

ERASMUS+ EUROPEAN POLICY STATEMENT, VOCATIONAL COLLEGE BIC LJUBLJANA

The Ljubljana Biotechnical Education Centre is a public institution providing education and research in secondary, tertiary, and adult education. The Vocational College implements and develops short tertiary education, namely the two-year Food and Nutrition and Hospitality and Tourism programs. They are designed by the Bologna and Copenhagen Declarations. Both are practically oriented and, in addition to theoretical knowledge, place a strong emphasis on the acquisition of practical experience and skills. BIC Ljubljana's mission is to provide students with quality education. Through the Erasmus+ program, students can gain practical experience abroad, which is of great importance for their future careers. We have been participating in the Erasmus+ program practically since the establishment of the BIC Ljubljana College of Higher Education and have always followed the principles of the ECHE Charter.

Our Erasmus+ objectives include reliable employers, quality mobility, at least maintaining the number of student and staff mobility, linking the content of mobility to the curricula and at the same time to the development of the school, integrating the knowledge gained abroad into the development of the institution and our activities, disseminating our international activities to staff, students and the general and professional public at home and abroad. The vision of the institution emphasizes the visibility of the institution in Slovenia and abroad and the international cooperation of the school (practical education, competitions, projects abroad, etc.), to offer the best study and placement conditions.

We participate in short- and long-term mobility activities for student placements, training, teaching, and staff shadowing with partners abroad, and invite lecturers and entrepreneurs from abroad to provide an international experience for those students and staff who, for various reasons, are unable to participate in mobility themselves. Partner institutions often send their students and staff to Erasmus+ activities, and we are happy to welcome them and look after them as if they were our own. We also follow the principles of the ECHE Charter for incoming mobilities.

Through international cooperation, we give participants access to the latest trends in the profession we teach, we provide new knowledge and skills development that contribute to successful careers, and we give employees the opportunity for continuous professional development. Further confirmation that we are working in the right direction is the feedback from employers that our students are suitably competent and quickly integrate into the work environment.

We inform students very intensively about the mobility opportunity in the autumn and winter, followed by intensive preparation for the mobility, with the actual activity taking place mostly in the spring/summer. The early application deadline for mobility allows students to prepare and arrange all the necessary details in good time. We aim to make mobility possible for anyone who is motivated to participate. We inform students about the possibility of additional funding for people from disadvantaged backgrounds and provide additional funding. Students have their placement abroad recognized as part of their practical training with their employer, and their experience is recorded in their diploma supplement, while their participation in mobility also earns them extra points in the

Best Student awards. We encourage and inform them about the possibility of obtaining a Europass Mobility certificate of work experience abroad, and advise them to obtain a letter of recommendation from the employer where they did their placement. We also strongly encourage young graduates to be mobile. As of the academic year 2023/24, we have also launched short-term mobility schemes of 5-30 days to enable those who want to go abroad but cannot stay longer due to commitments at home to do so.

We also publish a call for staff. We send our staff for training for 4-7 working days, making it easier for them to keep up with trends in the field and to transfer fresh practical knowledge to students and the development of BIC Ljubljana. To make the mobility activities as effective as possible, candidates write down the purpose and added value of the mobility at the institutional level when applying for the mobility, and after the mobility, we have also introduced a mandatory submission of an internal Mobility Report form for staff, where the participant identifies the effects of the mobility, the sustainability on a scale of 0 - 3, the problems, recommendations and an overall assessment of the mobility. This makes it easier to record impacts and identify opportunities for future improvements. The completed forms will also be used as a source of qualitative data or impacts for self-evaluation reports. Based on the ECHE charter, which aims at recognizing skills acquired abroad, we issue a more comprehensive certificate for staff, showing the type and extent of mobility, the destination, and the planned/achieved (internationalized) learning outcomes.

Contacts with companies and other institutions abroad are obtained through the school network of Slovenian companies and lecturers attending international conferences, trade fairs, and other meetings. In 2019, we have already introduced a list of verified employers abroad who provide quality jobs and mentoring to facilitate the search for student internships. The list has proven to be an example of excellent practice, as more students go on internships and find it easier to take up the challenge of living abroad if we provide them with quality and verified employers. Where possible, we take the opportunity to visit employers abroad, as experience has shown that personal contact is very important for long-lasting and reliable cooperation. We update our list of verified employers every year. In recent years, we have put more emphasis on finding employers who offer internships in the food and nutrition sector, and this has paid off. In the academic year 2022/23, for the first time, more students from the Food and Nutrition program than from the Hospitality and Tourism program have chosen to do their internships abroad.

To ensure the best Erasmus+ experience, we provide adequate administrative support to mobility participants, ensuring that information on mobility opportunities is accessible, that mobility agreements are signed and approved in advance, that selection procedures are appropriate and fair, that students and staff have access to the selection process, that students and staff are assisted in preparing for, welcoming and joining the mobility (obtaining visas, insurance, finding accommodation), and that the mobility is monitored, evaluated and recognized on an ongoing basis. At the end of the mobility, students write up their experience in the form of an Erasmus+ Contribution, which is published on the school website. This makes the experience closer to those who want to go abroad and helps them to decide to go.



Mobility projects are crucial for the development and visibility of schools at home and abroad, as well as for the exchange of experience, good practice, and expertise. In the future, we will continue to strengthen cooperation in the field of international activities within the institution, to expand the network of partner institutions and find opportunities for joint projects with foreign countries. As a professional school, we are in constant contact with the Slovenian and foreign professions, which are developing very rapidly. To this end, we organize an international professional conference every two years, which we link to the Erasmus+ program, thus providing our trainees and the professional public with new knowledge from abroad. We will continue to participate in the Community of Higher Professional Schools, which contributes to our international activity by providing additional places for practical training for our students and mobility for our staff.

We cooperate with most European countries and several countries outside Europe in the Erasmus+ program. We sign an inter-institutional agreement or cooperation contract with educational institutions (a culinary school in Vietnam, a school in Macedonia, and the MakProgres company in Macedonia). We contact employers at least once a year and renew our intention to cooperate, to host students for internships, or to invite them to visit us on a professional visit.

In the last year, we have put more emphasis on working with schools from different Balkan countries, as we see an opportunity to gain additional knowledge there, especially in the field of the food industry, as Slovenia is weak in this area. The result of the cooperation with schools and companies in Serbia and Macedonia is also reflected in the higher number of students enrolled from the Balkans, which we welcome.

With our high-quality training programs, expert staff, and international and domestic links, we are among the best educational institutions in the fields we train for, and are thus a co-creator of new trends.

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POLNI CERTIFIKAT

