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di Catania



Erasmus+

The University of Catania (UNICT) includes the process of internationalization among its strategic activities for the next seven years. Internationalization is intended as the process of integrating an international and transnational perspective into teaching and learning activities and into the administrative and service functions. The overall internationalization strategy of UNICT is coordinated by the managing body of the University made by three delegates for internationalization respectively for the scientific, medical and social and humanities areas and by the Erasmus Institutional Coordinator who is in charge of the Erasmus actions. These actions are developed by the International Mobility Office. UNICT is developing an international strategy and the participation at the Erasmus Programme is finalised at contributing to foster three international dimensions identified for managing its internationalization strategy.

### **Individual level**

It concerns the development of the international perspective of persons acting at UNICT: students, teachers and staff. UNICT chooses “learning mobility” and “mobility” among the EPS keywords because it aims at fostering incoming and outgoing mobility as main policy tools for increasing the international perspective of individuals. Mobility is considered as the main way to develop transnational and multicultural approach to higher education, a worldwide assessment and perspective in learning and teaching activities. Moreover, the new working environment obliges Universities to train students and staff for living and working in a context of global interdependence. The added value of the ERASMUS program is not only the financial support but foremost the incentive to comply with core values and common principles that will reinforce local engagement.

### **Academic level**

It concerns the development of international curricula (double degree, joint degree, study-abroad programs). Joint or double degree programmes, local degree structures and course prerequisites must be made more flexible to facilitate credit transfer from abroad; study and systematic planning and reporting of results must be developed. Erasmus program will provide UNICT with benchmarks for its international courses and will facilitate the presence and integration of international students and teaching staff into UNICT life. Moreover, it will train administrative staff to act in regular interdependence with “other university multilanguages systems”, that can help UNICT to ensure efficiency and customer care in administrative procedures.

### **Civic level**

As a public body, universities have a crucial role in educating people, tackling societal issues and providing policy solutions to institutions and large public. The civic engagement of UNICT is strictly connected with its internationalization process. UNICT is located in the middle of Mediterranean area and it must provide relevant actions for facilitating exchange of ideas, projects, reflection among people from different backgrounds, races, ethnic groups, and generations not only among its students and staff, but also among people in order to represent a bridge between the university and the wider world. In this perspective, UNICT is developing a wider civic engagement strategy which is directly connected and linked to the internationalization strategy. Erasmus+ program will



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reinforce UNICT capabilities to promote civic engagement and active citizenship amongst outgoing and incoming students and staff before, after and during mobility.

Participation in the KA1 Key Action, which is the most successful activity developed during the past program with a great appreciation by the UniCT academics and students community, will foster UNICT's capability to provide effective, equal and high quality mobility for its students and staff. Participation in the KA2 key action, with regard to the "Partnerships for Cooperation and exchanges of practices" will facilitate the development, learning and adoption of best practices in order to foster UNICT process of modernisation. Both Actions fit with the first level of internationalisation as described in the forthcoming UNICT internationalisation strategy – Individual Level. Participation in the KA2 Key Action with particular regard to the Partnerships for Excellence – European Universities, Partnerships for Excellence - Joint Master Degrees and Partnerships for Innovation will improve UNICT capabilities to increase the international dimension of its learning and teaching programs either by developing joint and double MA degree and also reforming traditional study courses by introducing the international and European dimension as integral part of each study plans and syllabuses in order to reinforce internationally oriented contributions and the European perspective. It fits with the second level of internationalisation as described in the forthcoming UNICT internationalisation strategy – Academic Level. Participation at the KA3 Key Action will contribute to improve the UNICT civic engagement, with particular regard to actions offering contexts for the exchanges of people of different expertise and backgrounds; development of policy aiming at stimulating development, dialogue and the exchange of knowledge in the fields of education, training and youth. It fits with the third level of internationalization as described in the forthcoming UNICT internationalisation strategy - Civic Level.

UNICT is expected to improve the number of individual mobilities of students and staff at quantitative and qualitative level either at European Level (KA103 project) than at non EU Level (KA107 project). As far as the quantitative level is concerned, UniCT plan to move more or less 5000 students incoming and outgoing and more or less 1000 staff incoming and outgoing units in the next seven-year program. As far as the qualitative target is concerned, UNICT intends to pursue the following goals: 1st and 2nd year - provide a complete on-line course catalogue complying with the rules of the ECTS Users' Guide and support incoming mobility by establishing, in cooperation with alumni association, a welcome desk providing incoming students with information on didactic and extra academic activities and needs (housing, health care services, equal opportunity initiatives); 1st and 2nd year - complete the full automatic recognition procedure of all credits obtained by outgoing students during mobility periods abroad; 3rd and 4th year - support outgoing mobility by providing economic resources for fostering the linguistic abilities of students and staff, improve the relevance of the staff mobility by recognizing it as added value in the curriculum and using it for progressions in professional career; 5th year – evaluation of the targets reached and feedback collection; 6th and 7th year – adoption of solutions more suitable to the critical aspect to be better developed. Moreover, UNICT is expected to improve its participation in cooperation projects, with particular regard to double degree programmes, capacity building and knowledge alliance. In seven years UNICT is expected to prepare each three years at least one proposal of a new Double Degree Programme, one Mundus proposal and one Knowledge Alliance proposal. This target is fixed in consideration of the sustainability at long term. UNICT is expected to foster civic engagement by establishing an institutional forum on UniCT international mobility and cooperation projects including representative of students, staff, alumni, local NGOs, local stakeholders. This action will be taken in three phases: Beginning Phase (2021-2023): mapping the target groups and their needs



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and projecting the procedures; Pilot Phase (2023-2025): the forum will be launched; Evaluation Phase (2025- 2027): feedback will be collected and eventual changes will be adopted. Moreover, in cooperation with the Civic Engagement and Equal Opportunity delegates, a monitoring joint action on gender, race, religion and country of origin of incoming and outgoing students will be organised in 2021 and 2022 in order to identify students with fewer opportunities and to organise positive actions for the next seven years. In order to reach such ambitious objectives, UniCT is going to reorganise its structures facing a deep transformation from a political and administrative point of view, in order to give adequate support to the new Erasmus Programme. On one side, the Rector has recently appointed an International Relations Commission which is a committee made of representatives of all the university stakeholders (professors, staff and students) and it is in charge of supporting, monitoring and evaluating the current and new Erasmus and international initiatives proposed by the Erasmus Institutional Coordinator, jointly with the three delegates for internationalization. On the other side, UniCT intends to manage all the Erasmus actions in a single office; to significantly increase the number of International Mobility Office administrative staff devoted to support the management of the programme giving to each staff unit more specialised competences and responsibilities; support the students associations with a financial contribution for developing the forum and the other social activities planned; support training and linguistic activities for academic and administrative staff and students involved in the program at the managing level in order to ensure efficiency and customer care in recognition and administrative procedures.