

## **ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT**

**2021-2027**

The development of the Baltic International Academy (BIA) strategy has complied with the laws and other regulatory enactments of the Republic of Latvia, the Constitution of the BIA, the Latvian Sustainable Development Strategy until 2030, the Lisbon Strategy, the most important Bologna principles. BIA offers international multilingual academic and professional education to students from Latvia and around the world, providing the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve success as a personality and professional, and the values that are necessary for everyone. The education provided by BIA helps to unite students from East and West. BIA is accredited for an indefinite period. BIA is a modern educational institution that, in connection with research in the humanities and social sciences, provides various types and levels of higher education opportunities for the residents of Latvia and other countries. The Academy has more than 400 foreign students from more than 20 countries. The expansion of international relations in the field of higher education along with the development of other international activities, is one of the main directions marked in the Academy's development strategy that lead to building a European Education Area. BIA representatives actively participate in education fairs and exhibitions in many countries with the aim of positioning Latvian higher education and education system, attracting potential students from these countries to study at the Academy in study programs of various levels and directions, expand cooperation with higher education institutions and organizations. in the field of science.

The main strategic goals of internationalization and international activities in BIA that could be carried out with Erasmus Charter:

- Expansion of co-operation with universities in various international activities, strengthening and expanding bilateral agreements and increasing the number of partner universities in the EU and other countries;
- To increase the number of outgoing and incoming students at the first, second and third level in study and traineeship mobility (EU and other countries) with fully recognition irrespective of students` socio-economic background in accordance with the Bologna process, participation of BIA students, the BIA Student Parliament and the Erasmus buddy system in assistance with mobilities and further improving its international performance;
- Joint research activities: conferences, research projects, seminars for students and lecturers;
- Introduction of new teaching technologies in accordance with European standards,
- Exchange of academic staff for teaching unique courses and preparing common modules, join master degrees, development of Course Catalogue;
- All forms of support for academic and administrative staff wishing to participate in Erasmus exchange and other EC programs in education and science;

- Creation of joint programs based on the basis of programs already accredited at the Academy and partner universities recognising higher education qualification;
- Development of language skills of students and academic staff, paying special attention to professional language skills; Development of new projects for participation in EC programs, development cooperation projects with strategic partners;
- Joint participation in international projects and scholarships, exchange of good practice in the area of education, science, promotion of Western and Eastern partnership;
- Participation in short-term programs: provision of research internships for doctoral and master's students, organization of student summer research schools;
- Digitalization of project administration, using new IT in teaching and study process;
- Promoting students' European identity;
- Developing the administrative skills of appropriate staff.

BIA supports the use of ECTS, introduces general qualification standards and promotes the flexibility of the study / qualification process, as well as mutually recognized quality systems, access to the European market and the attractiveness and competitiveness of European higher education. BIA is convinced of the advantages of the ECTS system and its fundamental right to recognize credit points obtained elsewhere.

BIA takes on the challenge of working in a competitive environment at home, in Europe and around the world. The demographic situation in Latvia is complicated and all educational institutions are losing the number of students, however, BIA is trying to increase the number of graduates by modernizing the study process with distance learning opportunities, quality control (surveys, comparison of exam results, etc.), attracting students from outside the EU.

BIA plans to continue international cooperation, looking for new partners and participating in new international cooperation projects. BIA has concluded international cooperation agreements with partners in countries outside the EU, within the framework of which mobilities, research projects, conferences, student summer schools are organized, that allow to use the new opportunities of the program. BIA plans to cooperate with the EU and other countries within the framework of the new international cooperation. Participation in such projects is a professional development for employees and students. The International Relations Department and the Administration are responsible for taking advantage of all the opportunities offered by the new program.

Student and staff mobility, cooperation among organisations and institutions is an important aspect of the European Higher Education Area and BIA strategy. BIA plans to implement more mobility and use the existing recognition tools (ECTS, diploma supplement) in a positive and flexible way in the future period of the program. BIA recognizes that competitiveness in lifelong learning is enhanced by the value of quality

education, the diversity of approaches and programs, the adaptability of programs and the development of communication and language skills, the ability to mobilize knowledge, solve problems, work in a team and social processes. Within the framework of international student exchange and lifelong learning cooperation, BIA sets the following goals for 2020/2027 period: to establish contacts between BIA and partner universities in the EU and other countries; update student training standards to enable participation in international exchange programs and to support students and teachers involved in international exchange programs. Participation in the program has a positive effect on BIA program administration skills.

Participation in Erasmus+ actions will contribute to achieving the objectives of our institutional objectives in following: development of teaching in English, improving students' language skills and increasing the attractiveness of BIA to potential foreign partners in Erasmus projects. BIA cooperates with companies that offer internships to students that helps students to have international competitive work experience. Staff involvement in international projects and mobility programs is included in self-assessment as one of the most important qualification criteria. BIA attracts Erasmus guest lecturers and staff from partner universities to strengthen cooperation, to create joint programs, joint research activities (conferences, research projects, seminars), to increase the quality of education, IT, digitalization usage and provide a language base not only for Erasmus students. BIA intends to participate in policy development and cooperation projects that lead to high standards of education, exchange of good practice experience, through policy analysis and peer learning, dialogue with policy makers, policy innovation that is important for the European Higher Education Area.

Participants of the mobility program from Latvia have the opportunity to get acquainted with the different approaches of their future profession to the understanding of its specifics in other countries, staff can compare the methodological approach of the Baltic International Academy and the host university; participants get acquainted with the culture and traditions of a new country, expand professional contacts. Upon return, the student may have a completely different idea of the higher education system as a whole. The experience gained during the mobility program expands the student's opportunities to find a job, increases competitiveness. One of the advantages of mobility is the strengthening of foreign language skills.

Teachers can use the experience of mobility both methodologically, improving teaching methods and theoretically. Both lecturers and employees, thanks to the mobility program, improve their study programs in their universities, popularize international mobility programs among colleagues. Mobility strengthens relations between partner universities, develops scientific research activities, promotes the creation of new programs and projects that ensure the development of the country as a whole.

Participation in the Programme supposed to have impact in various areas: to expand students' professional knowledge and professional skills of academic and administrative staff (development of new unique courses and common modules, programs); close cooperation in the development of joint new study programs on the basis of study programs accredited by BIA partner universities; attracting students from other countries to the study

process in Latvia; stimulating the mobility of students and teachers by strengthening the European benchmark for the quality of higher education; stimulating the development of short-term programs; development of joint scientific research activities in the application of innovative technologies; support the modernisation of education and training systems, in particular through enhanced policy cooperation, innovation excellence and internationalisation at the level of education and training institutions, policy reforms at national level; increase the attractiveness of European higher education institutions for Partner-Countries. It is important that results of projects continue to be used by the partnership after the project finishes. All members of partnerships (international relations department and engaged in the project departments) monitor implementation of the project, prepare necessary reports (incl. finance reports) during and after projects. Erasmus Department and International Department monitor each mobility (its quality) by following the preparation process: application, study or training agreements, work plans, and continue to monitor the mobilities by helping with necessary consultation on various questions (ECTS, insurance, tickets, accommodation, etc.), consider final reports and successful stories of the participants.

BIA enlarges the number of mobility partners each year (min. 10 institutions per year), as well as continues to participate in Erasmus+ actions, for example, BIA was coordinator of Erasmus KA107 project 3 years ago and continues to apply for KA107 action this year. As an example, BIA tourism department actively participates in Erasmus+ activities (Capacity Building in Higher Education, etc.) and other international activities each year. BIA is trying to increase the number of incoming and outgoing students and staff mobilities every year. We plan the digitalization of Erasmus + program documentation could help to increase the number of mobilities and projects.