



Strategy for the internationalisation of Slovenian higher education 2016-2020

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Edited by: Katarina Aškerc Veniger, dr. Alenka Flander

Proofread by: P-Lingo, Petra Tomše, s. p.

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THE VISION FOR THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE SLOVENIAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA:

In 2020, Slovenian higher education will be a part of a global higher education area, continuously improving its quality of education through collaboration with the best international institutes. This will help it become a recognizable international centre of knowledge and an attractive destination for higher education study as well as for teaching, scientific research and professional work for international students and professionals.

Internationalisation as a Tool to Make Slovenia an Internationally Renowned Centre of Knowledge

Maja Makovec Brenčič, PhD
Minister of education, science and sport



The Resolution on the National Higher Education Programme 2011–2020 recognised the internationalisation of Slovenian higher education as one of the key areas of further development for the sector. The strategy, which was confirmed by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia this July, charts a path of implementation for the development of higher education and scientific research.

Our objective is that Slovenian higher education shall become a part of the global higher education area by 2020, whilst continuing to improve its quality through cooperation with high quality international institutions. Slovenia will thus become a reputable international centre of knowledge and an attractive destination for higher education studies as well as teaching, scientific research and professional activities of both domestic and international students and experts.

The strategy is focused on five key areas, as follows: international mobility as a key feature of the Slovenian higher education and scientific research community; openness of institutions towards the international environment; high quality international scientific research and development cooperation; promotion of intercultural competences; and a focus on targeted priority regions and countries, as well as the ongoing promotion, support and monitoring of the strategy. With the aim to improve Slovenia's reputation as a destination of knowledge, we developed the "Study in Slovenia" access point, which is regularly showcased at international fairs, seminars and professional conferences in Slovenia and abroad. Moreover, we intend to continue with these activities into the future.

The international openness of the Slovenian higher education system is a significant driver of quality of

higher education and contributes to its international reputation. Despite positive trends in recent years, Slovenia still lags behind the OECD and EU averages in the international comparisons of mobility. Therefore, the strategic plan of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport focuses primarily on the opening of the higher education and scientific research area, accelerating knowledge transfer, promoting "talent exchange" and providing modern competencies and experiences to all people who will help to co-create the higher education and scientific research area.

In this context, it is important that we focus on the provision of various supporting activities and environments that can help to open and set up international connections at all levels. This is the only way to further ensure increasing numbers of mobile individuals, the openness of our institutions and their international networks and connections, and to implement all of our other internationalisation objectives.

A daring action plan for the period from 2016 to 2018, within which we are pursuing 25 objectives and over 50 measures with a total value of €57 million, is already being implemented, supported by both national and European funds. Moreover, the action plan also reaches out to the socially disadvantaged.

I am convinced that the planned strategy and its implementation represent the right development path towards excellence and a strong international reputation for the Slovenian higher education and scientific research area. However, cooperation and trust, and especially belief that, together, we are capable of succeeding, will be essential to reach the above-specified goals.

The internationalisation of slovenian higher education

The internationalisation of higher education is important for the establishment and development of Slovenia's global relationships and connections in the world. Slovenia has the unique potential to become an international centre of knowledge. We are a small, secure and friendly European country with knowledge and resources that are already widely renowned for their creativity and innovative potential. Our quality of life is contingent upon our ability to produce superior knowledge that will support the creation of high-quality living conditions. That's why strategic and in-depth international connections, as well as the mutual exchange of knowledge with institutions in our target regions and countries, are important to our higher education and research system, and to our economy. Higher education can also be a key lever for the promotion of Slovenia internationally, the creation of strategic connections with international partners, the strengthening of connections with the Slovenian global diaspora and can help and support the growth of society and the quality of life in developing regions.

Internationalisation provides an opportunity to develop a global network of Slovenian-educated international graduates, who can act as ambassadors of Slovenia in regions with which our connections are

weak or not yet established. Domestically, internationalisation can contribute to the development of an internationally experienced, inter-culturally informed and qualified population, as well as to internationally open public and private institutions, which can attract global talent. In this way we can increase the attractiveness of our system, and thus boost the possibilities and opportunities for all Slovenian professionals currently active abroad (especially young professionals) to return to Slovenia and realise their potential in the Slovenian academic, economic and social fields.

The internationalisation of higher education has also been one of the key objectives and one of the main political areas of the Bologna process and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) from the very beginning. In accordance with the goal set at the Ministerial Conference in Leuven (2009)¹, which states that in 2020 at least 20 percent of those graduating in the EHEA should have had a study or training period abroad, and in accordance with all previous Communiqués and documents, a mobility strategy until 2020² was adopted at the Ministerial Conference in Bucharest (2012), which includes measures at institutional, national or European levels. For this purpose, all member countries of the EU are supposed to prepare and implement their own in-

1 Website: http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/conference/documents/leuven_louvain-la-neuve_communique%C3%A9_april_2009.pdf.

2 Website: <http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/%281%29%2012%20EHEA%20Mobility%20Strategy.pdf>.

ternationalisation and mobility strategies with concrete and measurable objectives³. The strategy emphasises mobility as playing a key role in ensuring a high-quality higher education system, and, at the same time, as an important driver of cooperation and exchange outside the EHEA. It strives for a greater openness of higher education areas that would enable more balanced mobility, or »brain circulation«, within the EHEA, which would consequently become more attractive to students, young researchers, teachers and other higher education staff from non-European countries. The intent is additionally supported by the Yerevan Ministerial Communiqué (2015), which, among other things, highlights the following priorities: the quality of learning and teaching, fostering the employability of graduates, implementing agreed structural reforms and making systems more inclusive, within which the aspect of mobility in higher education is strongly emphasised.

The internationalisation of higher education in Slovenia is one of the priorities set out in the Resolution on the National Higher Education Programme 2011-2020 (off. g. 41/2011), which is key to the development of higher education and an important aspect with regards to quality. It means acquiring new skills, the improvement and development of interpersonal, cultural, and communication competences, updated academic offerings for greater employability of graduates, etc. Higher education institutions operate in an international environment, which is why they are involved in international collaborations through networks of higher education institutions, international projects and by implementing joint study programmes. Additionally, it is crucial that education can be conducted in a foreign language, alongside which the simultaneous development of the Slovenian language and terminology must be ensured.

The internationalisation of the Slovenian higher education area shall proceed as a part of a long-term and sustainable process based on high-quality, holistic and balanced international partnerships. For that, the following is necessary:

- **a partnership between the government, higher education institutions and the wider public** towards a common vision and national objectives for internationalization, as well as a coordinated approach to achieving these stated objectives;
- **a partnership between key areas** (culture, internal affairs, labour, family and social affairs, external affairs, etc.) when implementing the strategy, removing barriers for mobility;
- **a common concern for the preservation and development of the Slovenian language**, which shall develop its own professional vocabulary and usage, and a simultaneous openness to the possibilities of quality communication in a foreign language in education and scientific research, which is a prerequisite for attracting quality (international) students and potential new professionals;
- **an integrated governmental policy**, which will establish flexible administrative and legal procedures in order to support internationalisation;
- **the establishment of a recognizable, integrated, national identity for Slovenian higher education**, which will improve the global visibility of Slovenia and the Slovenian higher education and research area, and make it an attractive destination for study and research.

³ According to a study made by the EUA (2013), over half of higher education institutions (56 %) report to have adopted a strategy for internationalisation, 13 percent are intending to develop a strategy, and 30 percent of the institutions are considering it as part of other strategies. All institutions (except one) report a positive impact of the strategy for the internationalisation of their institution, especially in the areas of developing partnerships, outgoing student mobility, teaching in a foreign language, attracting international students and opportunities in the area of developing options for mobility of their staff.

Concurrent with the formation of the Strategy for the Internationalization of Slovenian Higher Education, a Strategy for the Internationalization of Scientific Research is also being prepared by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. The key purpose of the Strategy for the Internationalisation of Science is to operationalise the provisions set out in the Research and Innovation Strategy of Slovenia 2011-2020. The increas-

ing pace of globalization requires the urgent strengthening of scientific and technological excellence and the promotion of sustainable development in Slovenia. The two strategies complement each other, especially in terms of strengthening international scientific research cooperation, an open job market for researchers, transfer and circulation of knowledge and an open approach to scientific publication and research data.⁴

⁴ In this context, the European research area means a »... unified research area, open towards the world, based on an internal market, in which researchers, knowledge and technologies circulate freely and through which the Union and her member countries can strengthen their scientific and research foundations, their competitiveness and ability to solve great global challenges together. Available on: http://www.mizs.gov.si/fileadmin/mizs.gov.si/pageuploads/Znanost/doc/Zakonodaja/Strategije/ERA_Roadmap.pdf

The development of the strategy for the internationalisation of slovenian higher education 2016-2020

In order to set the objectives, measures, indicators and implementation activities of the national strategy, global higher education trends and national strategic documents, policies and directives, the National Higher Education Programme 2011-2020 in particular, were taken into account.⁵ We also considered the theory and literature in the field of the internationalisation of higher education.⁶

The Strategy for the Internationalisation of Slovenian Higher Education is focused on five key areas, which are intended to align with a long-term goal: the development of Slovenia into an internationally attractive and recognisable centre of knowledge. Internationally demonstrated excellence in higher education and scientific research can contribute to the appeal of Slovenia for international students, academic staff, researchers and innovators. A favourable geographic location and a historically significant regional role in these areas are two of the biggest comparative advantages, which should be effectively harnessed to achieve the strategic goals of internationalisation.

With this strategy, Slovenia is defining its advantages in the field of higher education, research and innovation. Systematic collaboration and quality cooperation with the best professionals and institutions in the target regions in different fields enable a clear positioning, the successful resolution of current issues, progress in research, and the international competitiveness and attractiveness of Slovenian higher education institutions for international professionals and students. By connecting with other higher education institutions, joint projects and research, Slovenia can strengthen and develop its profile as an internationally recognised and attractive centre of knowledge.

Based on the starting points listed above, we have formed the five aforementioned key areas, or strategic objectives, for the internationalisation of Slovenian higher education.

The strategic objectives served as a tool for consultation, carried out in summer 2015, with various stakeholders of Slovenian higher education, including: representatives of the Directorate of Higher Educa-

⁵ The Strategy for Smart Specialisation, Slovenia's Development Strategy 2014-2020, Research and Innovation Strategy of Slovenia 2011-2020, priority strategic directions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the field of Slovenia's international development cooperation and the previously adopted strategy of internationalization of Slovenian higher education institutions.

⁶ Knight, J. (2004). Internationalization Remodeled: Definition, Approaches and Rationales. *Journal of Studies in International Education* (8), 5-31. V Knight, J. (2005). An Internationalization Model: Responding to New Realities and Challenges. V *Higher Education in Latin America: The International Dimension*. Ur. Jane Knight, Hans de Wit, Isabel Christina Jaramillo in Jocelyn Gacel-Ávila. Available on: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTLACREGTOPEUCATION/Resources/Higher_Ed_in_LAC_International_Dimension.pdf (5. 3. 2015).

tion at the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MIZŠ), the Council for Higher Education of the Republic of Slovenia (SVŠ), the Rector's Conference of the Republic of Slovenia (RKRS), the Commission for the development of a culture of quality at Slovenian universities at RKRS, and the representatives of student bodies. All parties involved expressed support for the initial draft of the strategy for internationalisation. Through the joint cooperation of all stakeholders and interagency cohesion between the relevant Ministries and public institutions, a draft of the national strategy for internationalisation was formed. The amended document was prepared based on the comments that were collected. The aforementioned approach has contributed positively to the formation of a common consensus and identification with the main strategic objectives, measures, indicators and implementations activities, which will help to facilitate the realisation and achievement of the objectives of the strategy by 2020.

The strategy represents a basis for the financing of international agreements and programmes, international mobility and mechanisms for internationalisation at home, which will be made available by the state to an appropriate extent from the national budget, from EU resources and/or additional sources of financing. According to the adopted national strategy, higher education institutions are expected to adjust their institutional strategies for internationalisation, which will thus become a part of the broader mission and development plan of the institutions. This will not inhibit their autonomy in the organisation of teaching and scientific research work, which will actually be strengthened by implementing the general principles and objectives of the national strategy. The active and systematic participation in the international academic environment is crucial for ensuring high-quality Slovenian higher education and scientific research, and the promotion of cultural, political and economic cooperation with other societies and cultures that are important to Slovenia.

Areas and objectives of the strategy for the internationalisation of slovenian higher education 2016-2020

In order to realize this vision, the Strategy for the Internationalisation of the Slovenian Higher Education is focused on five main areas:

1. *mobility as a key component of the Slovenian higher education community, open to the international environment;*
2. *quality international scientific research and development cooperation;*
3. *promoting the development of intercultural competences;*
4. *targeting priority regions and countries;*
5. *promotion, support and monitoring of the Strategy for the Internationalization of Slovenian Higher Education.*

1. Mobility as a key component of the Slovenian higher education community, open to the international environment

International student mobility is still the most widespread and important means of internationalisation. Along with the mobility of staff, it brings multiple benefits to both institutions and individuals. International mobility enables all participants to gain direct experience and contact with representatives from other nations and cultures. The systematic improvement gained from an international experience along with development of cultural competences helps individuals to become more competitive on the global and international labour market and to successfully contribute to society. Knowledge and understanding of other cultures and nations and fluency in foreign languages has never before been more crucial for working in a contemporary inter-

cultural and global environment. Mobility adds value to both domestic and international higher education institutions and to the social environment, which is why encouraging international mobility, while also developing intercultural competences and quality assurance and enhancement processes that support mobility, is one of the key objectives of the Slovenian higher education system.

To be equipped and suitably qualified for work, a career and life in modern society, which require graduates to have interdisciplinary knowledge, critical thinking and problem solving skills, and be adept at interpersonal communication and collaboration, students must have access to the most advanced forms of education.

Systematic mobility as a key component of a high-quality and open higher education area can expand the horizons of students and graduates and strengthen their ability for inter-personal communication and collaboration. It also positively influences the development of soft skills, such as intercultural awareness, adaptability, flexibility, innovativeness, productivity, motivation, endurance, problem solving abilities and being able to work productively in a team and in global society.⁷

These skills, along with the acquired knowledge, contribute towards greater employability. It is therefore important to establish a system for the recognition of these competences (which students acquire during mobility) by employers, so the young people can showcase their experiences at interviews in a way the employers can acknowledge. It is also important to establish a method to recognize student internships and placements abroad. Work-integrated learning and experiences allow students to familiarise themselves with the actual work processes specific to their future field of employment,

In addition to the international mobility of students and academic staff, the internationalisation of Slovenian higher education includes the internationalisation of teaching, learning and research, cooperation and competition, the adaptation of institutional strategies as well as national and transnational policies.⁸ Therefore, the balanced and continuous development of the internationalisation of the Slovenian higher education area must include the mobility of students and academic staff both into Slovenia and abroad from Slovenia.

which are also connected to the specifications and standards of a particular country (for example, for future teachers of national minority languages in Slovenia).

As is apparent from the Overview of Slovenian Higher Education in the Field of Internationalization (Appendix 2), data shows that the mobility of Slovenian and international students and academic staff in Slovenia is among the lowest in the EU. With the appropriate and systematic inclusion of competences gained abroad into the study process and scientific research activities, the quality of the education process and scientific research is improving, and, consequently, the quality and employability of graduates is also progressing. Even a doctoral scheme, which is in the process of being established, is now open to international doctoral candidates, who wish to broaden and develop their knowledge in Slovenia. The inclusion of international specialists in the activities of Slovenian higher education institutions allows for a higher quality academic offering and the development of improved courses and programmes, which represents added value to scientific research and teaching. That is why the objective is to attract the best academic staff and experts to those fields of national importance where the inclusion of additional human resources and competences can contribute to the sustainable development of these disciplines. Enabling Slovenian academic staff to teach at excellent higher education institutions abroad (including for longer periods) and enabling Slovenian professionals to be involved in international research groups and programmes contributes to the enhancement of the visibility and quality of our higher education system, and the country of Slovenia, in an international environment.

One of the main goals of the strategy is to encourage mobility, which is a part of institutional part-

⁷ Bracht et al. 2006, 209.

⁸ Kehm, B. M. in Teichler, U. (2007). 'Research on Internationalisation in Higher Education', *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 11 (3/4), 260–273.

nerships, as all forms of mobility must be comprehensively integrated into the functioning of the institution, including the provision of appropriate support activities such as guidance and counseling. Higher education institutions should therefore encourage mobility not only for students, but also for their staff, rewarding them sufficient-

ly within their HR and career development frameworks, which will help to cultivate international openness and the quality of the institutions. The establishment and maintenance of supportive environments for academic and professional staff and students is of critical importance, and will assure and enhance the quality of international mobility.

Objectives in the area of mobility of the Slovenian higher education community, open to the international environment

ENCOURAGING THE MOBILITY OF SLOVENIAN STUDENTS ABROAD	
Increasing the number of Slovenian students on student exchanges and student internships abroad	(Objective 1)
Increasing the number of Slovenian students studying abroad full-time	(Objective 2)
Strengthening support environments for the improved quality of international mobility	(Objective 3)
Implementing a pilot project to promote students' competences gained from mobility abroad	(Objective 4)
ENCOURAGING THE MOBILITY OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TO SLOVENIA	
Increasing the number of international students participating in student exchanges, internships or full-time study in Slovenia	(Objective 5)
Enabling the placement of international students in public student housing	(Objective 6)
Informing international students on Slovenian culture, society and language	(Objective 7)
ENCOURAGING THE MOBILITY OF SLOVENIAN HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHERS AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATES ABROAD	
Increasing the international mobility of Slovenian higher education teachers and professional staff	(Objective 8)
Removing legislative barriers to international mobility of Slovenian higher education teachers and professional staff	(Objective 9)
Encouraging Slovenian citizens who have completed doctoral studies abroad or are employed at a higher education or research institution abroad to return to Slovenia	(Objective 10)

**ENCOURAGING THE MOBILITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHERS
AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATES TO SLOVENIA**

Increasing the number of visiting international experts and higher education teachers in Slovenian higher education institutions **(Objective 11)**

Informing international higher education teachers on Slovenian culture, society and language **(Objective 12)**

Removing of legislative barriers to encouraging mobility of staff from non-EU countries **(Objective 13)**

Establishing a support centre to help international professionals, teachers and researchers with administrative processes **(Objective 14)**

2. Quality international scientific research and development cooperation

Scientific research activities and higher education cannot exist without an international dimension, since international cooperation is a source of new ideas, discoveries and creations, which bring additional value to all involved in the scientific research and higher education community as well as to the economy and society in general. International cooperation must be systematically directed towards the creation of excellent knowledge.

At the European policy level, the EHEA (European Higher Education Area) and ERA (European Research Area) complement each other and synergistically work together to form the framework of the “knowledge triangle”. Scientific research work encompasses research at both research institutes and higher education institutions as well as in the private sector.

In order to ensure and develop international excellence in scientific research, it is of the utmost importance that excellence in Slovenian higher education is also achieved, both in terms of teaching as well as scientific research. Only higher education and scientific research of the highest quality can enable Slovenia to realise its competitive innovation potential and a critical mass of knowledge, which is crucial for the necessary advancement of Slovenian economy. That is why both the internal and external internationalisation of higher education and scientific research is needed.

Structurally, internationalisation must happen with regards to all three pillars of the national scientific research system: human resources, research infrastructure (institutions and research equipment), and models and management practices (decision-making and evaluation).

International scientific research cooperation and the effective transfer of knowledge are fundamental to the successful sharing of research outcomes between higher education institutions and the labour market. As such, a Strategy for the Internationalisation of Slovenian Science is being drafted for the sector, stemming from the Slovenia’s Research and Innovation Strategy 2011-2020. Its purpose is to shape and strengthen a successful and internationalised public research sector with a clear mission and vision to create excellent, internationally recognised, competitive research that has a significant impact on economic growth and employment. High-quality doctoral studies are the main source of future academic staff and researchers, which is why it is important that doctoral candidates, in addition to academic staff and researchers, are provided with opportunities to experience high-quality and competitive research in an international environment. Accordingly, Slovenian higher education institutions will strive to be included and cooperate in high-quality, competitive, international education, research and development projects, and to promote the attractiveness of postgraduate and doctoral study programmes in internationally competitive disciplines. These are especially important for Slovenia when it comes to attracting talented international researchers, academic staff and doctoral candidates.

By having an improved and effective national research and innovation system, Slovenia wishes to increase its competitiveness in the EU and globally. In order to establish such a developed system, it is necessary to also have a system of allocating funding to priority areas. A higher degree of internationalisation of Slovenian and European science should gradually lead to the formation of a Global Research Area (GRA), which has already been strategically defined (Lund Declaration 2015). Global societal challenges demand a coordinated global response.

Objectives in the area of quality international scientific research and development cooperation

ENCOURAGING QUALITY INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Ensuring effective inter-institutional and international mobility of higher education teachers and researchers (Objective 15)

Increasing the international visibility, attractiveness and competitiveness of Slovenian scientific research and development potential (Objective 16)

Increasing the volume of international multilateral cooperation and establishing new strategic forms of international bilateral cooperation (Objective 17)

3. Promoting the development of intercultural competences

Slovenian higher education institutions are responsible for the development of the intercultural and global competences of their graduates, which will enable them to function successfully in either a local/national environment, which is a part of the global environment, or directly in an international environment. Slovenian higher education institutions must therefore implement high-quality internationalised curricula⁹, which, in particular, systematically include the intercultural dimension into all study programmes and disciplines at all study levels and in all fields. This will be complimented by a range of quality study programmes, modules, and subjects offered in a foreign language.

At the same time, an ongoing concern will be the preservation of the Slovenian language as the language of the profession and the dominant language of teaching and research in Slovenia. Special attention will therefore be given to international students and teachers, who come to Slovenia on an exchange or for a longer period of time, to make sure that they have access to extracurricular, mainly language oriented content by means of short-term or long-term language courses and elective courses in Slovenian language and culture. They will also be offered additional activities available prior to and on arrival at a higher education institution, which will make for an easier transition and integration into the new academic, social and cultural environment.

Higher education institutions are actively involved in the development of a multicultural higher education community. Even though mobility is the most effective way to internationalise education, we also have to consider the fact that only a fraction of students and academic staff actually go abroad.

Therefore in order to broaden the horizons, intercultural and global competences, and the development of soft skills of the majority of students and academic staff, it is necessary to have a high-quality, structured, integrated and systematically organised study experience, which embeds internationalised curricula and the concept of internationalisation at home.

Internationalisation at home is the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students, within domestic learning environments.¹⁰ It encompasses study programmes, the process of learning and teaching, development of human resources in higher education, extracurricular activities and connecting with local cultural and ethnic groups.¹¹ With internationalisation at home the objectives of internationalisation of the curriculum are achieved, regardless of whether students have the experience of studying abroad or not. The main focus should be on the process of learning and teaching, and the learning outcomes of students, which include an international, intercultural, and global dimension.

The ability to function successfully in an intercultural, multilingual and international environment, and to understand cultural specifics, is of crucial importance to every individual in modern society.

The objective of the Strategy is to use the proposed measures and activities to develop the intercultural, social and national competences of students and academic staff through the curriculum, so that they may operate successfully and gain

⁹ Curricula contain the subjects and learning outcomes of study programmes

¹⁰ Beelen, J. and Jones, E. 2015. Redefining Internationalisation at Home: In: Curaj, A. et al. eds. The European Higher Education Area: Between critical reflections and future policies. Springer.

¹¹ IAU, 2015: <http://www.iau-aiu.net/>.

employment in a global and local environment.

It is also important to remove the barriers for the accreditation of international joint and double/multiple degree study programmes, as they are an important vehicle for internationalised curricula. Slovenian academic staff must undergo appropriate training for

educating culturally diverse groups of students, functioning in an intercultural environment, teaching in a foreign language and preparing and implementing joint and double/multiple degree study programmes. At the same time, it is imperative that lessons on the Slovenian language, society and culture are available free of charge for incoming students and staff.

Objectives in the area of developing intercultural, social and civic competences of students and the academic staff

ENCOURAGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL, SOCIAL AND CIVIC COMPETENCES OF STUDENTS AND ACADEMIC STAFF	
Including intercultural competences and internationalized learning outcomes in study programmes	(Objective 18)
Removing administrative barriers to the accreditation of international joint and double/multiple degree study programmes	(Objective 19)

4. Targeting priority regions and countries

With its integrated and effective national approach, Slovenia seeks to contribute to the competitiveness of higher education, scientific research and development in the EU and around the world. It is therefore sensible to target funding on priority geographic areas. In a geopolitical sense, Slovenia is the only European country that belongs to three European regions, or macro regions¹²: The Adriatic-Ionian, Danube and Alpine Regions.¹³

Slovenia's strategic interests, strengths and weaknesses are largely defined by its geographic location. Common traditions in terms of education, research and innovation strategically align Slovenia with the more developed countries of Central Europe and the Alpine region, which are among the most developed and competitive countries in the world. Slovenia seeks to install these good practices in its national system and to strengthen its strategic collaboration with these countries. Additionally, it is necessary to develop enhanced strategic cooperation within the EU and targeted cooperation with the regions of the world with the greatest developmental potential.

Slovenia's Foreign Policy Strategy, adopted in 2015¹⁴, defines three priority areas for Slovenia: Europe, particularly the closest regions (the Mediterranean and the Western Balkans), and the wider world (Asia, Africa and Latin America).

In accordance with this and taking into account the potential and trends in higher education, the Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education encompasses the following regions as priority areas: the countries of the Euro-Mediterranean region, highly industrialised countries (South Korea, Japan, USA), and the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa).

Slovenia's higher education institutions are already well-known within the region of the Western Balkans, and the overall image of Study in Slovenia will enhance the visibility of Slovenia as a destination for higher education. In addition to promotion, activities will focus on strengthening strategic connections among higher education institutions (a regional platform for cooperation in higher education and research) and the establishment of cooperation with ERI-SEE.¹⁵

While the Western Balkans is already a region where Slovenia is recognised as an important higher education destination, the recognisability of the Slovenian higher education and scientific research area still needs to be established in other regions. These days, the Mediterranean countries of Northern Africa are in need of structured developmental aid, also in the area of higher education, science, and technology, which will help them normalise affairs after the conflicts end in their region. That is why

¹² EU macro-regional strategy for the Danube Region, the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region and the EU strategy for the Alpine macro-region.

¹³ Macro-regional strategies do not have their own sources of finance, however their potential is in offering opportunities for using the existing sources for integration and development of human resources, as well as educational and research infrastructures in regions for problem solving and technological progress, which is common to all included in the region.

¹⁴ Website: http://www.mzz.gov.si/fileadmin/pageuploads/foto/1507/STRATESKI_DOKUMENT_-_KONCNO_-_PDF.pdf.

¹⁵ ERI-SEE (Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe) is a regional platform in the field of education and training for the area of South-Eastern Europe. Slovenia is the only former Yugoslavian state not included in the region, even though the Memorandum was signed in 2010 in the Brdo process.

these countries offer potential for Slovenian higher education as well as for its economy. The region that will witness rapid progress in upcoming years, in light of its large youth populations, is Asia, as global tertiary education is predicted to shift eastwards. In addition to student mobility, this region offers opportunities for collaboration on in-depth strategic partnerships not only in the fields of academic and scientific research but also in economic affairs. Therefore, the activities envisaged within the Strategy will include participation at higher education fairs and other activities and networks, focused on this region.

Collaboration with the USA remains of key importance given its highly developed higher education and scientific research areas, and will also serve to strengthen the recognisability of Slovenian higher education in Latin America, especially in countries with populations of Slovenian immigrants and their descendants.

Focusing on priority regions (while identifying important professionals, higher education institutions and other institutions in target countries and regions, significant for Slovenian higher education) is an opportunity to strengthen cooperation and investment in the development of Slovenian higher education institutions and the country of Slovenia in the field of sustainable development, economic and non-economic cooperation, international competitiveness and solutions to current issues.¹⁶

The identified objectives and measures, which serve as the basis for an integrated and focused approach to priority regions, will allow for the development and positioning of Slovenia as an international centre of knowledge.

Objectives in the field of promoting cooperation in priority regions

TARGETING PRIORITY REGIONS AND COUNTRIES	
Promoting Slovenia as a study destination in the Western Balkans	(Objective 20)
Promoting the development of strategic partnerships in the region of the Western Balkans	(Objective 21)
Promoting mobility between Slovenia and priority regions and countries	(Objective 22)
Promoting Slovenia as a study destination in the countries in the priority regions	(Objective 23)

¹⁶ Website: <http://www.mzz.gov.si/si/>; http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/communic/danube/com2010_715_danube_sl.pdf; http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/communic/danube/action_plan_danube_sl.pdf; http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index.cfm/en/policy/cooperation/macro-regional-strategies/adriatic-ionician/#2; <http://www.eu-skladi.si/ostalo/operativni-programi/strategija-razvoja-slovenije>; <http://www.eu-skladi.si/2014-2020/>.

5. Promotion, support and monitoring of the Strategy for the Internationalisation of Slovenian Higher Education

One of the key elements of encouraging the internationalisation of Slovenian higher education is the establishment of a single entry point, Study in Slovenia, which will be promoted in the future as a comprehensive and unified image of Slovenian higher education. The Study in Slovenia initiative includes an active and up-to-date website, a Facebook and Instagram group, active participation in higher education fairs in target regions, and presentations at professional conferences at home and abroad.¹⁷

The active promotion of Slovenia at higher education fairs abroad under the comprehensive and unified image of Study in Slovenia will visibly connect the institutions of the Slovenian higher education area, and will thus complement and connect with the international promotional activities of individual Slovenian institutions.

In the Western Balkan region, where Slovenia is already regarded as a quality higher education partner, Slovenian higher education institutions can use the comprehensive and unified image of Study in Slovenia in conjunction with their own institutional brand. In the priority regions, where the recognisability of Slovenia is yet to be established, CMEPIUS will carry the mantle of the Study in Slovenia offer, and actively represent Slovenia as an attractive higher education destination at physical as well as on-line fairs and, where appropriate, organise accompanying events, intended to strengthen the strategic connections with higher education institutions in that region.

The activities which are a part of Study in Slovenia have long-term effects on two levels. The first level relates to the international public, with implementation intended to boost the interest of international students, researchers, and lecturers. The other level is indirect; as a result of a greater interest and the increased visibility of Slovenian higher education and active participation in this area, internationalisation at home is supported (conducting study programmes and parts of programmes, summer schools and short courses in foreign languages), the intercultural and other competences of participants are strengthened, etc.

Parallel to the promotion of a range of quality higher education services from Slovenian, another key step towards the successful implementation of the objectives of the Strategy is the removal of administrative and legislative barriers to international cooperation. Slovenian legislation and administrative procedures must actively support internationalisation.

Interagency cooperation and coordination between the relevant ministries and national authorities is of the utmost importance for the creation of policies that are favourable to international students and academic staff, and which will encourage the most talented international citizens to remain in Slovenia even after the completion of their studies, teaching or research, as well as encourage Slovenian citizens to return to Slovenia after their invaluable experiences abroad.

¹⁷ The website is a single entry point for users, interested in a comprehensive study programme (the target groups are mainly postgraduates), as well as in mobility in Slovenian higher education institutions (as part of the EU and other mobility programmes).

Adequate support for the implementation of the Strategy for the Internationalisation of Slovenian Higher Education will be provided, mostly by close cooperation between all responsible ministries and through the provision of adequate financial resources. An inter-agency working group will be formed, which will coordinate the work of relevant ministries and national authorities to ensure that the objectives of the Strategy are comprehensively implemented to a high degree of quality. The group's activities will primarily be directed towards the removal of barriers and the organisation of promotional activities and joint representation in the target regions, which will strengthen the attractiveness of Slovenian higher education, science and

the economy, and open possibilities for the dissemination of Slovenian culture and language worldwide.

The successful implementation of the Strategy for the Internationalisation of Slovenian Higher Education is dependent on the performance of all involved. Due to the complexity of the areas included in the Strategy, it will be necessary to systematically monitor the implementation of the objectives, measures and indicators. Monitoring the implementation of the internationalisation of the Slovenian higher education system will include regular reporting by all stakeholders on how they are progressing towards to realisation of the set objectives.

Objectives in the area of promotion and monitoring of the strategy for internationalisation

PROMOTION, SUPPORT AND MONITORING OF THE STRATEGY FOR THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF SLOVENIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Promoting a single entry point „Study in Slovenia“	(Objective 24)
Monitoring the implementation of the objectives, measures and indicators of the Strategy	(Objective 25)

Appendix:

1. Action Plan 2016-2018: collected objectives, measures, indicators, responsibilities with a time plan



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
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