledge of Finland, potential to be an ambassador for Finland and Laurea.



- The credits completed during the exchange abroad have to be included in the Personal curriculum, extra credits cannot be completed during the exchange.
- Progress and completion (as required) of previous studies in Finland.
- First priority is given to students who have not been on exchange before

Laurea's internal application:

Application period

- The internal application period will open at the beginning of January.
- The deadline for study exchange applications for the following academic year is **18th of February** of each year. An additional application deadline for remaining exchanges is **15th of September**.
- There are several info sessions, exchange fairs etc. organised before and during the application period. Information about these will be provided in student announcements.

Application instructions

- Check your exchange destinations as described above
- Applications to international study exchange should be sent through the electronic mobility platform system
- On the application you will also be asked to attach a **Motivation letter** to the form so make sure you have the text ready in a file on your computer before filling in the application. The motivation letter is meant for Laurea's coordinators to help them in making the student selections to the exchange destinations. The recommended length for a motivation letter is about one page and you can write e.g. about the following matters in it:
 - What kind of studies or working tasks have you planned to complete during your exchange?
 - Are you applying mainly for studies in your own field or in some other field?
 - What kind of competences will you develop during traineeship?
 - What are your expectations regarding the exchange?
 - Why are you applying for exchange?
 - How will the exchange support your personal learning and career prospects?
- If you apply to several destinations (you can put altogether 3 choices on the application form) you can write about all of them in the same letter. Remember to also write your name on the motivation letter.



- **If you are applying for exchange studies** you will also be asked to attach a preliminary plan of what you want to study at the host institution. You can emphasize your first choice of destination in the plan. The idea of the plan is to show that you have researched the study offer of your destination and thought about what courses you could take there.

Interviews and decisions

- All applicants are interviewed and the interviews are organised during March.
- The decisions are made at the end of March / beginning of April.
- The decisions are made based on your application and motivation letter, the interview and your degree programme's recommendation.

Preparations

Planning the study exchange and application to host university

Once your internal application for exchange has been approved at Laurea, the next step is to apply to the host university according to their instructions. International Planning Officers will guide you with this process, and they will inform you how to proceed.

- Prerequisite for a successful study exchange is that the credits completed abroad can be transferred fully to your degree at Laurea. Studies completed abroad can be transferred either to your complementary studies, or to your compulsory studies, so be sure to study the course offerings of the host university well!
- You will need to fill out a Learning Agreement (a requirement in Erasmus+ exchanges), in some cases already when applying to the host university, but mostly after you have been accepted to the host.
- The Learning Agreement is approved by tutor teacher / degree programme coordinator as well as the equivalent people at your host institution.
- Forms need to be filled in and approved prior to departure.

Orientation studies for exchange

- Those chosen to go on study exchange should complete the compulsory orientation studies as project studies in Optima 'Go abroad' (3cr) before exchange.
- Also students going on traineeships are recommended to complete the orientation studies.



- All students elected to go abroad on exchange/traineeship will be invited to the orientation studies.

DURING STUDY EXCHANGE

Executing the studies abroad

- Carry out your studies according your personal study plan. You may change the plan during the exchange, but all changes must be approved by your tutor teacher and the coordinator at the receiving institution.
- If your study plan changes at the host institution fill in the Changes to the original Learning Agreement section. The changes have to be accepted by the home institution and the host institution (e.g. by email).
- Complete assignments for Go Abroad study unit.
- Participate in the discussion in Go Abroad workspace.
- At the end ask for a certificate of studies completed (e.g. Transcript of Records, which shows the list of courses taken, the credits gained as well as the local grades and possibly ECTS points) You'll need the certificate for recognition of studies after your exchange.

Remember the contact to Laurea

- Maintain contact with Laurea's and the host institution's international coordinators. Following the activities of Laurea and your field of study makes it easier to come back.
- Market Laurea as an opportunity for student exchange to students at the host institution. You can use the communications material about Laurea in English.

Other important matters

- Remember that you are responsible for your health and well-being while being abroad, consider the health and safety issues, e.g. cautions regarding automobile travelling, accident prevention, nutrition, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, contraceptives, protection from HIV/AIDS/sexually transmitted infections.
- All people undergo psychological as well as physical and social adjustments to new cultures. So called "culture shock" is actually a positive indicator that the person is involved with the host culture. It is helpful to interact between representatives of home and host cultures, e.g. international students and the tutor students from the host country. Working on managing the stress that is caused by



cultural adjustment is better than trying to eliminate it. (You can get peer support from other students on exchange in the Going Abroad workspace.)

AFTER STUDY EXCHANGE

Reporting on the exchange

- In order to receive the 2nd payment of your grant and finalise your study exchange reporting, you should follow the following steps:
 1. Attach the following documents
 - Letter of Confirmation (proves the actual dates of your studies abroad, should be signed at the end of your exchange at the host university)
 - Learning Agreement fully signed by all three parties (student, tutor teacher, host university)
 - If you had changes to your learning agreement, please make sure you have reported those changes in the learning agreement during mobility part. You need to attach both the original learning agreement and possible changes to it
 - Transcript of records

Recognition of the studies

- Make an appointment for an evaluation discussion with your tutor teacher and/or international planning officer.
- Fill in the form 'Recognition of studies/placements completed during international mobility' to have your studies registered. The recognition is done by your tutor teacher, campus representative or Head of Student Affairs
- The recognition of studies/traineeship should be done within one month after you have received your transcript of records from the host institution.
- Laurea uses the ECTS system (where 1 credit is equivalent to 27 hours of work) as the normal credit accumulation system.

Sharing the experience

- Participate in the return orientation (you will receive an invitation to your email).
- Assist other students interested in foreign exchanges and market student exchanges at Laurea



for instance in international events or orientations.

- You can continue with internationalisation by acting e.g. as an international tutor student.

Internationalisation at home

Study units related to internationalisation

All degree programmes include study units related to internationalisation, and you can also choose studies from another degree programme's study offer.

Studying in a foreign language

Studying in a foreign language gives a student an opportunity to internationalise not only through language studies but also with the help of internationally emphasised curriculum and multicultural peer group. Especially for foreign degree students and those on exchanges, Laurea's foreign- language teaching opens doors into professionalism based on both Finnish and multicultural roots. Laurea's wide-ranging language programme offers opportunities for studying both well-known and unusual languages and cultures.

Student tutoring

An effective way to acquire international skills is to become a student tutor for international students and obtain practical experience in international work during your studies. A tutor will welcome and guide new foreign students arriving at Laurea in practical issues and leisure activities. In addition especially the exchange tutors perform various kinds of tasks related to internationalisation together with Laurea's international planning officers, thus acquiring skills related to internationalisation that will be useful in working life. Student's language and culture skills and skills in guidance and networking develop. Laurea's student tutoring system is active, supporting not only the tutors' internationalisation but naturally also Laurea's foreign students. The student tutors provide very important support for incoming foreign students. Training is organised twice a year and exchange tutors also have their own additional meeting.

UNITO/ITALY

The international dimension at UniTO concerns:

- about 4,600 students with foreign nationality (a.y. 2019-20)
- over 25 international double-degree programs/joint degree programs



- Marco Polo and Turandot projects for Chinese students
- 17 courses taught in English language (a.y. 2019-20))
- over 100 doctorates in joint-supervision and 2 international PhD courses
- 1,300 agreements for Erasmus+ mobility for students, trainees, researchers, teachers
- programs for Visiting Professor
- over 500 academic cooperation agreements with universities and research institutions from 80 countries
- the Italo-French University for the cooperation between French and Italian research institutions and universities
- development cooperation with non-EU countries

Subsequently more specific programmes and initiatives will be more in depth described.

4.1.1. Marco Polo and Turandot projects

Marco Polo project is a program aimed at providing Chinese students who wish to study at an Italian University but have no Italian competency the opportunity to obtain a University Enrolment Visa for those undergraduate and postgraduate degree programs which reserved places for Marco Polo students, on the condition that students take a 10 or 11 month Italian language course prior to the university enrolment. Students may choose the language course they wish to attend among the courses offered by the universities or language schools participating in the Marco Polo project. Students who at the end of the language course obtain the B1 or higher-level certificate of the Italian Language Proficiency Test will meet the language proficiency entry requirement.

4.1.2. Italo-French University

The Italo-French University/French-Italian University (UIF/UFI) was established on October 6th, 1998 as a result of an intergovernmental agreement signed in Florence. The UIF/UFI promotes and actively supports the cooperation between French and Italian research institutions and universities. It acts as a funding agency in order to:

- foster academic cooperation between Italy and France, with respect to both teaching and research
- contribute to the implementation of joint programs and initiatives
- promote and support scientific and/or technological joint research activities
- support the development of HEI consortia including other EU countries.



The main activities and programme promoted by the UIF/UFI are as follows.

Vinci Program. The goal of this Program is to promote students, researchers and professor's mobility within a French-Italian academic space, while boosting the exchange of methodologies, teaching experiences, refinement of language skills and the establishment of a scientific network of excellence.

Galileo Program. This program is managed by the Italian-French University for the Italian part, and by the MEIRIES and Campus France for the French side. The goal of the Galileo Program is to develop scientific collaborations between Italian and French institutions and research laboratories on joint projects and to promote the mobility of groups of young scientists coming from Italian or French institutions/research centres.

Visiting Professor Program. The Italo-French University supports Italian universities interested in hosting Visiting Professors (teachers, researchers or professionals) coming from French universities, research centres or private companies.

Scientific Label Program UIF/UFI. Since 2007, the Italo-French University awards its label to Italo-French initiatives with high cultural and scientific value. In the period between 2007 and 2018 the UIF has awarded the Label, sometimes accompanied by a financing, to 257 projects frequently proposed by prestigious institutions.

Jointly-supervised doctoral theses award 2020. The Italo-French University grants two awards of € 1.500 each as a recognition for jointly-supervised PhD theses completed within the last two years in the context of the Vinci program (cap. II and III). The awards are intended for humanistic-social works as well as for scientific ones.

4.1.3 Hub TO-CHINA

The TOChina Hub is an integrated knowledge hub established to engage China not merely as a field of research, but as an indispensable partner in the education of future generations of cosmopolitan citizens and competent professionals.

The University of Torino has developed the TOChina Hub in cooperation with ESCP Business School (Turin Campus) and the Torino World Affairs Institute (T.wai) to promote an innovative model of academic cooperation with select Chinese partners.

Supported by two of Italy's largest banking foundations – Compagnia di San Paolo, through its International Affairs program, and Fondazione CRT –, as well as by the Torino Chamber of Commerce, the TOChina Hub works to provide theory-informed knowledge, policy-relevant insights



and practical know-how on China's morphing identities, socio-economic structures, institutions, and policies.

4.1.6 The Unesco Chair in Sustainable Development and Territory Management

It was established in 2010 at the University of Turin to promote an integrated system of research, training, information and documentation in the field of sustainable development and management of territory and facilitating international cooperation and dissemination of research results between research institutions and universities in Italy and in the world, with particular interest to Latin America and the Euro-Mediterranean region.

4.1.7 Scholars at Risk

It is an international network of institutions and individuals, begun at the University of Chicago in 1999, whose mission it is to protect scholars and promote academic freedom. By arranging temporary academic positions at member universities and colleges, Scholars at Risk offers safety to scholars facing grave threats, so scholars' ideas are not lost and they can keep working until conditions improve and they are able to return to their home countries. Scholars at Risk also provides advisory services for scholars and hosts, campaigns for scholars who are imprisoned or silenced in their home countries, monitoring of attacks on higher education communities worldwide and leadership in deploying new tools and strategies for promoting academic freedom and improving respect for university values everywhere.

TUIT/UZBEKISTAN

Nowadays, many universities of Uzbekistan lead double-degree programmes with foreign universities. For example, joint faculty in TUIT-BSUIR which students' study for two years in Tashkent and two years in Minsk (Belarus). Such kind of programmes nowadays have in many universities in Uzbekistan: NUU(UZ)-HIT (Israel), NUU(UZ)-KSU (Russia).

XJU/CHINA

In China, there is joint training between universities, such as XinJiang university and Xi'an Jiaotong University. In four years of undergraduate study, students will spend two years at xinjiang university and two years at Xi'an Jiaotong University with a joint degree.



IET/TSUC

From the perspective of IRO staffs most of us say the good suggestions for the Internationalisation is a Network. Expanding network requires appropriate staff and again it brings us for overall capacity building, in particular the place of learning foreign languages for HEI staff. IET TSUC since 2008 has full degree programs offered in English. That was a key resource during fostering internationalization in 2017-2020 at IET TSUC. Because just in a very short period IR of IET TSUC had a great work using the potentials, which we were building since 2008. Regarding why Network is prioritized – most of the significant achievements in IR was through personal contacts and networking. Most of the Central Asian HEIs are not paying attention or not investing in big Networking events of different associations like European Association for International Education (EAIE), because of high cost and absence of allocated budget for this. However, IET TSUC is trying to participate in such events, so in last 2 years participation of IRO staff at Eastern European Universities Association.

5. Emerging practices and main challenges. The impact of an emergency situation (as COVID 19) on the internationalisation of HEIs between constraints and alternative solutions

Initially the partners HEIs have identified the following main emerging practices and related challenges:

1. -New modern technologies;
2. -Digital learning, smart education;
3. -Distance learning lack of experience;
4. -Implementation of ECTS;
5. -Lack of knowledge in Language

How it can be seen most of these inputs are related with the big issue of the use of ICT to enhance, make smarter and closer HEIs and people. Strictly connected with this challenge is the role carried out by the digital in facing the COVID 19 emergency. For such reason a specific section of the WP2.7 toolkit is dedicated to show and describe how the different partners IROs and countries are dealing to manage the effects of the COVID 19 on the internationalisation of HEIs.



Laurea University of Applied Sciences

Overview

Laurea had been preparing for various scenarios in a systematic and risk-based manner before the closing of the campuses due to outbreak of Covid-19 in Finland in March. Collaboration on preparations was goal-oriented and successful with all members of Laurea community and stakeholders. After that all the recommendations and regulations have been decided by a preparation working group set up by Laurea's President. Laurea has followed carefully the recommendations from the leading national institution, the [Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare](#).

With these decisions, our goal is to provide all members of our community with safe working conditions and continuation of teaching for students. Our focus is on actions ensuring the continuity of our operations.

For its part, Laurea wants to bear its responsibility for not spreading the virus in our community and not making members of our community, or anyone else, ill. At the same time, we wanted to prevent members of our community from being quarantined abroad with these guidelines. The guidelines have been created taking into account every Laurea employee's right to safe and healthy working.

The rapid development of Corona situation has been carefully monitored by Laurea Management with support of Safety and Security Director. The Laurea's intranet has been the platform for continuous information sharing. The intranet has been updated regularly based on the evolvement of the coronavirus.

Due to potential corona virus exposures revealed over the weekend in Mid-March, Laurea's students and staff started to move on to remote work. The decision was based on suspected exposures during previous week, the extent of which were unknown at that time. To protect students, staff and other members of the Laurea community, Laurea decided to close all campuses until the end of May. Since mid-March Laurea has been offering teaching online or through other means.

As Laurea is used to offer whole degrees online, the remote working atmosphere and tools were already existing. Remote working has been a normal working habit and an option to do every now and then in Laurea. It was basically easy to jump to remote work. Though the contact lessons needed to be planned again differently, which caused a huge amount of work load in the first weeks of online teaching.

During these current unusual times, Laurea has supported staff and teachers with continuous online trainings to use different online tools. Our IT Help Desk is also easy and possible to contact in cases there are network, hardware or software problems. In Finland, the network is vast and efficient, so basically problems with



internet connections occur quite rarely. Every staff member has been provided with a laptop and mobile phone, so the tools were already existing. The online training calendar has been updated regularly.

Guidelines during Covid-19 situation

Updated guidelines are published and updated in staff and students' intranets. Guidelines are published also on the [Laurea web page](#) . Guidelines include e.g. the following topics:

- Prevention of the risks of infection
- Teaching and training transferred online
- Exceptions to campus services
- Students returning from abroad to Finland
- Entrance exams and selection tests
- Common events and other activities on our campuses
- Visitors to our premises
- Staff meetings
- Work-related policies
- Internal staff communication in case of disruption

The basis of our preparation is to ensure student wellbeing and to enable our students to continue their studies as seamlessly as possible. Also simulation and workshop teaching in health and physiotherapy are temporarily being transferred online. The teachers inform their students about possible changes and how exams and similar events are going to be arranged.

Job placements and internships in Finland will continue until further notice, if not cancelled by the placement organization. The announcements of Laurea and the internship organisation's guidelines must be followed. If a job placement period is cancelled, we try to offer other teaching to replace cancelled internships.

For students we also opened a separate corona named e-mail if they have questions related to their studies or internships.

The international relations during the pandemic

Laurea has been preparing for corona situation to ensure student wellbeing and to enable our students to continue their studies. Our decisions are based on the recommendations of the Government and the National



Institute for Health and Welfare. We also updated student and staff intranets, sent several e-mails to our students abroad, exchange students in Laurea and partner institutions worldwide. For the exchange students there is also a mobile phone app Whatsapp –possibility to send quick questions or share worries and receive answers from an IRO team member.

Laurea IRO also promoted a possibility for an Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange. It is offered to help teachers and students to continue studies in these uncertain times. There are ready made courses, which might be possible for Laurea students. A teacher can design a course with an international partner teacher for everybody's use. More information here https://europa.eu/youth/erasmusvirtual_en.

Communication and guidelines to our students abroad

Some of Laurea students had gone on their exchanges earlier this year while some of the students did not start their exchanges before the exceptional current situation. The coronavirus situation developed rapidly in March also in Finland, to which also Laurea responded.

Laurea IRO sent an e-mail to our students abroad in the beginning of the eruption of the coronavirus. Based on the Finnish Government's announcement, declaring a state of emergency in Finland, Laurea was in line with this announcement guiding all students to terminate their stay abroad and return to Finland at once. Laurea decided to support students for their additional travel and accommodation costs if they returned by the end of March. Otherwise, we are following closely our students' situation abroad who decided to stay abroad.

Practicalities to take into consideration when terminating exchange

Studies: Contact your tutor teacher as soon as possible to let them know of the termination/cancellation of the exchange and for finding out how to ensure the continuation of your studies in Finland.

Insurance: Contact your insurance provider to see what they cover in this situation and whether you can make claims for any costs caused by this situation. It is good to have their decision of this in writing.

Flights: Many countries are now closing their borders and restricting movements, which causes airlines to cancel their flights. It is, therefore, important to act immediately.

You should contact your airline to check the possibility of changing your flight or ask for a compensation. If you receive no compensation for the flight costs from the airline or from your insurance, Laurea will pay for



your flight back in case you return early to Finland. Provide receipts of the flight and written document from the insurance company to the International Services. It is recommended however, that you look for the most reasonable price as possible.

Housing: Remember to terminate your housing contract at your exchange destination and to see whether there is any cancellation policy in place. Organize housing at home.

Quarantine: It is important to remember that, after returning to Finland, you will be placed in a quarantine-like conditions for 14 days. This must be taken seriously.

Health concerns: If you suspect you have symptoms of the corona virus, call the local health center in your area. Any suspected infections are dealt with locally.

Grants: In bilateral exchanges (outside Europe) the students can keep their grants. For Erasmus+ exchanges, students should send the International Services information regarding the costs of the exchange so that claim to the Finnish National Agency for Education can be made and allow the student to keep the grant as a compensation for the costs.

Information: Follow student intra, the local authorities and your local Finnish embassy for further information.

Communication with exchange students and our partner universities

Laurea IRO have sent frequent e-mails to all its partner universities and institutions about our practical actions due to the coronavirus in March-April. We informed our readiness for online teaching that all students can continue their studies remotely. The exchange students at Laurea received detailed instructions from their Laurea teachers regarding each of their courses. Teachers also informed the students separately about how exams and similar events would take place online. We also instructed the exchange students at Laurea to be in contact with their home universities, if they wish to return to their home countries and finish their studies while at home.

Some of the exchange students returned to their home countries. Less than ten exchange students decided to stay in Laurea. Out of these students, a few wants to continue studies in the fall semester with us. Laurea supports exchange students in their decisions. If there is a need, we will pay the rent for May in case a student returned earlier to the home country. Some student apartments are rented with a fixed term contract the landlord wants the rent paid for the whole fixed term.



Laurea will continue accepting nominations from incoming exchange students for the autumn semester normally. However, we would like to remind them that the Covid-19 situation is continuing, and therefore keep in mind that the acceptance is conditional until we can be sure about the autumn situation. If the situation changes, we shall inform our partners accordingly. As for current Laurea students looking to study at our partner universities, we shall nominate them as directed and act according to our partners instructions.

Exchange students in autumn semester 2020

We will do everything we can to start the semester at the normal time in August, but we must follow the national instructions as well as the international situation all in all. It is possible that large gatherings will not be allowed in August, or it could also be possible that traveling within EU or to EU is still banned in the autumn.

We have informed that if a student is coming from a non-EU country, he needs to also keep in mind that getting the residence permit to Finland might be extremely difficult due to the embassies and consulates being closed, and therefore he might want to even consider postponing the exchange to the spring semester 2021 just to be sure.

If we were not be able to start the semester on our campuses in August, the studies will be offered fully online until the return will be possible. It is very good to keep in mind that as we can't be 100% sure how the situation will be, any payments for flights or accommodation shouldn't be made that can't be returned in case of postponement of the exchange. We also advise the students to make sure that their insurance policy covers any costs due to the Covid-19 situation, e.g. postponing or cancelling flights, accommodation etc. If the travel restrictions will be lifted, it is still possible that there is a quarantine for 14 days after the arrival to Finland.

COVID – 19 impact in the Higher Education sector NWAUFU/ CHINA

How the Office of International Cooperation and Exchange of Northwest A&F University dealt with the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic

Large scale outbreaks of pandemic disease took place globally, affecting not only human health, but also the education sector. The massive disruptions created by the novel coronavirus to education sector have been so severe that, according to UNESCO, more than forty-six countries in five different continents have announced school closures and banned face-to-face teaching to contain the spread of COVID-19. At the beginning of this



semester (end of February 2020), the Chinese Ministry of Education has launched an initiative entitled “Disrupted Classes, Undisrupted Learning” to provide flexible online learning to hundreds of millions of students in China. All levels of institutions of education in China initiated several strategies to cope with educational issues raised in this crisis.

Being an important section of our university (NWAUFU), the problems faced by the office of international cooperation and exchange have been particularly complicated and unprecedented when the whole world is virtually under lockdown. It’s been really difficult to carry out the work, and it’s must be same for every international office in universities globally. However, our office has tried our best to find solutions to various problems and mitigate the adverse impact created by this pandemic. The following are the thorny problems we are facing and some solutions that we have found to address them.

First, the biggest challenge we need to handle is to remain connected with all foreign teachers and international students, and make sure the information of their health status has been reported and updated to the government as required. It’s been hard due to the time differences and the lack of Internet connection for a few. Apart from that, because the outbreak of the virus was during the winter vacation, many Chinese students and teachers were visiting universities overseas, we also need to make sure the latest information of these Chinese students and teachers has been collected and reported in time for our government to better understand whether they are safe and whether they need help in case they have an emergency.

In order to deal with this challenge, our office has adopted several solutions:

- a) It seemed we are understaffed during the situation of emergency, partially because some staff are required to stay at where they are and are not allowed to come back to the office, and partially because the workload has been increased dramatically. Therefore, we recruited volunteers who are fluent in English from different schools in our university (teachers or students) to be responsible for reaching foreign teachers or international students every day.
- b) Volunteers not only need to gather the latest information of the health status, the traces of movement of foreign teachers and international students, but also make sure they are informed about the updated situation of epidemic control in China and regulations concerning the travelling over borders.
- c) For the Chinese teachers and students who are traveling overseas, our office remains connected with the universities and research institutions that they are visiting to make sure the safety of them should be the priority. Meanwhile, we use the social networking platform to inform them useful information, such as



what kind of help available from the Chinese embassy in case they have an emergency.

- d) We feed updated e-pamphlets to these teachers and students. Pamphlets detail all the information they need from how to protect themselves scientifically, what regulations they need to adhere to while they are in a particular country, what if their visa is going to expire, to what they should do if they don't feel well and how to see a doctor if it's necessary, and if they are planning to come back to China, what they should prepare.

e)

Another pressing issue that needs to be addressed by our international office is minimizing the adverse influence of Covid-19 on our cooperation and collaboration with overseas universities and research institutions. Meetings have been called by our office with different offices in our university to discuss the significance of continually carrying out research and fostering collaboration especially during the time of crisis. Proper guidance and incentives have been offered to encourage teachers, researchers and students to continue to work and cooperate internationally to ensure that the latest research findings will be better shared and used. Some practices we've adopted are as follows:

- 1) We actively explored the possibility of using the virtual platforms to recruit leading foreign experts globally. We also are encouraging teachers and students to hold meetings, conferences between universities domestically and internationally, maintain academic communication, conduct research and even promote teaching and learning online by using video conferencing software and apps that enable them to work more collaboratively without the limitation of time and place. For those who are not adept at using the latest online communication software such as Zoom, Tencent Meeting, our office invited experts in using this software to offer several online webinars to our staff and students to improve their technology literacy. And the university has employed several technicians to offer technique support for our staff whenever they encounter problems concerning communication with technology.
- 2) For those who plan to conduct any online activities internationally, they need to notify the international office, then they need to file an application in advance to the offices accordingly in our university in order to get the funds and support they need.
- 3) The person who is in charge of a particular international programme established and implemented online should make sure that the process of carrying out it is effectively as required and properly supervised. The written report of the implementation of the programme should be handed to relevant offices and provided to get funds as supporting materials.
- 4) For the security of conducting research and holding conferences online, the international office offers



essential guidance on stressing the significance of network security, information leakage, and how to make sure all research materials are properly recorded and preserved.

More practices have been done in order to tackle the problems caused by the Covid-19 for our university, especially for our office, we just hope what we have shared here could offer some experiences to other universities to draw on during this hard time.

COVID – 19 impact in the Higher Education sector of Tajikistan

Overview

Tajikistan was one of the few unaffected countries in the world, without any positive COVID-19 cases reported. Among all the consortia member countries in Tajikistan quarantine measures have been taken in ends of April. 30th April 2020 the Ministry of Health of Tajikistan has officially reported 15 cases of COVID-19 infected people¹. However, the government didn't announce a total quarantine. Partial quarantine measures were taking week ago, and only for schools and colleges², businesses and industries, including HEIs were working regularly. After the official report of cases universities were also quarantined. The quarantine has touched only 1, 2- and 3-year students. All the classes were stopped. The 4th year students, which are in the phase of examinations and diploma defence, they are coming to the universities to accomplish their last year of study. In our opinion, the government's weak quarantine measures are directed to minimize the effects of quarantine on the economy in general and in particular minimizing the negative impact of a pandemic for key activities and events of different sectors, including higher education. During writing this paper (07.05.2020) the official numbers of infected have reached 379 with 8 reported death cases³.

The impact of a pandemic to the HEIs in Tajikistan

Nevertheless, this is unprecedented for the higher education of Tajikistan as well for most of the countries around the world. Earlier in 2017, the Ministry of Education and Science of Republic of Tajikistan has declared instant transformation from part-time studies to distance learning (due to the specification of this study is similar more to the Blended learning system). The resolution of experts about the ineffective form

¹ Khovar - [National information agency of Tajikistan, https://khovar.tj/2020/04/vmyhabari-favr-dar-to-ikiston-odisai-tasdi-shudai-bemorii-siroyatii-covid-19-az-namuna-oi-biologii-odisa-oi-gumonbar-ba-ajd-girifta-shud/](https://khovar.tj/2020/04/vmyhabari-favr-dar-to-ikiston-odisai-tasdi-shudai-bemorii-siroyatii-covid-19-az-namuna-oi-biologii-odisa-oi-gumonbar-ba-ajd-girifta-shud/)

² Ministry of Education and Science of Tajikistan, <http://maorif.tj/ahborot/tatil-dar-muassisa-oi-tasiloti-tomaktab-va-miyonai-umum-tamdid-gardid>

³ Khovar - [National information agency of Tajikistan, https://khovar.tj/2020/05/habari-favr-shumorai-bemoroni-giriftori-koronavirus-dar-to-ikiston-ba-379-nafar-rasid/](https://khovar.tj/2020/05/habari-favr-shumorai-bemoroni-giriftori-koronavirus-dar-to-ikiston-ba-379-nafar-rasid/)



of part-time study, they should be converted into an online form of study with short contacting classes for examinations. Unfortunately, very few HEIs of Tajikistan could be able to transform all providing courses into Distance learning. The factors of weak technical readiness of universities, low skilled teaching staff in using technologies and just absence of student's capabilities to follow courses online pushed all HEIs in Tajikistan just to stop studies in the middle of the semester, pushing everyone to complete their studies in one-two weeks. Only 4th year undergraduate students were allowed to finish the semester to defend their final diploma works until 15th of May. Such measures were taken to minimize the number of students and staff who are coming to the university. The current situation showed how universities in Tajikistan and how the students are not ready for online education. Still, a lot of reforms and changes to be implemented for facilitating the development of online learning. The resolution of the Ministry of Education and Science of Tajikistan on switching to Distance learning released in 2017 still challenging for many universities.

Another negative impact is the economic situation of the universities. Most of the universities in Tajikistan are highly rely on tuition fees, our university is not an exception. The pandemic brought chaos, reduction of income in families, negatively impacted in tuition fee payments. The Ministry of Education and Science of Tajikistan has declared tuition fees holidays, allowing students not to pay for their studies until stabilization of the situation. This creates a big burden for the universities to survive and directly hits the staff of the university. Today, voluntarily quarantine measures allow HEIs staff to come to work if it is needed, only the key staff are working and the majority are in unpaid leave.

The international relations during a pandemic

International relations are one of the most negatively impacted areas at IET TSUC. The international relations here at IET TSUC started to boosting since 2017 and today we were running 7 international projects, where 5 are within Erasmus and 2 World Bank funded projects.

First of all, international credit mobility, currently, our 9 students stuck in Spain and Turkey. The IRO tends to contact with Tajikistan embassies to provide support and somehow find a way to bring them home, this is one of the most important tasks for IRO right now to help them come back home. IRO staff is in constant communication with all of them and their families here in the home country. The rest of incoming and outgoing mobilities of the staff were postponed for uncertain time. Regarding the capacity building projects, we have even more challenges. Currently, all planned activities are postponed and will negatively cause for



the implementation of the project timeline and to the milestones.

One of the IET TSUC proposals during drafting UNICAC project was creating a videoconference room. Hopefully, it was time done here at IET TSUC within UNICAC project, and here at the International Relations Office, we have installed videoconference equipment allowing to participate in the virtual meetings for up to 18-20 people. Videoconference room (65sq.m) equipped with:

- Videoconference system Logitech Rally Plus (with PTZ camera, soundbars, microphones and connecting concentrators)
- Smart TV Screen 65'' Samsung
- PC – Dell Vostro 3670, Intel Core I5 2.8Ghz, 8Gb RAM, HDD 1Tb

This videoconference system allows staying in contact with our partners, students who are in mobility and take active participation in UNICAC virtual meetings and partner meetings. One problem is remaining this is software. Until now we are using ZOOM and SKYPE free versions. When meetings are hosted by some of our partners, we don't have any shortages. The hosting these types of events is problematic because we have some limitations of using the software properly, due to the absence of the professional version. Next step is for us, to explain the importance of using professional software for virtual meetings because in such a difficult situation for the universities allocating a budget is very sensitive. Anyway, we found the videoconference room more efficient when in virtual meetings in one room are presenting all the staff who are involved in project implementation. But today when the situation regarding pandemic COVID-19 is developing from 5 IRO staff, only 2 of us are still working, the staff whose presence not needed are working from home. Nevertheless, virtual meetings couldn't displace some of the activities. In the framework of the World Bank project, we have planned external evaluation of International accreditation agency for the accreditation of 2 undergraduate programs. The process was started, and according to the agreement we were waiting for site visit activity with external experts from the agency.

Another thing is the process of documentation, signing the papers, finding the management staff to deal with something. We didn't implement yet the e-signature system here in our university, and probably HEIs around the country have similar problems. This bureaucratic approach in decision making creates more barriers in the project implementations and affects the timeline negatively.

Surely, this challenging situation for the whole world, never happening something similar in the modern world. It is obvious, that this pandemic hit much for struggling economies and developing countries.



The higher education in Central Asia, in particular in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan just were in the phase of developing providing qualitative education towards the Bologna process, having tight partnership relations with EU universities. The number of projects and the number of students and staff who were involved in international projects were growing. Nobody knows now, how post-pandemic will affect the future of Erasmus and other international programmes.

Unity and sympathy can somehow reduce the negative impacts of that virus. Most of the online education providers are opening the courses for free and supporting people around the world continue educating.

Saidqosim Mukhtorov, UNICAC institutional coordinator, the Head of IRO, IET TSUC,

07.05.2020, Khujand, Tajikistan

The impact of the COVID 19 on the internationalisation of HEIs at UNITO/Italy

Overview

Italy, one of the European countries at the centre of the world's coronavirus outbreak in March, is now gradually returning to normal after about two months under lockdown and no reports of new infections. The daily number of people dying of COVID-19 also is declining.

Italy has relaxed some of the coronavirus restrictions and is moving toward the next phase to reopen more businesses. Tourists will be allowed into the country beginning June 3.

Regarding information on the measures adopted by the Italian Government:

- FAQs on the #ImStayingHome Decree are available here:
<https://www.esteri.it/mae/it/ministero/normativaonline/decreto-iorestoacasa-domande-frequenti/faqs-on-the-italian-government-s-imstayinghome-decree.html>

- the list of Decrees and Regulations adopted by the Italian Government are available at the following link:
<http://www.governo.it/it/coronavirus-misure-del-governo>

As regards the main measures adopted by Italy:

- on 15th May 2020 the Government has decided to ease restrictions on movements. Starting from 18 May 2020, the movement of people within the same Italian region is allowed and starting from 3 June 2020, travel between different Italian regions as well as travel to and from abroad is also allowed.
- Quarantine: some easing from 18 May to 2 June. As of June 3, the quarantine is not required for travel



to and from the EU, Schengen, UK and European microstates. The need for justification and the quarantine at least until June 15 remain valid for movements to and from other states and territories. Persons with confirmed Covid-19 and persons who have been in close contact with confirmed infected persons must stay in quarantine.

- on 26th April the Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte outlined how the country would begin "Phase Two" of lifting its coronavirus lockdown and announced a gradual easing of the measures starting from May 4th.

- Previous measures: The Decree issued on 9 March 2020 provides, in particular, urgent measures to combat and contain the Covid-19 virus extending to the whole national territory the restrictive measures envisaged by the previous Decree, issued on 8 March, for Lombardy and surrounding areas. Among the more far-reaching measures, the decree provides that any movement of physical persons (both within the national territory and entering/exiting) must be avoided, except for proven work needs, situations of necessity or health reasons. Work, need or health reasons can be self-certified, as required by current legislation. Return to one's own home or residence is allowed. There are also restrictions on the exercise of public activities (sports, restaurants, entertainment, etc.) and any form of gathering of people in public places or places open to the public. In addition to the closure of the schools, already in force since February 5, the opening of the museums and the holding of events and shows are suspended. It is recommended to always keep a distance of at least one meter from other people ("social distancing"). In parallel, measures were taken to strengthen the national health system, with particular reference to intensive care. With the Prime Ministerial Decree of March 8, there are no longer any red areas: the limitations that were foreseen in the previous Prime Ministerial Decree of March 1 (with the establishment of specific red areas) have ceased.

The International Relations at UNITO/Turin University during pandemic

Several measures have been taken by Turin University, as described in:

- UniTO's *Website*:

<https://en.unito.it/coronavirus-updates-unito-community>

<https://www.unito.it/ateneo/gli-speciali/coronavirus-aggiornamenti-la-comunita-universitaria>



In UniTO website a special section dedicated to International Relations during pandemic has been introduced:

<https://www.unito.it/ateneo/gli-speciali/coronavirus-aggiornamenti-la-comunita-universitaria/mobilita-internazionale>

<https://en.unito.it/coronavirus-updates-unito-community/international-mobility>

- in staff and students *Intranet*, guidelines are published and updated
- frequent *emails* sent by UniTO IRO to outgoing and incoming students as well as to Partner Universities.

In the beginning of the pandemic, in line with the announcement of the Italian Government of the state of emergency, Turin University supported outgoing students when deciding to return to Italy and is following closely the situation of those students who decided to stay abroad. The University of Turin has suspended all outgoing mobilities within the Erasmus program or any other international exchange program previously planned for the second semester of a.y. 2019-2020.

UniTO emailed its incomings a Survey at the very beginning of the pandemic in order to know if they wanted to return to their home countries or continue their studies at UniTO. Our exchange students received detailed instructions regarding their courses. Teachers also informed the students separately about how exams and similar events would take place online. We also instructed the exchange students at Turin University to be in contact with their home universities, if they wish to return to their home countries and finish their studies while at home.

UniTO IRO sent frequent emails to all its Partner Universities about its practical actions due to the coronavirus and informed on online teaching and the possibility for students to continue their studies remotely.

Regarding the next a.a. 2020-2021, Turin University will continue accepting nominations for incoming exchange students. our University is monitoring the general situation and should the future conditions require it (in particular during the first semester) distance learning will be organized. We expect updating to be provided by the end of June and we will inform our partners/students accordingly.



Therefore, as of now, we highly recommend to wait before booking flights or accommodation or to consider refundable solutions. We also suggest you to visit our Incoming webpage where all the relevant information/updating about the application process will be published together with information about the University of Turin and our city. Italian version: <https://www.unito.it/internazionalita/studenti-e-ospiti-internazionali/studenti-mobilita-ed-erasmus>
English Version: <https://en.unito.it/international-relations/students-mobility/exchange-students-and-erasmus-mobility>

Considering the totality of its decisions and measures depending on the pandemic, UniTO's main goal is to provide its community with safe working conditions and continuation of teaching for students.

UniTO's students and staff started to move on to remote working immediately: to protect students, staff and other members of our community, Turin University decided to close all Campuses and is offering [teaching online](#).

Consequently, also UniTo International Centre and its International Offices in the different Campuses will be closed until further notice and its staff is working from [home](#).



The restrictive measures to limit the spread of Covid-19 disease have been further loosened with the President of the Council of Minister decree of May 17th 2020. At the present moment all the ordinary activities are carried out in remote mode, except the services that can't be postponed and fulfilled remotely. The staff and the similar figures (Phd students, grant holders, research fellows) that will have to work on site - on the instruction of their Director - must previously and carefully follow the COVID-19: Information and Guidance (access reserved only to UniTo staff) and then fill in the Self-certification for the return to work and acknowledgment of having read and understood the "COVID-19 Information and Guidance Form".

This extraordinary situation requires strong sense of individual responsibility. Punctual and scrupulous compliance with the hygienic-sanitary measures set by the authorities is recommended.



Best practices at UniTO during pandemic and Initiatives for Staff and/or students, such as:

- Online Course for Staff on Smart Working



- Smart Learning, a peer-to-peer support to study during lock down made by a group of students in Psychology of Work and Wellbeing in Organisations
- UniTO Listening Space:



It is a psychological counseling service which aims to improve life quality in UniTO, addressed to UniTO staff (academic and administrative) and students living situations of hardship or psycho-physical distresses that can have consequences on their work and study quality.

UniTO Listening Space offers support and guide to the analysis, the management of the critical issues experienced and the development of useful resources for a good-quality work and university life. The service is free and provides an interview cycle, up to five, with psychologists qualified to psychotherapy, specialists and School of Health Psychology students in specialist training of Department of Psychology.

- More specifically in International Relations, in this uncertain time UniTO is supporting the development of International projects based on virtual mobility. Turin University is part of an Erasmus+ Project on Virtual Exchange Mobility called “Movidis” and lead by the University of Nice. For a short description of the Project click here:

<http://www.lets-steam.eu/post/participation-to-movidis-kick-off-meeting>



- And last but not least, in this period UniTO IRO is very much experiencing the implementation of digitalisation and e-signature system, for example for cooperation agreements and study plans, as well as virtual meetings hold in Webex platform.

Barbara D'Agati, Head of IRO, School of Mangement and Economics, Turin University

27.05.2020, Turin, Italy

5.1 The Buddy project of UNITO during the COVID 19: between necessity and adaptation

With the "Buddy Project - Do you need suppor-TO?", the University of Turin provides a welcome and assistance system aimed at international students enrolled in a degree-seeking course or who carry out a period of mobility at the UNITO university (exchange incoming). The new arrivals are supported by the University students, regularly enrolled and with adequate language skills, in a logic of peer-to-peer tutor.

The aim of the Buddy project is twofold:

- allow international students to familiarize themselves with the new academic cultural and linguistic context, both before arrival in Italy and during the first months of their stay at UniTO;
- offer UniTO students the opportunity to internationalize their educational experience directly at the University.

Due to the COVID 19 emergency, in recent months UNITO central IRO has conducted some focus groups for evaluation purposes with buddies and IROs local coordinators, to understand how to adapt this service. Two main issues have been noticed: on the one hand, the difficulty of allowing buddy to finish the hours foreseen in the collaboration despite the contingent situation, and on the other the will to effectively transmit the knowledge acquired during these months to the buddy of next year. In recent months, moreover, the Natural Sciences department of UNITO has started an experimentation with its buddy which has proved to be very interesting: the buddy has in fact prepared a handbook for incoming students who arrive at their centre, coordinated by an IRO officer. Given this experience, we thought it could be useful to build guides similar to the one produced by the Natural Sciences department (partly taking up the contents) by the buddy of each department, in order to bring together the existing orientation material and being able to offer something unified to students.



The idea would be to create two distinct handbooks:

a) one (in English) addressed to incoming students, with both general information (those which are usually studied in depth on the Welcome Day) and those specific to each department (a quick overview). An example of possible index could be as follows:

1. Brief introduction
2. Arrival
 - ☐ From a European Country
 - ☐ From a non-European Country
3. Housing
4. Learning Italian
5. Learning Agreement
6. My.unito.it
7. Career Plan and exams
8. Departments (for each department you can enter information about: where the department is located, links for consulting the courses and individual degree courses, course times and academic calendar, map of the places where lessons are held, Help desk, referring professors, library, job placement, etc.)
10. Departure
11. Contacts

b) One (in Italian) for the buddy. It would be a handbook in which future buddy can find information that will help them to support incoming students more effectively, starting from those difficulties previously reported in a specific monitoring phase.

Possible points to be included are as follows:

- How to welcome incoming students and what procedures to indicate upon arrival
- Who needs a residence permit? How do you get it?
- Erasmus: guide to the procedures to be followed by Erasmus students (e.g. deadlines to be respected, facsimile of the forms to be completed such as the Learning Agreement, professors and reference offices)
- Other mobility agreements: guide to procedures.
- Career plans, edumeter and exam registration
- References: which office to contact for what



Obviously, it is an indicative index, to be declined according to each department/HEI etc.

US/University of Sevilla. Action plan from the COVID-19 health crisis.

General information

After being published the “Real Decreto 463/2020 de 14 de marzo”, in which the alarm status is declared to handle the health crisis for COVID-19, several measures have been taken, described in the following link:

<https://www.us.es/covid-19>

In consequence, the International Centre will be closed until further notice, and therefore public attendance and on-site services will be suspended. In the meanwhile, the staff will be working from home through:

EMAIL: you can contact us anytime if you have doubts and we will reply as soon as possible.

INTERNATIONAL CENTER WEBSITE: <http://www.us.es/internacional>

US ONLINE OFFICE: you can hand in applications with the form “Modelo Genérico” through the US telematic registration: <https://sede.us.es/web/guest/registro>

TELEPHONE INFORMATION: all phone numbers in the centre have been forwarded to be able to attend your calls.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STAFF MEMBERS INVOLVED IN MOBILITY PROGRAMMES

The US is keeping in touch with the university community who are currently involved in an international stay in a foreign country, such as students, researchers and administrative staff members from the US. We have prepared the following recommendations from them:

General Recommendations for students from the US:

- We highly encourage to follow the indications from health authorities from your destination country and university, that will be taking different actions in order to stop the pandemic.
- Due to borders closure in a lot of countries, and growing travel difficulties, we recommend you to keep contact with competent consular authorities in your destination, especially if you wish to travel



to Spain and you have troubles preparing your return trip. Please always follow their indications. Contact information of Spanish Embassies and Consuls abroad can be found [here](#).

- It is VERY IMPORTANT that, if you have not done it yet, fill in the [Registered Traveller System](#) for the competent consul to have records of your stay in the country and contact you if necessary.
- If needed, you can also contact Emergency Consul Office from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, through the Spanish phone number [913948900](#) or Twitter: [@MAECgob](#).
- During these exceptional circumstances, we want to remind the importance of remain in contact with the University of Sevilla, either your faculty or the International Centre, and also to inform immediately if you need help with any change in your situation. Please click [here](#) to know all the contact information listed.

General Recommendations for international students in the US:

- Stay at home, except for the most essential tasks.
- Since March 16th teaching has been suspended and the University's facilities have been closed. Click on the link to access [updated information](#) on all of the steps that our University is taking, including how online teaching is being organised.
- Keep in touch with your Centre's Head of Mobility and with the Universidad de Sevilla's Head of Incoming Mobility at its International Centre. For more information on online teaching and to inform us of any change in your circumstances, you can access the Contact List.
- Keep in touch with your own University.
- If you think that you might have caught the coronavirus, click on the link to access [specific information on how to act](#).
- Click on this link to access [public information from the Spanish Ministry of Health](#).

General Recommendations for Teachers, Researchers and Administrative Staff from the US

- We highly encourage to follow the indications from health authorities from your destination country and university, that will be taking different actions in order to stop the pandemic.
- Due to borders closure in a lot of countries, and growing travel difficulties, we recommend you to keep contact with competent consulate authorities in your destination, especially if you wish to travel



to Spain and you have troubles preparing your return trip. Please always follow their indications. Contact information of Spanish Embassies and Consulates abroad can be found [here](#).

- It is VERY IMPORTANT that, if you have not done it yet, fill in the [Registered Traveller System](#) for the competent consul to have record of your stay in the country and contact you if necessary.
- If needed, you can also contact Emergency Consul Office from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, through the Spanish phone number [913948900](#) or Twitter: [@MAECgob](#).
- During these exceptional circumstances, we want to remind the importance of remain in contact with the University of Sevilla through the International Centre and the Vice-Rectorate for Research. and also, to inform immediately if you need help with any change in your situation

General Recommendations for International Teachers, Researchers and Administrative Staff at the US:

- Stay at home, except for the most essential tasks.
- Since March 16th teaching has been suspended and the University's facilities have been closed. Click on the link to [access updated information](#) on all of the steps that our University is taking, including specific information for Teachers, Researchers, and Administrative Staff.
- Keep in touch with Universidad de Sevilla's Centro Internacional and Vice-Rectorate for Research. You can access the Contact List.
- Keep in touch with your own Home University or Centre.
- If you think that you might have caught the coronavirus, click on the link to access [specific information on how to act](#).
- Click on this link to access [public information from the Spanish Ministry of Health](#).

The impact of the COVID 19 on the internationalisation of HEIs in Uzbekistan

The COVID-19 pandemic period has big effect on internationalization of HEIs in terms of international mobility of staff/student/teachers; International universities cannot accept professors from foreign countries because of closed borders. International activities: conferences, seminars, symposiums have been postponed or cancelled. However, the situation has affected on distance learning process, many universities have started providing online education, this will enhance new services at HEIs.

Nevertheless, within the project framework the following activities were accomplished with the use of online conferencing systems:

- April 7, 2020: online meeting with participation of all project partners devoted to the presentation of online



courses for teachers, students, and researchers in leading European NEIs;

- April 7, 2020: online meeting with participants of the NUUz project team discussing the ongoing problems and perspectives;
- April, 2020: the equipment purchase agreement was concluded and sent to the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan;
- The organization of online conference in summer was discussed with the partners from Tajikistan;
- The updated information about the project was translated into Uzbek and released at the official website;
- The NUUz coordinator published the article devoted to the project

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7. Annexes: case studies and useful material

Annex 1. The ERASMUS model: birth and development of the International Relations Office at SME/UNITO

Interview to Prof. Oreste M. Calliano (former Vice-Rector for European Relations and lecturer at the School of Management and Economics, Turin University) and Prof. Cristina Barettini (former International Relations Officer and lecturer at the School of Management and Economics, Turin University)

- How did the Erasmus Programme start?

The idea of allowing exchanges among European students originated in [1969](#), thanks to the intuition of the Italian prof. [Sofia Corradi](#) (nicknamed "Mamma Erasmus", who was awarded with the Charles V prize in 2016), [educator](#) and scientific consultant of the Permanent [Conference of Italian University Rectors](#): this role allowed her to circulate in the academic and institutional sphere her idea of creating Europeans “from grass-roots”, enabling young students to get to know formative realities directly, and thus create a “network” of future European leadership.

The project started thanks to an initiative of the student association EGEE (now [AEGEE](#)), founded by [Franck Biancheri](#), which in 1986-1987 convinced French President [François Mitterrand](#) to support the creation of the *Erasmus programme*. The decision was approved by the Turin Summit.

This active collaboration between AEGEE and the [European Commission](#), and especially [Domenico Lenarduzzi](#), Director of Public Education, brought forth the approval of the Erasmus Programme in 1987. It became an integral part of the [Socrates I](#) (1994–1999) and Socrates II (2000–2006) programmes. In 2007 it became one of the elements of the [Lifelong Learning Programme](#) (2007–2013), then [Erasmus+](#) since 2014.

- Which motivations led to the creation of an Erasmus / International Relations Office at the School of Management and Economics of Turin University?

In 1987 the Rector of Turin University, prof. Mario Umberto Dianzani, invited me to cooperate with the University as a Vice-Rector and asked me which sector, I would like to concentrate on. As I had been a convinced and active European federalist since youth, I suggested I might be involved in international relations; but this sector was already under the care of our colleague prof. Ferraresi. Therefore, Turin



University opted for one Vice-Rector for International Relations and one Vice-Rector for European Relations. A few days later the delegate for International Exchanges of Lyon III Jean Moulin University came to Turin, and he was surprised to be able to negotiate exchanges of the prospected Erasmus Programme with an eponymous Vice-Rector. We had a fruitful dialogue and I understood that we had the chance of drawing useful information from the French experience concerning student exchanges, for example on:

- a) The creation of a University Erasmus Commission, composed of representatives from the various Schools, regularly meeting (once a month) in order to coordinate the different and often incoherent practices of the various Schools concerning selection of outgoing students and acceptance of incoming students. Consequently, we enhanced the creation of a similar Commission in every School, so as to avoid personal or discriminatory choices. The Erasmus Commission of the School of Management and Economics was the first one created, as early as since the 1988 Erasmus selection.
- b) Working out a uniform procedure for selecting students and accompanying them abroad; this procedure was set up during a year of intensive coordination among the representatives of the various Schools, who were bringing up different needs and approaches (scientific Schools, humanistic Schools, professionalizing Schools).
- c) An integration of national scholarships with a further economic incentive in order to compensate costs borne by students and their families. Erasmus scholarships were indeed meant to cover the difference between fees in the home University and in the foreign University, and they did not foresee travel and living expenses, which resident students did not need to bear in Italy. The Erasmus Commission of the School of Management and Economics suggested to the School Council an integration of 150 euro for train journeys and 300 euro for flights, and the Council approved. This “nudge” reduced any income discrimination and encouraged many students to take part in the project.

- How did the Office start, and how did it develop?

The entire procedure needed to be followed by a dedicated office, which we called the Erasmus Office. Both outgoing and incoming students could refer to the office, as well as officers from other European Universities, outgoing lecturers, and later even incoming lecturers. This required organizational, linguistic and communication skills in foreign languages. Therefore, I initially asked our Rector for one officer and two employees, and they were granted to me; one of them, engineer Kaboré, was French mother tongue and spoke English. The office was initially located in a room under a staircase in the Rectorate, with one only phone and one only personal computer.

The directing officer, Dr. Marengo, was enthusiastic about this initiative, and she succeeded in getting



over the initial operational difficulties. However, the entire group was conscious of the fact that we were playing an important role for Turin University, since we were among the first to activate an Erasmus Office in Italy, as well as for our outgoing students and for the European integration process.

In this pioneering phase, of a “statu nascenti”, information at national level was little and fragmented. It was considered preferable to dialogue with foreign officer colleagues, exchanging experiences and solutions to questions which came up on a daily basis (where to accommodate incoming students, how to communicate with them beforehand, how to stimulate lecturers to hold examinations in foreign languages, how to register examinations of Erasmus students who, bureaucratically, did not appear to be enrolled in our University...). A relevant legal problem was, right from the start, the one of obtaining staying permits for studies for students intending to stay in Italy for six months, while Italian law offered permits for studies for only three months. We had to bring up the issue of EU law prevailing over Italian law, and make pressures, with the support of the EU Commission, for Italy to grant Erasmus study permits of at least six months. We thus had to face many logistic, organizational and legal problems, but thanks to our enthusiasm, the appreciation for the work we carried out and the Rector’s support, we were able to bridge over them soon.

- **Which geographic areas were by and by taken into consideration, and how did the personnel of the Office consequently undergo adjustments and formation?**

The first indication came from our students, who aimed their choices at relevant geo-linguistic areas.

The first was the Anglophone area, but British Universities (or rather the English Government) immediately showed strong resistance against welcoming a significant number of students. Indeed, based on the principle of “mutual recognition”, Erasmus students did not pay the high fees of their resident British colleagues, depleting Universities which in that “Thatcher” period were suffering heavy cuts in their budgets. We therefore turned to Irish Universities, which were more cooperative and “pro-European”, and then to Nordic Universities which taught courses in English: Danish, Finnish, Swedish and Dutch Universities were highly qualified and well organized.

The other area was the Hispanic one, partly because of the untrue belief that Spanish is an easier language for Italians, and partly because of the similarity in juvenile habits and traditions. In fact, Spanish and Portuguese managerial Universities turned out to be of excellent level (Barcelona, Oviedo, Porto), well organized and strong in international relations (it is not by chance that Spain is the first European country as to using the Erasmus programme, followed by Germany and France, and then Italy in fourth position).

The Francophone area had always been a cultural exchange area for Italian Universities; with French



Universities we mainly worked out bi-national Degrees, which were then promoted and encouraged by the Italian-French University, based in Turin. We set up a bi-national Degree Turin - Chambéry in “Langues appliquées” for the formation of technical, legal and economic translators; a bi-national Degree Turin (Cuneo campus) – Nice in Management; a bi-national Degree Turin - Lyon in Comparative Italian-French Law.

To this scope, our Erasmus Office needed to dialogue in English, French and Spanish. We hired a trilingual officer and we enhanced English language courses for all our officers, and we allowed our directing officer to take part in foreign exchanges for Erasmus officers, which were foreseen by the project.

- **How were partner Universities selected, and how were connections to them set up?**

Early contacts were based on individual lecturers’ scientific and personal connections: by suggesting an exchange, lecturers wished to set up constant communication channels between them, as well as to create possibilities of traineeships for their graduating students.

Another channel was based, for research centres, on the development of Post-Doc and PhD exchanges.

Finally, a structured channel was offered by University networks which were being set up at European level: the network of historic Universities Coimbra Group had recently been founded, in 1987. In 1988, by initiative of the City and the Chambre de Commerce of Bordeaux, the Eurometropoles network was created. It included non-capital European cities, among them Bordeaux, Lyon, Barcelona, Manchester and others; Turin University was assigned the task of coordinating the Universities of twinned cities. The aim was sharing experiences on Erasmus exchanges and facilitating their implementation.

For example, Lyon had created, in an old abandoned industrial hall, the Maison de l’Europe, which offered housing for incoming Erasmus students. This experience was copied by other towns. Turin preferred to create a network of apartments rented at an agreed price and coordinated by the Erasmus Office.

Since our students turned out to be among the best in the management area, relationships with partner Universities became stronger, and were extended also to their twinned Universities by reciprocal contacts and “academic word-of-mouth”.

- **How are incoming students welcomed? Are there welcome days, is assistance provided for finding accommodation and getting to know the town, and for choosing classes to attend?**

For a long time, French and Nordic Universities had been organizing a welcome day for international students. We decided to delegate this activity to former and present Erasmus students in our School,



and we called this day the “Erasmus Day”. On the Erasmus Day, incoming students were welcomed by our Rector and/or the Deans of the School and our Erasmus Coordinators, there was a visit of the town and youth logistics information was provided. Furthermore, every incoming Erasmus student was entrusted to one of our volunteer students, who served as a tutor for academic information and for organizing the incoming student’s stay in our town.

A transnational network of relationships was thus established, and according to prof. Sofia Corradi’s dream-project it created a network of young people who were connected not only to their home country, but also to Europe, as a space of culture, relationships and common exchanges. Many Erasmus students joined into couples, others got married (my son met an Alsatian colleague in Dublin, and now they have two lovely children), all of them kept up transnational relationships which are still useful for their working career as well as for cultural-tourism exchanges.

- **Are incoming Erasmus students able to find courses taught in English?**

The appeal of Italian Universities used to be diminished by the scarce diffusion of the Italian language as a vehicular language, except for children and grandchildren of Italian emigrants. Initially exchanges were sought for in humanistic sectors (Art History, Literature, Linguistics) or in scientifically advanced sectors (Physics, Biology...), as well as in cases when they were with historic Universities, or Universities located in touristic towns. It was therefore necessary to develop courses taught in a vehicular language, especially English.

The School of Management and Economics started with an English medium Degree course in Management; gradually, other Degree courses taught in English followed, and nowadays they are offered even online. It was also necessary to train lecturers in didactics in a foreign language, thanks to specific training courses, and to overcome the problems of legal technical language, which in Italy is based on Romanistic Codes, and is therefore difficult to adapt to the Common Law language. However, the encouragement from the world of companies, the impulse given by Department Directors and the commitment of many lecturers, especially the younger ones, overcame any obstacle.

- **How are exchange agreements set up, and how are the selection and formation of outgoing Erasmus students organized?**

The first step is the negotiation of the framework agreement, which states the yearly number of exchangeable students (tendentially, but not necessarily symmetrical); the duration of the exchange period: initially, since not all Universities had yet adhered to the 3 year Bachelor + 2 year Masters’ model (for example German Universities in the first years after 1997) or to the division into semesters



(Humanistic and Law Schools), this raised the problem of homologation at European level; choice of the 1st or 2nd semester depending on the agreed courses students are to attend.

Every year, an Erasmus call is published, listing all partner Universities with which there is an agreement; the call states the number of positions available in each partner University and the deadline for applications (initially students were asked to express a first and a second choice in their application). The Erasmus call is divided into sections according to the instruction language: there are an English, a German, a French and a Spanish-Portuguese language area section.

Students are selected according to criteria based on the number of examinations already passed, the average grade, the year of enrolment (students who are about to graduate and Master students are given precedence). A motivational interview with each suitable applicant is then organized; evaluation looks at the knowledge of the receiving University's language (since the Erasmus programme is not aimed at studying languages, but at enriching the students' experience with foreign Universities and environments), at academic motivation (courses the student intends to attend, maybe final dissertation to be prepared), at personal motivation (whether the student seems prepared to adapt to a different lifestyle, and shows a genuine interest in discovering new cultural patterns) and at career motivation (especially for traineeships in companies).

Finally, the Erasmus Commission puts down a ranking. In early times, a first choice ranking and a second-choice ranking were prepared, in order to distribute candidates into all available positions, avoiding excessive affluence to the most attractive Universities and thus maybe leaving some locations uncovered. Subsequently, due to the high number of applications, the second choice was cancelled in the whole of Italy; however, in my view this leads students to concentrate their applications on the locations which seem most attractive, even just based on mere students' "word-of-mouth", which is often misleading. Therefore, a second chance is nowadays given: students who have not been assigned to the chosen receiving University are later offered the chance of spending their Erasmus exchange semester at one of the Universities of the chosen language area where some positions have remained uncovered; students are given a few days to think about it and maybe collect information about the specific University, before they agree. They often do agree, and in the end, they are very happy of having been assigned to a more "unusual" destination.

As to the formation of outgoing Erasmus students, once they have been selected, they are invited to meetings with the School's Erasmus officers and with the Erasmus coordinator relevant to the destination they have been appointed to – since the coordinator, who is a lecturer, has normally visited the destination University personally, often has scientific connections with colleagues teaching there,



and has collected feedback from students who have spent their Erasmus exchange period at that University in previous years, as well as from incoming students from that University. The plan of courses each student should attend is agreed upon with the relevant Erasmus coordinator. Furthermore, meetings are organized with students who have been at the selected location, and with students from that University who are currently in Erasmus exchange at our School.

When outgoing students have reached the hosting University, their activity is carefully monitored, with exchange of information between coordinators in order to solve problems which might show up, for example changing agreed classes because a class is not offered any more or is not coherent, as to its syllabus, with the student's objectives. Similarly, the Erasmus coordinators follow up the activity of incoming students, and keep in touch with their home coordinators, if necessary, adjusting their plans of studies and examinations.

When outgoing students return to Turin after their Erasmus experience, their marks need to be validated. It should be remembered that grading systems may vary from one EU Member State to another: in France the highest score is theoretically 20/20, but in practice it is 16/18; in other EU Member States, grades are letters of the alphabet from A to F (failure); in further EU Member States what counts is not the single examination, but the average score throughout the academic year. The Erasmus Commission then addresses any issue of recognition of supplementary or unforeseen examinations in courses which however are equivalent, as to syllabus and credits, to courses offered at the home University. Finally, the examinations passed abroad are added to the student's curriculum by the Schools' Student Offices.

Bi-national Degree theses are also discussed, sometimes in presence (even just virtual) of lecturers from both Schools.

- **Which kind of feedback have you received from students, lecturers and officers concerning the Erasmus experience?**

The Erasmus Programme has been, and still is, a source of significant experiences for:

- a) Outgoing and incoming students. Sandro Gozi, now a member of the EU Parliament elected in France, in his book: [*Generazione Erasmus al potere. Il coraggio della responsabilità*](#) (*Erasmus Generation in power. The courage of responsibility*), Bocconi University Ed., 2016, highlights this generation's potentialities and difficulties in emerging.
- b) Lecturers, who have started dialoguing with European colleagues, not only about scientific research, but also about didactic methods and organization. In this regard, two important initiatives started: the Jean Monnet network, which set up chairs by the same name, one of which I held and



still hold; and AUSE (University Association of European Studies), of which I have been Vice-President and now am member of the Committee of Guarantors.

- c) University administrative offices, which have compared their bureaucratic practices, often making them leaner, improving them, updating them. Dr. Marengo, now retired, remembers that “glorious period” nostalgically.
- d) Central educational administrations, which, by creating Bodies dedicated to managing the various European educational projects, are proposing improvements in the national formation system (among them, courses taught in English language and online didactics).

Personally, I enjoyed the great privilege of being among the first in Italy and in Europe to follow the Erasmus Project and to be in touch with the various Italian coordinators, who were mainly language lecturers; since I was among the few non-linguists, being a comparative lawyer, the group entrusted me with analysing the legal-organizational aspects of the project.

Guided by prof. Corradi, in 1989 we took part in a visit to Salamanca University, in order to negotiate exchange agreements with the main Spanish Universities, and in 1991 we went to New York in order to develop exchanges which were then going to enter the Mundus Project.

Unfortunately, this “grass-root” experience was not welcomed by the Rectors’ Conference and by the RUI Foundation, who aimed at centralizing all regulations and decisions in Rome, and thus prof. Corradi was emarginated and the network was dismantled. However, relationships remained strong and this enabled every single University to keep up some organizational and decisional autonomy.

The structure designed in the first phase (University Erasmus Commission, common procedures, Central Erasmus Office and Schools’ Erasmus Offices) was maintained and strengthened, even after I was not a Vice-Rector anymore and was substituted by an Erasmus Delegate, prof. Morelli, and by the various subsequent Rectors.

The most significant experience for me, however, is the one I live when I meet again with many students, I sent for an Erasmus experience, or their parents, who thank me for the deep formational transformation and for the professional and relational opportunities the Erasmus experience enabled them to pick.

Finally, let me quote two relevant passages:

One is from Jean Monnet, who brought forth the Schumann Declaration, which 70 years ago initiated the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the first nucleus of the European integration process: “Les institutions peuvent, si elles sont bien construites, accumuler et transmettre la



sagesse aux générations successives” (*Institutions can, if they are well constructed, accumulate and transfer wisdom to future generations*).

The other one is from Altiero Spinelli, founder of the European Federalist Movement, who in the Ventotene Declaration in 1943 indicated to the future Europe an anticipating objective of the Italian Constitution: “young people should be assisted with what is needed to reduce, as far as possible, distances among their starting positions in their struggle for life. In particular, the State education system should offer a real chance of continuing their studies up to the highest level to the most suitable persons, instead of to the richest ones”.

- Prof. Barettni, what was your experience as International Relations Officer at the School of Management and Economics, Turin University?

When I started my activity at the International Office, in 2005, we already had a very wide network of Erasmus partnerships in Western Europe, therefore my role was mainly to extend our international exchange network to Central and Eastern European Universities as well as Universities from other continents. Since I had been teaching a lot in Central and Eastern European Universities, we intensified our bonds with Universities from those areas (Lithuania, Russia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Poland, Serbia...); with some of them we were even able to negotiate Erasmus exchange agreements, since the relevant Countries were already EU Member States, were preparing to join the EU or were in any case included in the Erasmus Programme.

As to Universities from other continents, of course many of our students wished to go to the United States, so we negotiated several exchange agreements with prominent U.S. Universities, and also invited U.S. lecturers to Turin as visiting professors. We strengthened our relationships with our partner Universities in Canada, Mexico, Brazil and Argentina, and we opened new exchanges with more South American Universities in the above countries and in Chile.

However, we did not want to restrict our exchanges to the usual Europe-America pattern, since we did have many students and lecturers interested in other continents and in emerging / developing countries, so we also negotiated many new agreements with Universities in Australia, Asia (India, China, Taiwan, South Korea...) and Africa (South Africa, Morocco, Tanzania...).

I believe that a very important part to successful international relations is also the personal factor, i.e. to actually go and visit partner Universities, and invite their lecturers to us: through the years, I was able to travel to many of our partner Universities in all continents as a visiting professor, and many of their lecturers came to teach in Turin. I believe the personal presence of a lecturer from a partner University is



extremely enriching for local students and lecturers, who are unable to go for an exchange to more than one or two countries, but are in this way able to experience different approaches and teaching methods. And of course, for a lecturer and exchange coordinator it is very important to personally get to know the Universities he/she will send students to, and receive students from.

- **How are foreign visiting professors welcomed and accommodated?**

Visits from lecturers from our partner Universities are always most treasured to us, because they are the best ambassadors for future incoming students, and they will be important reference persons for our future outgoing students. We do our best to make them feel at home in our town, discover its beauties and points of interest, and also meet our officers and lecturers; we believe that personal relationships are fundamental, for approximating our curricula, working out exchange students' careers, solving any problems which might come up and maybe, when the time comes, even creating double degrees.

Therefore, we put the utmost care into welcoming visiting professors adequately: we pick them up from the airport and accommodate them in one of our partner hotels, according to their preferences: mainly it will be one of our hotels in the historic city centre, which is very attractive, and well connected to our School by public transport. During their stay in Turin, we introduce them to colleagues, officers and students, as well as of course to the classes they teach; we invite them to a formal meal in one of our typical restaurants; but we also put every care into showing them the main points of interest in our city, like castles, parks, museums, the main shopping areas... and if they have sufficient spare time we like to take them to our mountains, countryside or one of our lakes.

This policy has enabled us to construct solid and long-lasting friendly relationships with many colleagues all over the world: some of them have even returned to Turin regularly, I have visited them at their premises, and together we have been able to solve any problem concerning our exchange agreements and students' careers; also, through them we have gained access to their own partner Universities, and we have been able to enter into agreements with some of these Universities thanks to their kind introduction.

- **Do your School's lecturers make full use of the opportunity of being visiting professors at partner Universities?**

We have always warmly encouraged our lecturers to visit our partner Universities and experience teaching there, since we believe this is very enriching for them personally, as well as fruitful for the local students and lecturers and for strengthening our mutual relationships. Several of our lecturers have been very keen in doing this; one of our professors, now retired, has even written a book about her experience at one of our partner Universities in the United States; another one enjoyed his experience at one of our partner Universities in Australia so much that he has moved to that University definitely!



Though we have been actively promoting the possibility of going to partner Universities as visiting professors, however, some of our lecturers still do not see the importance of this chance, or do not find time for an exchange period among their many commitments; we do regret this and we still work intensively on trying to promote this extremely precious opportunity!

Annex 2. COVID-19 EMERGENCY FAQs FOR EXCHANGE STUDENTS (UNITO)

A. When will classes resume?

The Italian Government has ordered the **closure** of all schools and universities nationwide **until 3rd May 2020 and introduced strong limitations to personal movements**. As of now, with other European countries starting to adopt similar measures, we cannot give a precise date when everything is going to go back to normal. In this regard, we do ask for your patience and understanding.

B. Is it mandatory to end my exchange now?

No, it isn't. If you wish to wait until the 3rd May and attend classes online, you can do so.

We acknowledge, however, that some of you may feel unsafe or worried about the whole situation and wish to go home, especially if you just came here for the second/spring semester. We, of course, want to do everything that is in our power to help you do so. **Please contact your home university as well and follow their advice.**

On the contrary, if you decide to stay, we want you to be aware of the limitations that are occurring in this moment both in terms of teaching (not all courses can be taught online e.g. laboratories) and of personal movement (cinemas, theatres, museums and other leisure venues are closed and travelling is limited) and this may have an impact on your exchange as you imagined it. In this regard, **please contact your home University as well and try understanding with them what is the best course of action for you.** For example, if you planned to graduate in May, this may affect your schedule.

C. I've already left Turin. Can I attend classes and take exams online and/or, if necessary, come back to Turin when classes and exams restart regularly?

Yes, you can. The University is currently working on making most of its teachings available online as well as preparing online exam session. You will receive further information on this by the relevant Professor



and/or office as soon as it becomes available. Make sure to **contact your home University to understand if they will recognise this kind of activities and credits as part of your exchange.**

D. I am no longer in Turin but I am attending classes online. Do I have to register the end of my mobility anyway?

It is not necessary **unless your University requires you to do so** (please check with them what the best course of action may be). We will require you, however, to fill in a questionnaire in order to keep track of your mobility in a different way. Check your personal email for further information.

E. I couldn't take some exams in February/March. Can I take them online?

The University is working towards facilitating online exams for those who could not take them in February due to the sudden closure of the University. You will receive further information on this by the relevant Professor and/or office as soon as it becomes available. Please bear in mind that spring exam session usually takes place in May/June/July.

F. What do I do if I want to go back home?

Please **let us now and inform your home university as well.** Check your email address where we sent you the self-declaration form for travelling purposes (*“modulo per l'autodichiarazione degli spostamenti”*), necessary to travel to the airport or to the train station.

Due to the situation we are facing, **you are NOT requested to go to INFOPOINT** to interrupt your mobility period. You can do so by:

- Filling in the online form using your @edu.unito.it email
- Filling in the end of mobility form upload. If you cannot print it, you can send it via email without your signature.
- The date of end of your mobility is the last day you are/were in Turin
- If you took exams, please upload the most up-to-date list of courses and exams of your Career Plan (*“Autocertificazione esami per studenti incoming”* available under www.unito.it » MyUnito » Carriera » Certificazioni Carriera). For any incomplete or incorrect information, please specify the relevant option.

End of mobility form: <https://forms.gle/P4BumPB2nvwebpwc7>



G. I ended my mobility before the emergency started. When will I get my Transcript of Records and my certificate of attendance?

We are working on this as well, however, it may take longer than planned. Your home universities have been contacted and are aware of this. For any extreme urgency (such as graduation) please contact us accordingly through your home university as well. Due to the current emergency we ask for your patience and understanding

H. How does distance learning work?

To be able to access classes online you first need to:

- Make sure your MyUnito account is active (it must show “Current Student”. If you still see “Future Student” and you registered your arrival at the Infopoint, please contact us)
- Take note of your MyUnito username and password. You will need them to log in.
- Check your @edu.unito.it email account for messages.

Follow the instruction in the document named “Distance learning”

I. I was supposed to start my exchange this semester. When can I come to Turin?

If you haven't left your home country yet, please reschedule your mobility in Turin for next academic year and **inform your home university**. For this semester no new incoming mobilities at the University of Turin will be allowed.

J. How do I access healthcare in Turin?

For all emergency (Pronto Soccorso), Covid-19 included, healthcare assistance is guaranteed regardless of any type of medical insurance and with no extra costs.

If you feel like you might have suspicious symptoms related to COVID-19 (most commonly fever, dry cough, shortness of breath), please make sure to:

- **Call the Regional Emergency toll-free number 800.19.20.20:** be ready to answer some questions related to your whereabouts, latest travels, health condition etc... Be specific and follow their guidelines and advice. The service is available **24/7**



- **112 - Common Emergency Telephone Number:** for emergency medical services
- **National Information Centre on COVID-19: 1500.** For general information valid nationwide
- **Guardia Medica: 0115747.** non-urgent medical services at night-time (from 8 pm to 8 am) or weekends (from 10 am to 8 am on the closest working date). **The service is free of charge.**

Do not enter the Pronto Soccorso (hospital emergency room) without signalling your symptoms first and keep the safe distancing measures!

In all other *non-emergency cases*:

1. If you applied for a health insurance with the **Italian National Health System (Sistema Sanitario Nazionale - SSN)** you can choose a general practitioner ("*medico d base*") in the area where you live without extra costs.

For further information please check the Edisu

website: <https://www.edisu.piemonte.it/en/faq/faq-sale-studio-e-altri-servizi/faq-health-care-information>

2. If you have a **European Health Insurance Card** (in Italian called "TEAM") released from another European country, first contact your doctor or the competent health authorities in your home country to gather information on how to use your card and then take it with you to a general practitioner near you.

For further information please check the Edisu

website: <https://www.edisu.piemonte.it/en/faq/faq-sale-studio-e-altri-servizi/faq-health-care-information>

3. If you have a private insurance (either European or non-European) please contact your insurance company at first to understand what services are included and so that they can provide you the name of a doctor and or clinic/hospital that are affiliated to them. Take your insurance documents with you as well.

K. What is the situation now in Italy and Turin? How can I keep updated?

Please check the following pages for regular updates:

Unito webpage - Italian version: <https://www.unito.it/avvisi/coronavirus-aggiornamenti-la-comunita-universitaria>

Unito webpage - English Version: <https://en.unito.it/news/coronavirus-covid-19-update-unito->



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FAQ curated by the Italian Ministry of Foreign

Affairs: https://www.esteri.it/mae/en/sala_stamp/archivionotizie/approfondimenti/farnesina-al-lavoro-per-una-corretta-informazione-all-estero.html

Read the World Health Organization's advice for the

public: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>