



ITS Academy
meccatronico
veneto
istituto tecnico superiore
scuola speciale di tecnologia

Erasmus Charter for Higher Education 2021/2027 - Erasmus Policy Statement

The position and role of ITS in Italy have been better defined since the previous draft of this document (the one relating to the period 2014/2020) and these paths are beginning to find their place in tertiary education, distinguishing themselves from university courses not only in terms of duration but mostly for the technical-practical nature of the training offered, placed at level V EQF. It is worth remembering that these higher education institutions were included in the Italian legal system 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.

Throughout the period when the first Charter was effective, the activity of the ITS Mechatronic Foundation in the Veneto Region expanded from three centers with a hundred students in 2014, to seven centers with 9 courses with about 300 students in the 2019/2021 two-year period. This has gradually allowed a parallel expansion of the activities carried out with the Erasmus + project along with an increasing awareness of its objectives, while the ITS's internationalization strategy continues to remain closely connected to the local socio-economic assets of the Veneto Region, which are based on four key pillars: Internationalization, Research, Innovation, Education. 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 coming from the European Union."

By this way, 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."

In this context:

A) mobility partners have been, and will be, chosen in countries where examples of excellence in education and mechatronics manufacturing can be found, and with whom it is possible to develop activities for benchmark and exchange of good practices. As a matter of fact, the network established in the ECHE's first period has allowed to lay the foundations to booster these activities.

B) The ITS is open to collaboration with all areas of the EU. Whereas the interest in countries of mechatronic-established tradition is quite obvious (namely Germany and Austria), the mobilities carried out in the first period made it possible to broaden the sphere of activity in Europe, ranging from countries such as Poland and Slovakia to Spain and Malta, thus creating a network of contacts between north and south of Europe, taking advantage of Italy's geographical position.

C) The main purpose of the projects is the mobility of short-cycle vocational learners, so as to spread the culture of internships in companies and assessment of the results of non-formal learning in compliance with

the ECVET procedures. Through the accomplishment of learners' mobility activities (internships in companies) and teachers' job-shadowing, it has been possible to establish the basis for the architecture of further future projects of transnational mobility using the opportunities provided by ErasmusPlus. This brings along an enhancement of the learner's language skills while in training, the increase of European vocational mobility, the 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). All 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 information and e-learning.

Therefore, in consideration of the positive results obtained with the activity carried out during the 2014/2020 period, ITS Meccatronico intends to implement the internationalization strategy because the experience abroad for students and staff has proved to be a fundamental element in completing and updating the formative, professional and personal profiles of these two components. In particular: for students, the internship experience in foreign companies (lasting two months) was extremely useful for their professional and human growth, offering them precious opportunities of interrelation with people of other nationalities and cultures; for teachers and staff, getting to know how educational bodies of the same EQF level (V) are organized and carrying out their teaching activities, is clearly preparatory to the goal of making their own contribution to the construction of a European Education Area. It should be emphasized that in Europe today the educational institutions that identify themselves in the V level EQF present quite different organizational and content aspects, since they range from Universities of applied sciences to institutions that are inserted by the various national systems both at VET and HVET level. This explains the necessity for a deep work of homogenization and sharing, so as to reach a truly common training area also but not only related to the priorities of the European Education Area. In order to achieve this result, the opportunities for mobility and contacts offered by the Erasmus program are extremely useful. This means that the panorama existing at the time of the Bologna Declaration (1999) has changed considerably and in several ways.

By participating in the Programme, ITS aims to develop internationalization and modernization in the following ways:

- 1) Increasing attainment levels to supply technicians and researchers mirroring what Europe needs. One of the key aims of ITS is to offer learners the highest possibility of employability. Mobility is a key factor in achieving this aim through developing the student experiences and enhancing teaching, through a constant relationship with partners and stakeholders. ITS undertakes to start and widen participation in mobility and seeks to break down barriers restricting mobility.
- 2) Improving the quality and relevance of higher education. The ITS has worked hard in these first years of activity to build comprehensive systems to ensure the quality of its curriculum, so as to become a bridge between secondary and tertiary education and industry in the Italian system. The dual system is focused on a strong cooperation with the companies of the area. Placement opportunities are valued and through the programme we hope to promote 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, in an increasing effort to involve disadvantaged 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 expertise expected by professional mechatronic technicians.

Therefore, with regard to the learning mobility activity (KA1), we intend to continue working in order to fully achieve the contents of the Erasmus Policy Statement already declared, with particular reference to the functions of technology transfer (Industry 4.0), consolidation of international relations with companies, research centers and training bodies of the same EQF level (V), exchanges of methods and good practices within the HVET short-cycle.

Furthermore, thanks also to the activities carried out in the first period of achievement of the ECHE, ITS Meccatronico has been able to create a network of contacts at E.C. level which has allowed to reach not only a more optimal organization of mobility, but which is generating the opportunity to participate in Community projects aimed at reinforcing dialogue between training and research bodies in European countries for greater sharing of work modules and exchanges of "learning outcomes". For this reason the item "Partnerships for Cooperation and exchanges of practices (KA2) - Cooperation among organizations and institutions" has been indicated as a possible course of action, since we intend to operate as a partner by entering community projects dealing with this work-related aspect, with particular reference to the European Education Area.

The participation of the ITS Mechatronic Foundation in the Erasmus + program aims to bring the Foundation's staff, teachers and students to a greater attention towards European "citizenship" in the broadest sense of the term: cultural, economic and social. To do this, the Foundation has already implemented knowledge and awareness activities - and intends to continue doing so in the next period of activity. Furthermore, some support measures have been put in place, which are mainly: extra financial support for student mobility (integrating the grants of the Erasmus project by almost 50%) and the choice of destinations differentiated by organizational and training characteristics for travel study of staff and teachers. The destinations for staff mobility hitherto reached have been: England, Sweden, Austria, Portugal, testifying the desire of ITS Meccatronico to deepen the knowledge of HVET training systems, no matter how different from each other. We also intend to focus on an increase in the mobility of both students and staff (keeping into account the social / health situation) and on an improvement in the satisfaction rates expressed in the mobility reports.

Furthermore, following the first partial experiences of coaching in the 2014/2020 period which concerned the involvement of ITC Meccatronico in some Community projects, such as GREEN STAR and SHINE, we intend to continue our involvement in cooperation projects, aiming for actual operational partnerships. The latest initiative - presented in February 2020 and therefore still awaiting approval - concerns participation as an operating partner in a project related to the Centers of Vocational Excellence, bound to have a 4 years' duration. The strong link with Confindustria Veneto / SIAV (regional business representation), which for years has been implementing community projects in the context of innovative knowledge networks and which also participates in this activity, represents an important stimulus and support for ITS in the development of any possible initiative in these areas.