

FPTR Brussels
Bollandistentraat 40
1040 Brussels
T: +32 (0)2 735 67 46
E: mobility@fpnr.be



Erasmus Policy Statement

FPTR Erasmus Strategy 2022 – 2027

Your Erasmus Policy Statement should reflect how you intend to implement Erasmus after the award of the ECHE. Should you wish to add additional activities in the future, you will need to amend your Erasmus Policy Statement and inform your Erasmus National Agency.

What would you like to achieve by participating in the Erasmus Programme? How does your participation in the Erasmus Programme fit into your institutional internationalisation and modernisation strategy?

What is the envisaged impact of the participation on your institution? Explain how you expect the participation to contribute towards achieving the objectives of your institutional strategy. Explain how it will contribute to making your institution more modern and more international. Explain how you expect the participation to contribute to the goal of building a European Education Area.

For each objective, define appropriate indicators for measuring achievement (e.g. mobility targets for student/staff mobility, quality of the implementation support for participants on mobility, increased involvement in cooperation projects, sustainability/long-term impact of projects, etc.) Link the targets to a timeline.

Introduction

The FPTR in Brussels is a young independent faculty for theology and religious studies in the heart of Europe. In the policy plan for 2022-2027 "Tradition, Culture, Living Religion and Internationalization" play an important role. In it, the FPTR wants to pay special attention to the specific issues that arise in a multicultural and globalized society. Especially in the field of meaning and religion, there is a large vacuum in the Brussels context. In addition to addressing the issues of radicalism and identity in education and research, the FPTR is

working on the development of a knowledge hub around traditional and current religious themes. As the world is rapidly becoming a connected network, the FPTR intends to build a centre of international inclusion on philosophy of life and tradition in the future. As an additional point of interest, the FPTR is aware that it is located in the heart of Europe and the seat of the European institutions. Hence, in our teaching and research, we subscribe to the policy option of paying more attention to human rights, gender equality and socio-economic inequality in relation to philosophical minority groups. To this end, the FPTR wants to build a network where students and researchers around these themes meet and deepen their expertise. With this policy, the FPTR wants to make full use of its unique position in the educational landscape to broaden the knowledge of religion and philosophy of life in a multicultural perspective and to address the growing challenges and opportunities concerning society and religion through student and faculty exchange and joint research projects.

Interfaith context

The FPTR is explicitly interfaith and non-denominational in orientation. We strive in our policy plan to give all global denominations and local traditions an equal place in education and research. As Brussels has been attracting more and more people from all over the world over the past decades, the diversity in the metropolis is growing by the day. The FPTR offers a study and research context that stimulates those involved to deepen their own tradition in an open and inclusive, interfaith perspective. Internationalization is a core value of this, which the FPTR upholds in its policy plan 2022-2027.

Strategic objectives

In practice, the FPTR applies three strategic objectives with a view to internationalization: (1) to encourage international students and teachers to engage in deeply inclusive teaching and learning about religion and worldview, (2) to facilitate sustainable and qualitative international mobility, (3) to build a centre of excellence that gathers knowledge of European and global issues of religious diversity and radicalism.

Contribution of projects to the objectives of FPTR's Institutional Strategy

Erasmus Key Action 1 (KA1) - Learning mobility

With the support of the Erasmus+ program, the FPTR aims to train its students, researchers and staff members to become global citizens, for whom an international orientation is indispensable. The policy plan of the FPTR is based on the realization that international collaborations contribute to the professional development of students and staff members. Thus, the FPTR sees the strengthening of language skills, innovative teaching methods and broadening of cultural awareness as essential. Furthermore, the FPTR aims to increase the impact of internationalization by broadening learning mobility and digital mobility and by expanding the curriculum multi-linguistically. It is also the intention, with the support of the Erasmus+ program, to encourage doctoral students to collaborate internationally so that the expertise of the research in question is invariably inclusive.

Erasmus Key Action 2 (KA2) - Cooperation among organisations and institutions.

The internationalization plan of the FPTR aims to further expand partnerships with European and non-European faculties. In addition to flexibility, the FPTR is strongly committed to interdisciplinarity. An important facet of contemporary religious issues plays out at the level of ignorance. The fragmented culture in confrontation with the multi-religious stratification of society created a meaning vacuum. At the FPTR we teach and research the religious hot button worldwide today on an interdisciplinary basis, this means that not so much the confession but rather the anthropological and psychological components of religion serve as a starting point. It is essential in this regard that teaching and research be informed by international cooperation. It is our experience that many sister faculties in Europe and elsewhere still cling very strongly to the traditional and origins context, while the world is changing very rapidly. The challenges of religion posed by globalization can no longer be approached at a purely institutional level. Therefore, the FPTR, with the help of the Erasmus+ program, wishes to enter into close and intensive cooperation with European faculties of theology and religious studies in order to address the very specific problems of

religion in Europe. The ongoing collaborations with institutions in the Netherlands and Germany as well as South Africa and Azerbaijan will be strengthened and expanded in the coming years in this perspective. In addition, we are very fond of the European University Project and would like to contribute to it in the future. Thanks to the Erasmus+ support, we want to boost the international image of the FPTR in Brussels - the only institution in the European capital dealing with theology and religion.

Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3) - Support to policy development and cooperation

The FPTR's ongoing internationalization aims to broaden its expertise and provide answers to religious issues that are all related to migration, polarization, identity and diversity. Hence, the FPTR developed a wide range of skills in its policies and operations to promote inclusiveness. Further implementation and consolidation of these skills will enable FPTR to provide education and research with policy impact in the future. This has been and will continue to be a fundamental part of the partnerships that the FPTR is forging and intends to build in the future.

Impact and Integration

A strong international network is a lever for structural international cooperation in education and research. Creating a European consortium is a necessity to participate in European project proposals. The FPTR aims to engage in European and international networks at the institutional level. Furthermore, we want to commit ourselves to participate in the association of theological and religious studies faculties, to gather them in a European network working on current issues.

To this end, the FPTR encourages its collaborators to orient themselves broadly internationally within their respective areas of expertise. The aim is to establish far-reaching partnerships with European and non-European institutions in the field of religious studies. In the context of these partnerships, the FPTR aims to develop training programs and joint teaching and research projects. Student and staff mobility is an essential part of this, as is

the prospect of building joint-master and PhD programs, possibly with national and/or international support.

It is crucial that students and staff experience the quality of multicultural coexistence. The best way to do this is through travel and exploring new horizons. Therefore, the FPTR wants to encourage its students and staff to actively participate in education and research abroad. In doing so, we strive for inclusive mobility.

However, the FPTR is not blind to the growing virtual mobility, which also contributes to further internationalization. Hence, we enrolled in the policy plan the further expansion of digital opportunities. This should offer students who are not able to travel abroad the opportunity to gain international experience.

A not insignificant additional objective for the FPTR is integration. Thanks to our location, our student population and faculty internationalized noticeably in recent decades. More and more students from other continents are applying. The FPTR integrates, on the one hand, due to its modest size, a high degree of flexibility and, on the other hand, due to its multi-linguistic context, a low threshold.

In the coming period, the FPTR intends to further develop this inherent internationalization through the establishment of multiple platforms and accommodation options. Hence, the FPTR pays ample attention to the mobility window in all study programs in its exchange program. This ranges from the existing physical mobility opportunities to digital internationalization from home. To this end, the FPTR aims to invite international experts and share their knowledge both on-site and by video conference.

The FPTR promotes its students and faculty to participate in international exchanges and initiatives.

Internationalization

The FPTR strives for inclusion while maintaining hospitality as a top priority. In the policy plan 2022-2027, we envisioned the development of a welcoming strategy, including the expansion and renovation of accommodation, the implementation of digital learning opportunities and social services for foreign students. The ultimate goal is to fully integrate internationalization into the operations of the FPTR. This also implies the development of an English speaking department. We are faced with an increasing number of foreign students and want to offer the entire study program in English in the short term.

The FPTR already provides an evening school where language skills are taught, focusing on the specific jargon of theological and religious studies subjects. We aim to expand this offer to include administrative and legal language, both in Dutch, French and English.

The FPTR is convinced that the Erasmus+ program offers the necessary opportunities to achieve the objectives of its internationalization policy and is therefore committed to subscribing to the Key Actions of the European program Erasmus+. In order to put this commitment into action, the FPTR established an Internationalization Committee, consisting of members of the Board of Trustees and the Academic Council who take the policies in this area to heart; The Committee meets three times a year.

Indicators

The FPTR considers students and staff as an important tool to implement the internationalization strategy. The Internationalization Committee works closely with the Academic Council and the FPTR Board. The organization of European and international credit mobility is the responsibility of the Committee and the Academic Coordination.

The FPTR is committed to increasing student learning mobility by 20% in the coming year. The Internationalization Committee will examine its operation and feasibility by semester and make adjustments as needed in view of the goal to be achieved. New students and faculty staff will be encouraged to pursue an international orientation. The static numbers covered in the evaluation are an indicator of learning mobility at the FPTR.

In view of this internationalization of teaching and research, networks are crucial. The partnerships that the FPTR is able to forge thanks to the Erasmus+ program form the backbone of this network. The specific embedding of the FPTR, its flexibility and interdisciplinarity also enable it to deploy exchange students in the multicultural context of the metropolis.

Apprenticeships and coaching

The FPTR's policy is to develop an action plan to provide services, integrating apprenticeships, internships and coaching. Especially in the areas of city chaplaincy and sports & human rights, the FPTR runs projects in which experience can be gained in an international and multicultural perspective.

In doing so, the FPTR simultaneously seeks to diversify its study program through various post-graduate programs, while guaranteeing the quality of education on a topical basis. Participation in these projects is monitored by specific guidance groups that follow up progress in close contact with the academic coordinator. The Internationalization Committee has from these reports an important indicator for the functioning and possible adjustment.

A third important indicator is the introduction of digital teaching and blended learning. Since the introduction of digital teaching during the past decade, student numbers in some study tracks at FPTR have tripled. During the Covid crisis, work was forced into purely digital education, which has remained after the crisis as the opportunity to study through blended

learning. The steady growth of these initiatives generated is monitored by academic coordination. This evolution underlines the importance of English-language programs, which we will continue to develop with the help of the Erasmus+ program.

Timeline

Following the implementation of the digital and blended learning during the previous policy plan (2019-2022), the FPTR will develop its internationalization project 2022-2027 in three phases:

1. 2022-2023: build out an international network for training and research of City Chaplaincy, flanked by the operation around youth, sports and human rights. To this end, it forges cooperative links with international faculties of theology and religious studies and perpetuates existing links. A not insignificant part of this first phase is the
2. implementation of the European Student Card initiative. In terms of logistics, the FPTR will work on accommodation for exchange students and teachers in Brussels. To this end, it will make contact with already existing possibilities in the capital. We aim for a 20% increase in learning mobility.
3. 2024-2025: in a second phase, the FPTR will complete the establishment of an English-language program. This will involve cooperation with non-European institutions in the field. The focus will be in the establishment of a chair and training on religion in a multicultural context. The expertise and research on contemporary religious issues, which in a previous phase resulted in international publications and policy documents on religious radicalism, will in the second phase be completed in the requested research on religious diversity. The partnerships with international institutions supported by the Erasmus+ program are indispensable in this process.
3. 2025-2027: In a third phase the consolidation of virtual mobility and cooperation will be worked on, with the further development of the three key actions. The intention is for the Brussels FPTR to be the place where knowledge and education about religion and the world

view are manifested in the heart of Europe. In this way, the FPTR wants to grow into a vital part of an international innovation network. It wants to participate actively in research and service related to the growing void of meaning.