

ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT

The Preschool Teacher Training College in Novi Sad (PTTC), established 1952, is one of the leading higher education institutions of its kind today in Serbia. It is located in the city of Novi Sad, the economic and political center of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, the European Youth Capital 2019 and the European Capital of Culture 2021. It is a multinational community where people have learned to respect differences and live together.

Although the PTTC has a long tradition in educating pre-school teachers, the education reform in the first decade of the 21st century introduced various challenges ahead of our institution. Immediately upon the introduction of the Bologna Declaration, the College became focused on building the capacities which would create the foundation for the improvement of the quality of the teaching process and, consequently, learning outcomes. Having managed to build sufficient capacities and respond to the requirements of the aforementioned reform it is our goal in the upcoming period to place emphasis on internationalization. Namely, internationalization constitutes a crucial precondition for increasing the quality of teaching by means of improving the knowledge, skills, competences and experience of both students and teachers alike. Likewise, internationalization is the most authentic manner of modernizing and establishing innovations in the process of education, introducing and maintaining the European dimension of higher vocational education and spreading the idea of a unique educational space intertwined with national, cultural and language differences which are seen as an advantage in cultivating tolerance, understanding and multiculturalism. Hence, the aims of the College internationalization strategy would be as follows: to improve teaching/learning processes at the College by means of staff/student mobility, to establish, maintain and improve the co-operation between the College and related higher educational institutions abroad, thus increasing international visibility of the College and its activities, to further improve the capacities of the College necessary for increasing the overall quality and becoming more competitive among the ever growing number of related higher education institutions.

Bearing in mind that the College has not yet had the experience in student/staff mobility, one of the basic proposals of this strategy would be to primary establish Erasmus partnerships, i.e. to conclude inter-institutional agreements with related European higher education institutions. In accordance with the College specific geographical position, education field and tradition, it is the proposal of this strategy that the College should place its focus in terms of mobility, primarily on the countries in the region of Western Balkans and Eastern Europe. With respect to other types of Erasmus projects (strategic partnerships, knowledge alliances, capacity building), the College places its focus on the countries in the region of Western Europe.

The PTTC see itself as a part of the European educational, professional, and scientific and research area, and strive to build capacities, improve and develop our study programmes and courses, strengthening our position in the domestic and international HE environment through further collaboration with HE and scientific institutions, with the communities. These are our main strategic objectives. In the selection of partner institutions we are focused on their competence to manage international projects and on study programmes they have. Our intention is to build efficient and quality partnerships for (re)designing our programmes. Consequently, we have established relations (for instance, for a decade long cooperation with *Pädagogische hochschule Zürich* and over them with Council of Europe) and signed bilateral agreement with *Pedagogical Faculty, University in Maribor* (Slovenia).

We have participated in national and international projects, having scientific, research or educational character that support student and faculty exchange, like the ones from Tempus and Erasmus programmes. Since the PTTC and its management are dedicated to all forms of international cooperation, the actions of the Erasmus+ programme are strongly supported. Currently, the PTTC is a coordinator at Erasmus+ projects **KEEP EDUCATING YOURSELF / KEY / 598977-EPP-1-2018-RS-1-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP** with public Universities from Montenegro, Romania, Slovenia, Hungary, United Kingdom.

As one of our main goals is to modernize our institution and raise the quality of our practice. It is essential that we have closer insight into practices of those whose results at an international level cannot be disputed. The PTTC is committed to the following priorities of the modernization agenda:

- improving the curricula in terms of responding to the necessities of the labor market thus increasing students' employability; enriched by examples of good practice provided through mobility and other co-operation projects we have better chances of devising curricula which would enable further co-operation, lifelong learning, learning transference, better chances of connecting with and informing the labor market.
- improving the relevance and quality of higher vocational education – it is essential that the College initiates and gradually increases the number of outgoing students who would attend studies abroad and thus improve their overall skills and knowledge, as well as to widen linguistic and cultural horizons
- linking higher vocational education and respective work fields with the aim of contributing to social and regional development
- improving the management and College services which play a significant role in realizing the College goals, being the basic structures of organization and functioning.

We focus on providing quality education to our students and continuous improvement of our staff. It is our aim as well as our desire to improve our study programmes, create new ones and improve our practice by looking up to the best practice in our common European space. One of the manners of accomplishing the aforementioned is through participation in various Erasmus + projects.

Keep up with the changes in educational sphere PTTC introduced new approaches to pre-school embracing the new paradigm based on holism, integrative practice, project-based approach and theme planning, the unrelenting pace of technological development, as well as ever growing requirements of the labor market leave no room for intermission or pleasure with the achieved results. A constant improvement is a must if one wishes to stay competitive and relevant. It is the belief of everyone at the College, staff and students alike, that intensive participation on various international projects can help keep one's head above surface. In the process of educating pre-school teachers, it is a must to develop transversal skills and key competences, as they are the ones making the difference between an average and excellent prospective teacher (or any other professional for that matter), i.e. between considerable and limited career opportunities. In order to develop the aforementioned skills, the College aspires to enable the students to study by resorting to the latest teaching/learning methods and tools. This can be done by innovating curricula and introducing short-cycle programmes, by attending such programmes during the periods of mobility. Furthermore, in order to be able to assume a more significant role in the society regarding equal opportunities and social inclusion the College aspires to become involved in



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Erasmus + actions – inclusion strategies implementation, awarding ECTS points for voluntary work and community activities, developing programmes which would encompass local, regional and societal issues. Our major policy objective is to raise the quality standards in all segments of performance on the institutional and individual levels alike.

In Novi Sad, on 21 February 2019.