

EHEA Action Plan on Internationalisation and Mobility 2027

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We the ministers in charge of higher education make the following commitments:

1. We affirm that comprehensive **internationalisation of higher education** is a cornerstone of European and global cooperation which enhances the quality and accessibility of higher education, and equips students and staff with the necessary intercultural and international competences.
2. In view of the growing importance of the global and intercultural dimensions for research and education, but also for societies and economies we promote a **holistic, comprehensive and inclusive perspective of internationalisation** that integrates physical mobility, virtual exchanges and other at home activities both on campus and cooperation with partners, in consideration of the spirit and commitments of the 2020 Rome Communiqué ensuring an international experience for every student.
3. We confirm the value of **international collaboration** and commit to reducing the existing barriers through joint learning opportunities such as joint programmes and degrees along with the development of international academic and administrative careers through staff mobility.
4. We reaffirm the **physical mobility target of 20%** outgoing mobile students, highlighting that physical mobility remains a key driver for the acquisition of intercultural and international competences, as well as a catalyst for intercultural understanding and international solidarity.
5. We strive to make learning mobility more **inclusive and accessible** for students from underrepresented backgrounds by addressing financial, social, and structural barriers, promoting flexible and diverse mobility formats, and providing targeted support measures that enable equal participation and ensure that all learners can benefit from international experiences.
6. We commit to promoting **balanced credit and degree mobility** by fostering mutually beneficial and sustainable exchanges of students between countries and institutions. We will strive to improve both incoming and outgoing mobility, while taking into account the broader societal impact, including educational capacity, housing, and local contexts.
7. We underline the importance of a **sustainable approach to mobility** and internationalisation, integrating environmental responsibility into policies, practices, and learning across higher education systems.

8. We commit to further **removing persistent and undue barriers to learning mobility**, recognising that such barriers affect both participation in outgoing mobility and the capacity of higher education systems and institutions to receive and integrate mobile learners and staff.
9. We commit to strengthening **data collection, measurability, and evidence-informed policy** making in the field of internationalisation and mobility by improving the availability, quality, and comparability of data at national and European levels.

I. Introduction and Purpose

This Action Plan aims to guide Ministries, Erasmus+ agencies, higher education institutions (HEIs), student organisations, and other relevant stakeholders who share the vision of a more interconnected, inclusive, and innovative EHEA. It promotes the implementation of coherent, coordinated, and effective measures to enhance internationalisation efforts across higher education systems and to stimulate balanced, sustainable and inclusive mobility opportunities. This Action Plan aims to strengthen the EHEA's global engagement and competitiveness, while ensuring that internationalisation remains a driver of quality, innovation, and mutual understanding.

The development of this Action Plan on Internationalisation and Mobility of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is grounded in a long-standing political commitment to strengthen internationalisation in general and to strengthen mobility as a core dimension of the Bologna Process in particular. Since the Leuven Communiqué (2009), Ministers have endorsed the target that at least 20% of graduates in the EHEA should have undertaken a study or training period abroad. Building on this foundation, the Mobility Strategy for the EHEA (2012) provided a framework to enhance the quality, inclusiveness, and recognition of mobility experiences. The Rome Communiqué (2020) subsequently committed to enable all learners to acquire international and intercultural competences, while the Tirana Communiqué (2024) called for renewed efforts to make mobility more inclusive, balanced and sustainable in response to emerging global challenges.

The context in which this Action Plan was developed has evolved considerably in recent years. Geopolitical tensions, global competition, and shifting demographic trends have reshaped the conditions for cooperation and exchange among countries and HEIs. Simultaneously, varying political and societal responses to international engagement continue to influence attitudes toward openness and mobility. These developments highlight the need for a forward-looking and adaptable approach to internationalisation and mobility, one that safeguards academic cooperation, fosters inclusivity and sustainability, and reinforces the EHEA as a space of trust, solidarity, and shared values.

II. Strategic Vision

Internationalisation and mobility are key drivers for advancing the EHEA. They enable all learners to acquire international and intercultural competences, preparing them to engage in an increasingly interconnected world. Moreover, internationalisation and mobility promote quality, inclusion, sustainability, employability and the safeguarding of fundamental values within higher education. They contribute to strengthening mutual understanding, cooperation, and innovation across borders, thus reinforcing the EHEA's role as a global reference for open, dynamic, diverse, and value-based higher education cooperation and exchange.

Internationalisation is understood as a comprehensive and intentional process aimed at integrating global, international, and intercultural dimensions into the objectives, content, learning outcomes, and overall learning environment of higher education. It reaches across all levels of HEIs and is reflected in curriculum design, competence development, internationally oriented teaching and learning methods, assessment practices, mobility measures, institutional values and standards, resource allocation, and staff development processes. Crucially, internationalisation also supports the acquisition of transversal and discipline-specific competences that enable students and graduates to act as responsible global citizens and effective change makers in diverse, multicultural, and rapidly evolving contexts. In essence, internationalisation permeates every aspect of higher education and engages all members of the academic community.

The vision for internationalisation and mobility within the EHEA is guided by the following principles:

- **Core educational mission:** Internationalisation and mobility should be embedded visibly and meaningfully in the very core of higher education's teaching, learning, and research missions.
- **Accessibility and inclusion:** Opportunities for international and intercultural experiences should be open to all learners and staff, regardless of their background or personal circumstances, with special attention to underrepresented groups.
- **Environmental and social responsibility:** Internationalisation and mobility must be pursued in ways that are sustainable, ethical, and socially responsible.
- **Diverse formats and approaches:** Internationalisation should occur within and beyond physical mobility, embracing internationalisation of the curriculum, internationalisation at home (IaH) and online learning opportunities that complement physical exchanges and ensure broader participation.

III. Commitments

The commitments presented in this Action Plan are general political commitments from Member States and national authorities, providing guidance for policy development and coordination. The commitments aim to include implementation perspectives for HEIs and other stakeholders, highlighting practical approaches to foster internationalisation and mobility across the EHEA.

1. **We affirm that comprehensive internationalisation of higher education is a cornerstone of European and global cooperation which enhances the quality and accessibility of higher education, and equips students and staff with the necessary intercultural and international competences.**
 - By 2028 we commit to having in place, or to further strengthening comprehensive national policies, strategies or equivalent measures for the internationalisation of higher education, developed, implemented, monitored and periodically reviewed in structured cooperation with higher education institutions and relevant stakeholders. These policies or measures should reflect the diversity of national higher education systems and respect institutional autonomy and academic freedom, while providing a coherent enabling framework for responsible, inclusive and sustainable internationalization.
 - Ensure meaningful stakeholder participation throughout the internationalisation policy cycle and through structured dialogue with higher education institutions, students, academic and professional staff, social partners, employers, civil society and, where relevant, regional and local authorities.
 - Support HEIs in developing coherent internationalisation strategies, policies and practices aligned with their missions, profiles, capacities and long-term objectives, in consultation with their academic communities and relevant partners.
 - Create enabling national conditions for international cooperation by addressing legal, administrative, financial and structural barriers and ensuring coherence across higher education, research, innovation, migration, employment and related policy areas.
 - Promote responsible internationalisation based on quality, equity, reciprocity, academic freedom, institutional autonomy, integrity, inclusion, sustainability and mutual benefit, while addressing ethical considerations, academic and research security, and the risks and opportunities of international cooperation.
 - Strengthen the societal and economic relevance of internationalisation through cooperation with employers, research and innovation actors, public authorities and civil society, contributing to quality education, research and innovation, employability, knowledge circulation, societal development and international understanding.
 - Ensure evidence-based and measurable internationalisation policies supported by clear objectives and proportionate monitoring arrangements that avoid unnecessary administrative burdens on higher education institutions.

2. **In view of the growing importance of the global and intercultural dimensions for research and education, but also for societies and economies we promote a holistic, comprehensive and inclusive perspective of internationalisation that integrates physical mobility, virtual exchanges and other at home activities both on campus and cooperation with partners , in consideration of the spirit and commitments of the 2020 Rome Communiqué ensuring an international experience for every student.**
 - We encourage and support HEIs to integrate internationalisation in the curriculum, and make the best use of mobility, but also to develop and enhance blended, hybrid and online formats including COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning).
 - In order to support the internationalisation efforts of the HEI and to follow-up on our commitment that every student should have a meaningful internationalisation experiences, whether through physical mobility, and by other means, we will in addition establish an approach for supporting virtual exchanges. To this purpose, we will work jointly with the higher education to define and implement formats for virtual exchanges.
 - These experiences must be explicitly anchored and made visible within the curriculum to ensure that all students have structured opportunities to acquire and demonstrate them.
 - We underscore the importance of multilingualism and encourage and facilitate HEIs to expand the number of language learning courses available to students, teachers and higher education staff, and expand the number of courses taught in a foreign language.
3. **We confirm the value of international collaboration and commit to reducing the existing barriers through joint learning opportunities such as join programmes and degrees along with the development of international academic and administrative careers through staff mobility.**
 - We are committed to addressing the gaps in the implementation of the Bologna key commitments and to improving their implementation through strengthened national action plans that include facilitating HEIs to stimulate more credit mobility and the development of transnational education, incl., joint, double or multiple degrees.
 - We underline the necessity to continue work to implement Bologna tools, such as the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) and the European Approach for Quality Assurance (EA), the QF-EHEA, implementation of ECTS, the Diploma Supplement, as well as international recognition conventions as the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC), as well as the Global Recognition Convention (GRC), and continue the process toward automatic recognition.
 - We welcome the recent EU initiatives including the revised Erasmus+ strategy and appreciate Erasmus+ support on the EHEA as a whole.
 - We acknowledge the value of staff mobility within national Human Resources, professional development, and career frameworks, and integrate internationalisation activities into promotion and appraisal systems, supported by internal incentive schemes.
 - We encourage HEIs to develop staff mobility schemes as a core component of internationalisation, and to provide stronger institutional support for building sustainable partnerships, enhancing capacity building, and fostering inclusive international collaboration.
 - We commit to foster higher education institutions' management to promote and facilitate diverse staff mobility opportunities—including short-term, administrative, and structured

exchange programmes—by improving access to information and encouraging participation in continuing professional development abroad, particularly through mobility and transnational programmes.

4. We reaffirm the physical mobility target of 20% outgoing mobile students, highlighting that physical mobility remains a key driver for the acquisition of intercultural and international competences, as well as a catalyst for intercultural understanding and international solidarity.

- We acknowledge that the Leuven mobility target has not yet been reached and encourage countries to renew efforts in this direction with differentiated approaches across study cycles and types of mobility, acknowledging that mobility patterns and feasibility vary between first, second, and third cycles, as well as between credit and degree mobility. We undertake to set realistic national milestones to move towards the Leuven mobility target (based on the current state in each country).
- We underline the important role that physical mobility can have in the acquisition of intercultural and international competencies and encourage HEIs and other stakeholders to strengthen the quality and impact of mobility experiences by incorporating attention for each of the mobility phases; before, during and after a mobility experience.
- We encourage HEIs to structurally and systematically embed mobility and/or flexibility windows in study programmes and develop a consequent and decisive approach towards recognition of learning outcomes abroad and flexible study modules.
- We encourage HEIs to establish comprehensive support structures for mobility, including welcome centres as single-entry points, access to national language courses, and adequate housing and welcoming arrangements for international students, alongside systematic reintegration processes for returning students and staff covering self-reflection, recognition of acquired competences, career guidance, and well-being.
- We encourage HEIs to develop and provide short term international activities that would foster inclusion of all students in the process of internationalisation but also raise motivation for long term mobilities.
- We emphasise the importance of quality-assured international traineeships/practical training/ internships ideally embedded in HEI curricula, as they enable the explicit definition, assessment and recognition of learning outcomes related to work-based learning, transversal skills and professional competencies, thereby strengthening students' job readiness and ensuring that international practical experiences are meaningfully aligned with programme objectives, employability goals and labour market needs.

5. We strive to make learning mobility more inclusive and accessible for students from underrepresented backgrounds by addressing financial, social, and structural barriers, promoting flexible and diverse mobility formats, and providing targeted support measures that enable equal participation and ensure that all learners can benefit from international experiences.

- We commit to develop and adopt national strategies to promote inclusive mobility and define targets and indicators for participation of underrepresented student groups. We aim to ensure needs-based support schemes, including financial top-ups and mental health

services, and other targeted measures addressing barriers faced by students with fewer opportunities.

- We aim to raise awareness among teaching and administrative staff about diversity and inclusion in mobility programs. Each HEI should have an understanding of which student groups are underrepresented, and what that means for their participation in mobility programs, including measures to address the barriers these groups face.
- Align inclusive mobility with broader social dimension policies and embed inclusive principles in the design of mobility programmes, ensuring accessibility through inclusive campuses, suitable accommodation, and barrier-free information. We encourage practical solutions to housing challenges, including accessible accommodation platforms, exchange arrangements where feasible, and welcoming environments that bring domestic and international students together.
- Promote equal participation by providing proactive outreach to students with fewer opportunities, alongside tailored support measures such as peer mentoring and buddy systems, dedicated advisory and onboarding services, and inclusivity training for staff in HEIs.

6. We commit to promoting balanced credit and degree mobility by fostering mutually beneficial and sustainable exchanges of students between countries and institutions. We will strive to improve both incoming and outgoing mobility, while taking into account the broader societal impact, including educational capacity, housing, and local contexts.

- We envision to maximise the societal and academic benefits of learning mobility, strengthen international cooperation, and mitigate potential negative effects such as brain drain, spillover or other undue pressures on local resources. In pursuing balanced mobility, we favour openness and the removal of barriers over restrictive measures that close systems.
- We aim to achieve more balanced mobility flows by collectively moving toward more open systems, instead of closing up our systems with restrictive measures and focussing on both outgoing and incoming mobility. By opening our systems in more comparable levels of attractiveness and accessibility, international student populations will be more equally spread across the region.
- We recognise that the language of instruction is a key driver of learning mobility flows and agree to aim for more comparable levels of courses taught in a foreign language and foreign-language degree programmes.
- We applaud the Study in Europe initiative, with clear goals about how different EEA countries can attract more international students and encourage cooperation with partner countries to develop balanced mobility pathways, while aligning institutional partnerships with national and regional mobility goals to strengthen coordinated and sustainable internationalisation efforts.

7. We underline the importance of a sustainable approach to mobility and internationalisation, integrating environmental responsibility into policies, practices, and learning across higher education systems.

- We promote and support sustainable mobility by introducing or expanding green funding instruments (e.g. incentives for low-emission travel), prioritising rail and other low-emission

transport, and encouraging environmentally responsible practices throughout the mobility period, including in accommodation, campus infrastructure, digitalisation, resource use, and daily living, while ensuring equitable access for all students and avoiding unintended barriers to participation. We also encourage the development of systematic national and institutional approaches to sustainable mobility.

- Promote green mobility through public visibility tools (e.g. certification, Erasmus+ Accreditation for HE integration) and support HEIs in embedding sustainability across their operations, campuses, and internationalisation strategies. Encourage national recognition or award schemes that make holistic sustainable mobility approaches visible and shareable across the EHEA.
- Strengthen the role of education in sustainability by integrating sustainability across curricula and offering sustainability awareness training for outbound students, while encouraging institutions to adopt a holistic approach to becoming more sustainable beyond mobility alone.

8. We commit to further removing persistent and undue barriers to learning mobility, recognising that such barriers affect both participation in outgoing mobility and the capacity of higher education systems and institutions to receive and integrate mobile learners and staff.

- We recognize that persistent barriers to learning mobility remain and that these barriers link back directly to above-mentioned commitments regarding the mobility target, balanced mobility, and inclusive mobility:
 - To advance inclusive mobility, we will address the administrative, financial, legal, academic, linguistic and social barriers that may prevent or disproportionately discourage learners and staff from participating in mobility, with particular attention to those with fewer opportunities.
 - To support the balanced mobility goal, we will also address barriers affecting incoming mobility and the capacity of higher education institutions and systems to attract, receive and integrate mobile learners and staff. This includes improving admission, visa and residence procedures, access to housing and support services, the availability of multilingual and internationally accessible study opportunities, academic and social integration, and institutional capacity to manage mobility sustainably.
- In addressing the persistent barriers to learning mobility we identify the following categories of barriers:
 1. Administrative & regulatory barriers – including complex application and admission procedures admissions, administrative bureaucracy, visa, residence and employment requirements, insurance, health, and grant mobility procedures.
 2. Financial barriers – covering housing costs, e adequacy and portability of grants and financial support.
 3. Recognition barriers – including recognition of qualifications and learning periods abroad, transfer of ECTS credits, curriculum compatibility, inflexible programme structures, mobility windows and differences in academic calendars.
 4. Social, linguistic and inclusion barriers – including unequal access to mobility opportunities and limited participation of learners and staff with fewer opportunities.
 5. Policy and structural and institutional barriers – linked to the incomplete implementation of EHEA commitments, insufficient institutional capacity to support

inward and outward mobility,, the need to promote clear and reliable information and guidance to students participating in mobility programmes.

This overview highlights some key systemic barriers to learning mobility with specific recommendations and commitments for their removal.

Barrier	Recommendation
Recognition of learning periods abroad	Ensure fair, transparent and timely recognition of qualifications and learning periods abroad, for both credit and degree mobility, in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and relevant EHEA commitments.
Language proficiency and language of instruction	Strengthen language preparation and support before, during and after mobility, while promoting adequate provision of multilingual and internationally accessible study opportunities, including programmes and courses taught in widely used languages. experiences; and ensure the availability multilingual and English-taught programs.
Affordability of mobility and lack of Portability of support, grants and loans	Improve the adequacy and portability of student support, grants and loans; provide need-based mobility grants and top-ups; take account of differences in living costs; and address barriers related to access to affordable accommodation.
Cultural integration and or segregation	Incentivize diverse, inclusive campuses and require intercultural training for staff and students. Promote inclusive and diverse academic environments, strengthen intercultural preparation and support, and address barriers affecting learners and staff with fewer opportunities, both in accessing mobility and in integrating into the host institution and community.
Inflexible curriculum design	Integrate mobility windows and flexible mobility pathways within study programmes, facilitate recognition of credits, and improve compatibility of academic calendars where possible.
Lack of Motivation, Awareness or Information	Strengthen communication and guidance by providing clear and accessible information, targeted outreach and tailored support, particularly for underrepresented groups, while communicating the academic, professional and personal value of mobility.
Visa and working permit regulations	Strengthen cooperation between higher education institutions and competent national authorities to simplify and accelerate visa, residence and, where relevant, work-related procedures, and provide clear and timely guidance to incoming and outgoing participants.
Administrative and organisational burden	Simplify and digitalise mobility procedures, including application, admission and documentation processes, improve interoperability where appropriate, and strengthen institutional capacity to

Barrier	Recommendation
	manage incoming and outgoing mobility efficiently.

9. We commit to strengthening data collection, measurability, and evidence-informed policy making in the field of internationalisation and mobility by improving the availability, quality, and comparability of data at national and European levels.

- The development of EHEA mobility indicators should build on existing internationally agreed statistical frameworks. The UNESCO-UIS/OECD/Eurostat (UOE) Joint Data Collection already provides harmonised definitions and internationally comparable data for degree and credit mobility, including breakdowns by level of education, sex, field of study, origin/destination and type of mobility. The EHEA and member states should therefore use the UOE framework as the statistical core and develop additional indicators only for policy dimensions not adequately covered by existing data, such as inclusiveness, barriers, recognition, portability of financial support, balanced mobility and green mobility.
- We will promote the use of clear indicators and monitoring frameworks to assess progress and impact, support research and analysis to inform decision-making, and ensure that policies are regularly evaluated and adapted on the basis of robust evidence.
- We underline the importance to monitor and measure the effectiveness of all internationalisation efforts for the acquisition of international and intercultural learning outcomes.
- Monitor and analyse in- and outbound flows by field, level, region.

IV. Implementation and Monitoring

We invite Member States to translate the commitments of this Action Plan into national policies, strategies, or action plans. To monitor the implementation of this Action Plan key indicators can be included in the Bologna Implementation Report (BPIR). In addition, Peer Learning Activities and thematic exchanges can provide opportunities to share experiences and best practices, supporting effective implementation throughout the next Bologna cycle (2027–2030) and beyond.