

# **ERASMUS UNIVERSITY CHARTER PANEPISTIMIO PATRON (UNIVERSITY OF PATRAS) EUROPEAN POLICY STATEMENT**

One of the major goals of the University of Patras, since its foundation, has been to promote effective interaction between the university and its European and international environment. In 1996, a "European Policy Statement" was approved by the university's senate. Since then, a so-called internationalization strategy has been gradually embedded in all academic and research activities. The requirements of the Bologna process have been in the university's agenda at all academic levels. Staff members currently participate in activities related to curriculum upgrade and synchronization. Another aspect of this process regards the financing of research activities via European funding programmes for inter-university cooperation.

The University of Patras has long recognized that international cooperation and networking are necessities of a global economy. In our modern era, education and research can no longer stay delimited by local borders or policies. Education was one of the first domains included in the so called Common European policies, with the aim to create channels of communication, debate, as well as collaboration leading to mutual learning and to the building of formal university networks and mobility programmes. In fact, such networks have also served in the creation of collaboration bridges with other countries outside Europe, namely in North and Latin America, Asia, Africa and Australia.

An additional important role of European universities has been to contribute to the European's Union development and competitiveness. In this respect, universities play a key role in the onset of networks enhancing both research and the diffusion of knowledge. Also, universities are responsible for the formulation of future policies regarding research and education, and the supply of policy makers with a related tank of ideas.

The international orientation policy of the University of Patras is formally achieved through the cooperation of its academic staff members with universities and research institutions worldwide. Besides research, such cooperation includes activities related to teaching, intensive programmes and the development of common curricula, establishment of bilateral agreements, as well as the participation in international educational organizations, networks and university associations.

The University of Patras was the first University in Greece to incorporate the principles of "Quality Assurance" in education. To this end, the university takes part in the Institutional Evaluation Programme of the European Universities Association (CRE). Also, the University of Patras has been a pioneer in introducing ECTS in its academic departments since 1996. Finally, the UP was the first in Greece to adapt and implement a students' evaluation of the teaching staff performance.

The University encourages multicultural academic exchange and participates in European educational and mobility programmes, such as Erasmus and TEMPUS. Within the frame of Erasmus and particular the LLP/ Erasmus Programme of Studies, the UP has conducted Bilateral Agreement with over 250 European Universities that facilitate the mobility of students, teaching and administrative staff. Taking into account the current financial restrictions as well as the advantage of having a former experience in the Leonardo Da Vinci

programme, the UP promotes the LLP/Erasmus Programmes for Placements (internship) in European companies, industry, and organizations right in advance.

The UP also runs three Erasmus Mundus Programmes. Two are realized in the Department of Civil Engineering within the frame of Master Programme in earthquakes. Students from all over the world participate in this Programme receiving high quality studies and excellent hosting. Our third Erasmus Mundus with Argentinean Universities initiated mobility of postgraduate students from Argentina to Greece through a first-launched exchange programme.

In this framework, and in order to enhance mobility, the UP has been a partner in the Euraxess Services Network, aiming to provide customized assistance, information, and support to incoming researchers and their families who work (or plan to work) in Patras and in the broader region of Western Greece. Such support extends to issues regarding taxation, insurance policies, visa procedures, social security, health services, education, language courses, accommodation, etc, aiming to minimize any obstructions posed to mobility.