

Erasmus Charter for Higher Education 2014/2020

Erasmus Policy Statement (overall Strategy)

In Italy, Higher Technical Institutes (ITS) offer non-university tertiary level education, leading toward an EQF 5th level degree, hence bridging a gap between the Italian and the European education system. Aforesaid institutes were established on January 25, 2008 by a Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers and became operational upon the enactment of the MIUR MLPS coordinating Decree dated September 7, 2011.

The Veneto Region has selected Vicenza as the location of the Mechatronic ITS Foundation as this city possesses a long-established manufacturing industry, specialized in the mechanics and mechatronics field: the Mechatronics District involves companies in Vicenza and in the Veneto Region and the local University, a branch of the University of Padua, offers degrees in Mechatronics (Bachelor/EQF 6th level and Master/EQF 7th level) and Product Innovation (Master/EQF 7th level).

Therefore, the ITS's internationalization strategy closely relates to this local socio-economic assets, which are based on four key pillars: Research, Innovation, Education and Internationalization. Article 1 of the Statute of the ITS Foundation reads, "The objectives of the Foundation shall be performed at regional and national level, nevertheless **embracing proposals from the European Union.**"

This is in line with the new economic theories involving not only local companies, but also schools, universities, research centers, public centers and institutions, in order to facilitate the sharing of new knowledge and continue to be not only competitive but also entertainers of a renewed confidence in the future of the whole area. Central is the interaction at local/European level among actors in innovative activity. The ITS believes distinctive in its own path of internationalization, the function of technology transfer, which affects small and large businesses, as well as research centers; they can be support for the role of intermediation (bridging institutions) and the design/development / implementation of a viable project experiences aimed to assessment, validation and recognition of competences. ITS then collects the request of the labour world to promote the dissemination of mechatronics culture, in international relations with companies, organizations, universities and research centers, to stimulate the creation of business networks and the provision of strategic services. The dialogue, communication and planning activities with the involvement of businesses and the "local community", are the fundamental pieces on which to build a specific way of economic international development of the Cluster and the educative development of ITS.

In this context:

A) partners will be chosen in countries where there are examples of excellence in education and mechatronics manufacturing and with whom it will be possible to develop activities for benchmark and exchange of good practices.

B) The ITS is open to collaboration with all areas of the EU. While it is clear the interest for countries of mechatronic established tradition (i.e. Germany, Austria), the recent presentation of the project KA2 considered a line that from west (Catalonia) moves eastward (Slovenia, Poland, the Baltics countries) looking for opportunities for excellence in education and economic clusters similar to the context of origin. In addition, a collaboration was activated with MEDIS, mechatronic district of Bari, in order to pave the way for opportunities of joint north-south cooperation between national districts in a EU dimension. This is also coherent with the aims of Cluster Tecnologico Nazionale CFI - Fabbrica Intelligente, to which ITS will join. It wants to create a national manufacturing community, stable and more competitive in the conception, organization, execution and enhancement of lines of research, as well as connect the policies of national and regional research with international ones, to seize opportunities for European funding and ensure greater synergy between the different sources of funding.

C) The main purpose of projects that can be made is the mobility of short-cycle vocational learners, so to spread the culture of: internships in companies; assessment of the results of non-formal

learning in accordance with the ECVET procedures. Through the realization of mobility activities of learners (internships in companies) and job-shadowing of teachers, it is possible to establish basis for the design of many future projects of transnational mobility using the opportunities provided by ErasmusPlus. This will allow an enhancement of language skills of the learners in training, the increase of European vocational mobility, exchange of experiences among teachers and foreign educational and economic clusters working together aiming to establish common training modules as to contents and learning outcomes (expected and recognized). This in order to work in inter-cluster synergy , both nationally and internationally, developing new policies for the sector and strengthening networks of expertise and knowledge. It is also necessary to increase the culture of : streaming online of information; e-learning. This, however, as an essential premise of the process of LLL that now the younger generations can no longer ignore.

Institutional strategy for the organization and implementation of EU cooperation projects in training in relation to projects implemented under the Programme Erasmus+

As the educational activities of ITS began in 2011 (the Foundation was established in 2010) its internationalization strategy is now under development. Overall, the strategy will aim to actively pursue collaborations in international projects that relate to the teaching and training. These programmes are developed both under the umbrella of centralized and decentralized actions of the Erasmus Plus, or through other programmes, such as measures to disseminate the research projects developed in the area by partners / entities such as mechatronic founders (i.e. Confindustria Vicenza), or the mechatronics network of institutes/schools, etc. Also crucial is the establishment of formal partnerships and ad hoc collaborations with companies, government and research agencies, other ITS, other entities of clusters (i.e. Cluster Tecnologico Nazionale CFI - Fabbrica Intelligente). These partnerships are intended in part to promote the teaching and multilateral training programmes. For the organization and implementation of international cooperation projects in the field of teaching and learning within the framework of the Erasmus program, the strategy includes participation in projects related to intensive programmes, combined with the development of joint programmes of study, and cooperation in the reception of teachers and learners from other countries. The strategy of ITS for projects implemented under the Erasmus programme is to engage both as a partner network and as a leader, initially capitalizing on such collaborations skills that make it progressively more structured to organize projects for broader. The implementation of this strategy will go through actions KA1, KA2, and the mobility of learners is that of teachers. Initially it will be determining to select a limited number of reliable partners with whom to perform long-term partnership, raising the quality of teaching, increasing the opportunities for joint research and exchange, aiming both to the training useful to achieve the expected results, which as a vehicle for increase the employability of learners.

Impact of the Mechatronics ITS participation in the Programme Erasmus+ on the modernization of the institution (for each of the 5 priorities of the Modernization Agenda) in terms of the policy objectives which the Mechatronics ITS intends to achieve.

The ITS is working on a Strategic Plan, able to set out how to enhance the status as a high-quality research-orientated institution enabling students to learn and acquire competencies needed to function successfully in a advanced economy, in which professional technicians are able to intellect the company organization and the cluster context in a globalized economy . The opportunities offered by the Erasmus+ are recognised as a vital for students to develop the competencies (both professional and key ones) they need, and professors can strengthen teaching and research through cooperative working. ITS aims that participation in the Programme will develop internationalisation and modernisation in the following ways:

1) Increasing attainment levels to provide the graduates and researchers Europe needs. One of the key aims of ITS is to offer the highest possibility to learners employability. Mobility is a key factor in achieving this aim through developing the student experiences and enhancing teaching, in

a continual relationships with partners and stakeholders. ITS undertakes to start and widen participation in mobility and seek to break down barriers restricting mobility.

2) Improving the quality and relevance of higher education. The ITS is working hard in these first years of activities to build comprehensive systems to ensure the quality of its programmes. Relevance is ensured by its being born on Cluster initiative as a bridge among secondary and tertiary education and industry. The dual system is focused on a strong cooperation with companies of the area. Placement opportunities are valued and through the programme it is hoped to encourage European and international traineeships.

3) Strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border co-operation. The ITS recognizes the need to focus on research and innovation (collaborating with local employers, where students can deliver in-house projects) and widening participation, also through some grants, in an increasing effort to involve disadvantages and vulnerable groups.

4) Linking higher education, research and business for excellence and regional development. The ITS is committed to creating high-quality programmes which develop the attributes expected by professional mechatronic technicians. Additionally, in the next year ITS aim to build regional, national and international enterprise partnerships and to develop teachers and learners mobility. The opportunities offered by the programme i.e. staff mobility and transnational strategic projects will be promoted to help achieve these goals.

5) Improving governance and funding. The ITS activities are working on building a strong leadership supported by efficient support services. A clear and transparent planning, management, administrative and budgeting process will have forecasting accuracy and financial solidity of the initiatives. Sustainability will be embedded firmly in all academic and administrative activities.