



ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT (EPS)
ECHE 2021-2027

STRATEGY

Fondazione ITS Agroalimentare per il Piemonte (Agri-food Higher Technical Institute Foundation for the Piedmont Region) is a Short Cycle Tertiary Level institution offering biannual courses resulting in a EQF5 Degree, focussed at building competences and professional figures required by the companies and businesses of the Piedmont Region reference area. Due to the peculiar characteristics of the sector in Italy and in particular in the Region, the international perspective and the commitment to modernisation and innovation in all aspects of the Foundation, as well as the underpinning strategy, are strongly supported by the award of the ECHE chart and by the active participation to Erasmus+ Mobility and Cooperation projects.

The reason for this is the high relevance of the Agri-food sector: as the second sector behind mechanical industry, it contributes to the national wealth with 25% of the national GDP, and to the 15% of the region GDP, employing 1,4 million people in production, processing and supply chain (130000 in the Region). 10% of the generated value comes from export worldwide, particularly from the processing industry. This is a peculiar feature of the Italian agri-food sector with respect to the global picture: the main contribution to export volumes comes from the processing sector.

Besides, its strength and resilience has been most convincingly confirmed during the 2020 health emergency, by being able to guarantee the supply in presence of unprecedented safety, lack of workforce and operational difficulties and constraints.

Such economical relevance and peculiarities are based on the unique features of the sector: renowned exclusive and Distinctive products and services, commitment to high quality and safety, craftsmanship and environmental sustainability. The mission of the Foundation – providing the sector with international class competences and knowledge as a key asset, while preserving and enhancing the values that make the sector recognized worldwide, makes it indispensable to strengthen and make structural the international dimension and continuing modernization and innovation of the training offer in all its elements. The first factor is maintaining and improving the sector competitiveness, a.o. fighting “Italian sounding” competition with effective marketing and appealing prices, and widening the market base on a global perspective, including the incoming market brought through cultural, leisure and business tourism.

The underpinning policy factors relate thus to knowledge and familiarity with other food cultures, habits and

requirements, best practices adopted abroad, innovative and targeted promotion and service, in the territory and abroad; the relevance of the human factor – students and staff –, together with reference the production fabric, for the development and growth of such a perspective is undisputed, making them the prime actors of the policy implementation, by directly involving each and all in international



experiences and cooperation activities, to widen and strengthen competences, better knowing markets and cultures, and ultimately support on new basis the growth of the sector.

OBJECTIVES OF THE INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY

Based on the policy and on the specific requirements from the reference sector (that participates to the definition and development of the formative offer and provides 70% of the teaching force), the internationalisation and modernisation strategy of the Foundation is from the beginning implemented with the following activities, aimed at implementing the internationalisation and modernisation strategy and policy, and founded and geared according to the European Education Area challenges and objectives:

- Students mobilities for curricular traineeships, covering a substantial part of the Courses hours (680 out of 1800), which represent the pinnacle of pathways based in turn on extended and active and work based learning, involving companies as “clients”, teachers and evaluators.
- Recent graduates mobilities, offering opportunities for further specialization alongside the skill, and cultural and European identity growth.

Having this crucial actions carried out at companies abroad, that are promoted and proposed to all students and recent graduates on a fair and inclusive basis, adds international experience and training to the wealth of competences and skills that are required by the sector business and world of work, contributing to the consolidation of the professional profiles as well as of the personal and cultural growth.

- Outgoing and incoming Staff (management, technical, administrative and teaching) mobilities for training, for approaching and transferring advanced contents, methods, market competences and knowledge as key enablers for implementing the international dimension and innovation of the training offer, through development, bilateral cooperation and KA2 projects

The widening and structuring of the international network helped by these actions is expected to pave the way for further initiatives to be developed and deployed upon the initial, mobility-based, roll-out phase of the policy implementation:

- Bilateral cooperation with companies, to make international the development of courses and programmes based on demand and requirements analysis
- Bilateral cooperation with agri-food HTIs (and possibly universities) abroad, for exchanging best practices and putting in place cooperation actions, such as supporting traineeships at both sites, identify and implement common didactic modules and topics to be developed and supplied ad both institutes, facilitated by distance learning and training
- Cooperation projects under the KA2 framework, to contribute to didactic and operation innovation strategically and effectively, also to the benefit for the wider HTI community. In this context, students, graduates, staff and companies, that are expected to be increasingly familiar to international perspective





and activities, are a key asset to develop, implement and contribute to the initiatives

Moreover, incoming and outgoing mobilities for teaching are a relevant goal to pursue, in a cooperation context, to give additional internationalisation and modernisation elements, also by exploiting a flexible adoption of virtual and blended mobility schemes.

In a further perspective, due also to preparatory actions needed in the ITS systems (e.g. adopting a ECTS compliant scheme for automatic credit recognition), the Foundation will develop a roadmap to develop and implement:

- the structuring and organisation of mobilities for studies, both outgoing and incoming, which can be associated to traineeship mobilities and be part of cooperation schemes
- the development of joint programmes and courses, to be based on relevant training objectives and carried

out also through (blended or virtual) mobilities of students and staff

- the implementation of automatic ECTS recognition for all students
- the implementation of the European Student Card initiative reinforcing and completing the paperless management of mobilities

IMPACT OF THE PARTICIPATION IN THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME

With reference to the actions described above, the expected impact and indicative timing are listed in the following:

Mobilities for traineeships (students and recent graduates)

Since the first experience, offered to participants (II year graduates from the 2019-21 two-year cycle and all from the subsequent 2020-2022) it is pursued and expected the achievement of a higher and wider level and quality of the professional profiles of the beneficiaries (prudential initial estimate 8% of students total), offering additional appeal to the world of work in favour of employability (a top criteria for ITS performance assessment by the relevant Ministry) back home and abroad; a progressive increase of this rate based on the first results and the contribution and support as ambassadors of the previous participants; the initial and continuing widening of the international company network for future traineeship hosting and cooperation to courses and classes development.

Staff Mobilities

Starting from the accreditation, development of mobility priorities according to the implementation plans will be carried out availing the HTI / HEI network of the Foundation to identify learning and exchange initiatives of common interest, as well as a targeted search for other opportunities. At the first occurrence (2021) are indicatively expected around 6 mobilities, with focussed objectives (e.g. impacting on production and processing; credits schemes, management processes related to internationalisation), together with the identification of initiatives for further cooperation as explained above). For the following, it is foreseen a suitable mix of individual mobilities and initiative in the context of cooperation projects that will include progressively mobilities for teaching.

International cooperation

As a first fallout of the widening of the Company / HEI network, thanks to the mobility-based roll-out, bilateral cooperation is expected (as other activities are) to be a growing instrument to improve teaching and traineeship offer, and as a platform for establishing innovation and best practice exchange projects proposals, which are expected to start based at a maximum of 2 years from the accreditation and become progressively a stable asset. Strategically, this area is expected to provide a fundamental impact on the internationalisation and modernisation of the Foundation and its formative





offer, by making structural and stable innovation, with initiatives whose objectives and complexity would be not feasible without an international cooperation approach.

Other initiatives (Mobilities for study, European Student Card, Automatic Credit Recognition)

Each and all, these initiatives will complete and prepare for continuous improvement and long-term sustainability the implementation of the Foundation international strategy, enabling a full structural and stable approach to innovation of the formative offer. As said, they are expected to occur in a subsequent time frame, due to unavoidable preparatory work (expectedly supported by mobilities and cooperation) and are on a (Automatic Credit – European Student Card – Mobility for study) sequence. It is anyway foreseen to adopt (if feasible) partial, pro-tempore measures, such as e.g. paperless management of mobilities, joint (virtual / blended) classes / modules, in order to speed up the implementation, compatibly with instruments at hand over time.

In any case it seems currently feasible to fully deploy these instruments within the time frames defined by the Commission (up to 2025).

