

DELIVERABLE D7.2

REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN (M39)

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Abstract	Second implementation report describing changes and the current state of mobility administration at EDUC partner universities.
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INTRODUCTION

The presented document is the second implementation report of the action plan for the harmonization of the mobility infrastructure within the European Digital UniverCity (EDUC) alliance. It is a part of work package 7 (WP7) of the pilot phase of the project. WP7 “Reducing barriers for physical mobility” is focused on streamlining and harmonizing mobility procedures in such manner that existing barriers preventing students or staff going on mobilities are reduced as much as possible. The second reporting period covers December 2021 – December 2022.

The action plan is the result of task 7.1 (Harmonization of the mobility infrastructure) and includes suggestions for improving several key areas in mobility administration: 1) policies and mobility regulations, 2) funding, 3) strong recommendation for international experience in EDUC, 4) EDUC Fast track, 5) study and teaching offer, 6) student services, 7) promotion. The action plan was approved by the EDUC Steering Committee in July 2020 and is being implemented at each university since at their own pace.

The following report provides a listing of each of the key areas and explanation of progress made by each partner.

Partner universities in the EDUC alliance and their abbreviations

University of Potsdam – UP

Université de Rennes 1 – UR1

Université Paris Nanterre – UPN

Masaryk University – MU

University of Pécs – PTE

University of Cagliari – UNICA

OVERVIEW OF EACH PART OF THE 7.1 ACTION PLAN AND PARTNERS' PROGRESS:

1. Official regulations and policies

Done/In progress

To provide transparent information on how the mobilities are administered and regulated at EDUC universities, all partners have them published and available online at the moment. All partners have updated their safety and security rules according to changes in pandemic situation, with most having their S&S rules published or being directly communicated to students.

a) Mobility regulations and policies

- **UPN** – has mobility policy and guideline published on its website. However, a new regulation has been written and now has to be approved by ad hoc councils.

- **UP, MU and PTE** have their mobility policies and guidelines published on their websites.
- **UNICA** also have mobility policies and guidelines published on their website and prior to mobility every international student (IN and OUT) is advised on what the mobility regulations and policies are. They are given an official communication containing all the important information on their mobility (learning agreements, contracts with students, linguistic preparation before the exchange period, etc.) and are asked to sign it declaring that they are aware of.
- At **UR1**, all relevant information and procedure for incoming mobility can be found on the "[Studying at Université de Rennes 1](#)" webpage; all relevant information and procedure for outgoing mobility can be found [here](#). To be noted: The information is provided in French only, for outgoing students.

b) Safety and security rules for international mobilities

- At **UPN**, recommendations are published on the website related to Covid-19, gender-based and sexual violence. There are no general or international focused security rules at UPN yet, but different information related to security disseminated on various supports.
- **UNICA** have safety and security rules published for Covid-19. In addition, the university recommends students to use national portals such as [Viaggiare Sicuri](#).it - the portal of the Foreign Ministry, managed by the Crisis Unit, created to provide Italian citizens with a wide and diversified overview of information on all the countries of the world. The Crisis Unit also provides universities that send young people abroad a dedicated channel within the "Where we are based" - Dove siamo nel mondo - portal, which allows you to register and be quickly tracked to the occurrence of a crisis situation abroad.
- **UP** has safety and security rules published for Covid-19, housing and general security.
- **PTE** has rules, codes and safety instructions, as well as Covid-19 site available in English (<https://pte.hu/en/covid/news>) and provides information regarding help to the Ukrainian students fleeing the war: <https://pte.hu/en/help-for-ukraine/news>
- **UR1** have published their [S&S rules](#). Moreover, [charter to promote equality and fight discrimination](#), [commitment to equality and women's rights](#) and [commitments against discrimination](#) are available on UR1's website. They also provide a [FAQ](#) (in French and in English) with information on the health crisis related to COVID-19 and the rules of the university.
- **MU** have updated their Covid-19 related information. Additional information was sent to students who were concerned whether war in Ukraine directly affects Czech Republic (MU also offers extensive information regarding help to Ukrainian students). S&S rules are regularly updated and sent to students before their mobilities.

2. Strong recommendation for international experience in EDUC

In progress

International cooperation, getting to know partners in different countries, exchanging best practices and experiences and thus strengthening the bond between EDUC universities is at

the core of the alliance. Partners have made their efforts to support the EDUC international experience from top-down as follows:

- **UNICA:** In order to strengthen the EDUC network to better know the activities and services to develop new ones, to increase the contact database for the email marketing activities, several live events were held, online events, videos and TV announcements, social media announcements, participation in student salons, publications and brochures. Through custom gadgets, the visibility of EDUC has increased at very low costs compared to other marketing strategies, such as participation in fairs and physical promotional events.
 - o The EDUC Team at UNICA supervises the communication activities in English and collaborated with the other relevant Divisions of the University in relation to web communications. It is also positive that through the experience at the EDUC University, despite the slowdown in activities due to the pandemic emergency, different paths of flexible learning have been created (summer schools in blended mode, gap year experiences, teaching and research seminars, innovative virtual teaching projects) to enable students to acquire and improve knowledge, soft skills and skills in disciplines or fields of study future-oriented such as e.g. environmental protection and sustainable development, clean energy, artificial intelligence, digital literacy.
- **UPN:** Different opportunities offered by EDUC gave rise to several application sessions (according to the type of mobility, according to the type of public etc.) and associated communication campaigns. Focus on EDUC opportunities are integrated in promotional events. The International Relations Department also participates in various bodies or staff meetings to disseminate this information. A dedicated staff for EDUC student activities has been recruited. In February and September when we announce the Erasmus+KA131, KA171 calls for applications, we promote the EDUC scholarships too. Faculty Coordinators are also involved and informed about these.
- At **MU**, EDUC mobilities have priority in funding and all available mobility opportunities in EDUC are promoted as much as possible. The vice-rector regularly updates university leadership on EDUC activities and opportunities.
- **UR1:** A special effort was made in order to develop the mobility opportunities at EDUC partner universities, and especially through:
 - o A match-making effort regarding the fields of study and programmes in order to develop the number of agreements between UR1 faculties and EDUC partner universities faculty.
 - o An integration of the EDUC activities into the promotional actions regarding the topic “Studying abroad”: information meetings in the faculties, webinars, website, etc.
- **UP** explicitly highlights mobility opportunities with EDUC partner universities for staff (Erasmus+, KoUP) as well as students (Erasmus+, additional national funding for short-term blended programs) in calls for applications, on dedicated websites and in print media. The UP also advertises mobility opportunities at virtual and on-site events, such as the Campus Festival, the WarmUP, tailored (online) information sessions and a virtual “StudyStream” on YouTube focused on going abroad.

3. Funding

Done

One of the main obstacles that prevents students from going on mobilities was lack of funding, as partners have found out in their mapping survey. To remove this obstacle, all EDUC partners can guarantee additional funding for mobilities besides Erasmus+ funds.

4. EDUC Fast track

In progress

EDUC Fast track was conceived and established as the key component of the action plan for harmonization of mobility administration. The fast track contains steps to make in order to prioritize EDUC mobilities, facilitate their administration and thus boost their overall number in the alliance.

A) Inter-institutional agreements on university level signed between EDUC partners

In progress

Due to Erasmus without Papers technical issues and complexity of the agreements negotiations, partners have chosen to break down the inter-institutional agreements to faculty or department level. Faculty-level agreements are being negotiated or were recently signed at MU, UR1, PTE and UP. At UP, additional IIAs have been agreed upon with different partners and in part signed via EWP. The initial aim to sign all subjects IIAs with all EDUC partners has been postponed due to technical restrictions.

B) Availability of international offices and EDUC contact person

In progress

International offices at EDUC universities are still offering their services most days of the workweek during their office hours in person, as well as through telephone and e-mail. Partners have also either appointed EDUC contact person (or team in case of UNICA) or EDUC e-mail address where students can reach out regarding their questions about the alliance partners or activities and expect response within a faster time frame (UR1). At UR1, due to decentralized nature the faculties are the local contact points for students. They are available to support students regarding questions they may have about EDUC partners and activities.

C) Advance payment of mobility grant

Done

As mentioned earlier, funding was perceived by students as an obstacle due to which they can't go on mobility. To remove this obstacle, partners made steps to ensure advance payment of mobility grant (at least partly) for EDUC mobilities.

D) Joint policy for course recognition

In progress

- **UP, PTE, MU** and **UNICA** (for outgoing students) have a guideline or policy on study recognition published.
- At **UR1**, a specialized working group involving several stakeholders was relaunched in 2021 in order to complete the common framework for course recognition. The grade conversion grids were validated by the Education and University Life Commission of the university in October 2022. This provides a common and transparent framework related to grade recognition applicable to all outgoing students. It will be published on the University website beginning of 2023.
- **UPN** – Guideline for recognition will be included in the new regulation (see 1. above). It will refer to EGRACONS project (grade conversion). It should be published around March 2023.

E) Unified deadline for nominations and publishing of course catalogue – In progress

In progress

Partners are still working on pushing the deadlines for nominations and publishing of course catalogue so the students in the alliance have easier orientation when applying for mobility at EDUC partner universities.

- **UR1** – Nomination deadline for incoming students is 15th of May. The study catalogue is finalized and published in December each year for the next academic year beginning in September.
- **UP** - Due to technical restrictions, the course catalogue at UP can only be published twice a year, shortly before the start of the respective semester. The IO has been in negotiation with the Studies and Exams IT to improve the status quo.

F) Full commitment to EWP

Done

Partners are still progressing with their EWP implementation as guided by the European Commission.

G) Priority accommodation for incoming students

In progress

All partners offer priority accommodation or assistance for incoming EDUC students, with these updates:

- **MU** is working on expanding dormitory accommodation due to higher number of students.
- **UR1** provides EDUC students extra assistance but all incoming students are treated the same (provided with access to accommodation). The Centre for International Mobility is a shared service offered by several HEIs in Rennes, which offers, among other services, support to student regarding the accommodation. We have a new partnership with a private platform which assists international students and help them to find an accommodation.

- **UP** has been successfully in negotiation with the student dorm provider concerning a quota contract for international students to support students in finding affordable accommodation.
- **UNICA** is working on reinforcing the desk dedicated to the offer of accommodation.

5. Study and teaching offer

In progress

A comprehensible and interesting study and teaching offer is one of the main factors that helps students and staff decide whether they want to go on mobility at a given partner university or not. Partners have made the following steps to ensure their offer is easily accessible and contains also short-term options for those interested:

Study catalogue

- **UP, UNICA, PTE and MU** have the study catalogue published online in English and updated.
- **UR1** - The study offer exists in French. A webpage is dedicated to [English taught programmes](#). In addition, each IO in the faculties publishes catalogue in English or gives individual information to incoming students. The need for an online course catalogue in English is tackled by the International Affairs Department in relation with the IT department. This project will be developed in the upcoming years, most probably in relation with a National Initiative coordinated by the French University of Caen Normandie, financed by the French Ministry for Higher Education and Research and supported by the French National E+ Agency, in the framework of EWP (OLA), among others.
- **UPN** – Study catalogue is published online and updated around May, but it is still mainly available in French only. The university's website is unfortunately not fully translated into English yet.

Staff week and summer school offer

- **UP** has offered summer schools both in and out of EDUC (WP6) and has teaching collaborations with student exchanges (funded from the national topping up).
- **UR1** has organized a staff week in June 2022 where 12 colleagues from EDUC partner universities participated. The theme of the staff week was European mobilities and digitalization. A summer school targeted at EDUC students was organised in June 2021.
- **PTE** has organized an international relations seminar with UPN in May 2022, as well as 2 summer schools in EDUC WP6 and many other summer and winter schools: <https://summerschool.pte.hu/>
- **MU** is currently planning to develop an EDUC-only staff week for 2-3 days due to high demand. A regular international department staff week was organized and there are also staff weeks offered by various MU centres and departments besides the international one (e.g. libraries, Teiresias - Centre for students with special educational needs, etc.) Besides that, 6 summer schools were organized by MU team for EDUC and many other summer and winter schools as well.

- **UPN** has launched three or four calls for applications each year (for a mobility funded by ERASMUS + and EDUC). International mobility could be integrated into staff training. So far, staff mobility has focused on the job-shadowing and cooperation. UPN is currently working on the promotion of staff weeks, particularly within EDUC. Human Resources, International Office and Head of Administration are discussing this opportunity. It can also help to identify some counterparts and improve inter-office cooperation.
- **UNICA** organised in 2022 four summer schools within the EDUC framework.

6. Student services

Done

All EDUC partners provide various services for student on mobilities – e.g. informative welcome sessions, social events, buddy, systems, pre-departure workshops, etc.

7. Promotion

Done

All EDUC partners have promotional activities in place in order to promote mobilities available – an informative website, social media and regular international days, fairs or similar events where mobilities are promoted.