

In the following sections of the application form, you will need to explain how your institution will fulfil the ECHE principles if the Charter is awarded. You are encouraged to consult the [ECHE Guidelines](#) for support in completing this application.

Please note that your Erasmus+ National Agency will monitor your Erasmus Policy Statement and your answers to the questions given in the application. The Erasmus+ National Agency reserves the right to request more information on your activities and propose supplementary measures, for the purposes of monitoring and implementing the Charter principles by your institution.

## 1. ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT (EPS)

### 1.1 Erasmus activities included in your EPS

In this section, you need to tick the Erasmus activities covered by your Erasmus Policy Statement. Please select those activities that your HEI intends to implement during the entire duration of the Programme.

#### Erasmus Key Action 1 (KA1) - Learning mobility:

The mobility of higher education students and staff

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

Partnerships for Cooperation and exchanges of practices

Partnerships for Excellence – European Universities

Partnerships for Excellence - Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees

Partnerships for Innovation

#### Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3):

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

### 1.2 Erasmus Policy statement (EPS): your strategy

Your Erasmus Policy Statement should reflect how you intended 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?

(Please reflect on the objectives of your participation. Please explain how you expect the participation in Erasmus to contribute towards modernising your institution, as well as on the

goal of building a European Education Area<sup>1</sup> and explain the policy objectives you intend to pursue).

Original language (and translation into EN, FR or DE if the EPS is not in one of these languages)

As an educational institution Viaa aims to contribute to the quality of human society. Internationalisation fits very well into that general framework for the overall goal of the internationalisation policy of Viaa, Christian University of Applied Sciences, is to educate future professionals who are internationally and intercultural competent, and aware of their position in a globalising society. They need to be aware of their responsibility of contributing to a sustainable and inclusive society at a national, European and global level. In particular as a Christian institute, Viaa strives to emphasize an understanding and caring attitude towards the vulnerable groups in society and the world.

Digitalising education, creating online options as well as implementing virtual mobility as a means for internationalisation at home, are areas Viaa will work on in the next coming years. Erasmus+ provides opportunities to explore and expand these options with the present partners in Europe, as well as to expand the partner network and seek new areas of inter-institutional collaboration. Elaborating digital education also helps to reduce emission by travelling.

Collaboration nearby, in Europe, provides options to reduce the footprint of internationalisation. Viaa intends to limit the number of flights and to promote travelling by train.

Please reflect on the Erasmus actions you would like to take part in and explain how they will be implemented in practice at your institution. Please explain how your institution's participation in these actions will contribute to achieving the objectives of your institutional strategy.

Original language (and translation into EN, FR or DE if the EPS is not in one of these languages)

Participating in the Erasmus+ programme helps Viaa to achieve the overall objections mentioned above. Europe is the nearby world outside the Netherlands. By creating possibilities for mobility and international collaboration through Erasmus+, Viaa students and staff experience the enriching experience of international and intercultural collaboration at a short distance in the European Education Area. Virtual or physical exchange provides students with the opportunity to widen their horizon on their future profession and the European labour market. Staff exchange and inter-institutional collaboration open ways for modernising education.

Viaa intends to take part in:

1. KA 103: individual mobility of students and staff.

Viaa has a partner network in Europe. As a rather small HEI, it has been the intention to limit the number of partners and to focus on the quality of the partnerships.

In the coming years, Viaa will continue with solid relationship management to stimulate the exchange of students within the network and to intensify the mobility of staff. Requests or other options for new partnerships will be considered concerning the aims of Viaa, options for an exchange mobility and the topics of mutual interest prospective partners offer.

The quality of the partnership, in terms of to what extent exchange of students and staff, and collaboration on educational content takes place, is evaluated every year. During visits to partners or their visits to Viaa the evaluation of the partnership is a topic of the discussions.

For the creation of an international atmosphere and to provide internationalisation at-home experiences, it is important to have incoming international students. To attract international students, Viaa needs to have a relevant offer of English taught courses. In collaboration and reconciliation with partners, Viaa determines how to adapt and expand the present course offers.

2. KA 2: Inter-institutional collaboration.

The focus areas within the inter-institutional collaboration are the exchange of knowledge; modernisation of education (in particular by offering shared modules by blended learning) and cooperation in research.

As an example: One of the Viaa teachers created, and already examined in practice, a programme for students in all study programmes. In this programme, the students carry out a case study within a small group of students at the

<sup>1</sup> For more information on the priorities of the European Education Area, such as recognition, digital skills, common values and inclusive education, please consult the following website:

[https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-education-area\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-education-area_en)

home institution. In an online meeting with a student group of a partner institute, they discuss their findings. Afterwards, they reflect on the different views based on differences in context and cultural background. In this example elements of internationalisation at-home are combined with an online exchange. Some partners of Viaa already expressed their interest in this method, called SWITCH, and for the future, Viaa seeks collaboration with partners to implement SWITCH in a wider of an online shared course between two or more institutes.

Another area of collaboration with European partners is research on shared topics of interest. On the topic 'Spirituality in Care' Viaa is in the lead in a European network. Some other areas of interest are: 'Calling and Profession', and 'The ethic of...'

What is the envisaged impact of your participation in the Erasmus+ Programme on your institution?

Please reflect on targets, as well as qualitative and quantitative indicators in monitoring this impact (such as mobility targets for student/staff mobility, quality of the implementation, support for participants on mobility, increased involvement in cooperation projects (under the KA2 action), sustainability/long-term impact of projects etc.) You are encouraged to offer an indicative timeline for achieving the targets related to the Erasmus+ actions.

Original language (and translation into EN, FR or DE if the EPS is not in one of these languages)

The impact of the participation of Viaa in the Erasmus+ Programme will be an enforced international atmosphere in the entire institution. For incoming students it must be clear: studying at Viaa means that you will meet students from different European countries. You will have a class with them, you meet with them online. Your teachers show an intercultural attitude and are fluent enough in English to teach their courses in-depth for a mixed student population.

To achieve this desired situation, Viaa has to develop the following areas and boundary conditions:

- Teachers who work with international students are international and intercultural competent: fluent in English at C1/C2 level; well aware of and trained in the theory of intercultural sensitivity. They all have a certificate for both areas. (2022)
- Students are used to read relevant literature in English in every study program, and are fluent in English at a minimum level of B1. Those students who plan to go abroad master level B2.
- A flexible institution-wide course offer, which is appealing for the Dutch as well as incoming international students, about a common topic for all study programmes (2022-2023)
- An increasing number of incoming students for study, or a mixed programme for study and internship:  
2022: 5 students/semester  
2024: 10 students/semester  
2026: 20 students/semester
- An increased number of Viaa students going abroad to international partners in Europe:  
2022: 5 students/semester  
2024: 10 students/semester  
2026: 20 students/semester
- When it comes to teachers exchange: Viaa will strive to achieve the numbers of 2 teachers exchanges both ways, as mentioned in each Inter Institutional Agreement in the partner network..
- Viaa participates in a KA2 project, coordinated by one of the European partners. (2022)

A blended and shared course offer in collaboration with a small network of Erasmus+ Programme partners: Under KA2 Viaa, together with several of the closest partners, creates a semester of courses and other educational activities with limited travelling, many activities online (COIL) Visiting and outgoing guest lecturers will be a part of it. (2025). The use of European Student Card easily allows students to participate in this blended learning environment.

Especially this last stage will have a firm impact on the institution as a whole since the digital facilities needed for it will have to be available, and be spread to all levels of the education at Viaa. The present experience during the Covid-19 period may have a positive impact in this area.

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

### 2.1 Implementation of the new principles

Please explain the measures taken in your institution to respect the principles of non-discrimination, transparency and inclusion of students and staff. Describe how your institution ensures full and equitable access to participants from all backgrounds, paying particular attention to the inclusion of those with fewer opportunities.

Viaa is a small institute and focuses on a safe and friendly atmosphere. The openness and easy accessibility of staff towards students are reasons why students choose for Viaa. Although Viaa is an explicitly Christian institute, it is open to students of all backgrounds. In that way, Viaa executes an inclusive policy.

For students with physical disabilities, structural measures have been implemented. For example, the building is accessible for wheelchairs, at the doors of offices, there are signs in Braille and in case there is a deaf student an interpreter for the deaf will be hired.

But also students with learning disabilities or mental problems receive support from a student coach, a counsellor or a student pastor. In comparison with other Dutch HEI's Viaa ranks high at this point. (NSE scores).

As a result of all features and measures mentioned above the student body of Viaa is increasingly diverse.

Internationalisation should be available and accessible for all. There are some restrictions for students that are unknown by study coaches or the international coordinators. Viaa plans to develop a self-report form to encourage students with fewer opportunities to ask for help. For example when the home situation of students (financially, practically) restricts them from participation in mobility. The information from this form might be the reason for the international office to pay out a top-up budget from Erasmus+ for the student in case.

Please explain what measures your institution will put in place to implement the European Student Card Initiative, and promote the use of the programme's Erasmus+ mobile App to students. Please refer to the timeline indicated on the European Student Card Initiative website<sup>2</sup>.

Viaa intends to fully implement the European Student Card initiative. Recently the Viaa International Office created the Erasmus Dashboard account. During the spring of 2020 the colleagues of the international office plan to participate in the webinars of Erasmus Without Papers (EWP) and experiment with the Inter-Institutional Agreement Manager (IIAM).

During the academic year 2020-2021, the IIAM and the Online Learning Agreement (OLA) will be implemented and the European Student Card (ESC) and the app will be promoted.

In the next year, 2021-2022, the ESC will be implemented, including online nominations and acceptance, as well as the exchange of the transcript of records related to the mobility (study and placements).

Please explain how your institutions will implement and promote environmentally friendly practices in the context of the Erasmus+ programme.

As an institute, Viaa subscribes the principles of sustainability. The school building itself already demonstrates this intention: by the use of solar panels, insulation and other modern technology it has been upgraded to an almost energy-neutral building.

But also in education and the daily practice of working together in this building Viaa wants to express an environmentally friendly attitude. For example promotion of public transportation, limiting printing and storing online as much as possible. The overall atmosphere regarding working green will eventually inspire students to embrace these principles as a way of life.

The research centre for societal issues considers to develop a research line called 'Inclusive society'. Intercultural and international aspects will certainly be part of this area of research.

When it comes to Erasmus+ this means that travelling will be limited in the next coming years. Students and staff are encouraged to travel by train instead of flying. Also, expanding the options for blended learning and virtual mobility helps to achieve the goals of reduction of emission. The participation in EWP (see the section above) supports this

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-student-card-initiative\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-student-card-initiative_en)

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policy. Viaa subscribes, together with all institutions for higher education in the Netherlands, the SDG Charter. An institution-wide committee works on implementing these principles for the whole school. The measures taken within the context of Erasmus+ are part of it.

Please explain how you will promote civic engagement and active citizenship amongst your outgoing and incoming students before, after and during mobility.

Viaa's outgoing students are prepared for their stay and intercultural learning process abroad. An important part of their preparation is to create intercultural awareness and sensitivity. This is a condition for better engagement with the culture they plan to visit. During their time abroad they reflect on their experiences. This process of intercultural learning is coached by their mentor from Viaa, either online or during a real visit. Students are encouraged to actively participate in the welcoming culture: improve language skills, visit cultural events, do voluntary work, etc. After returning home they reflect over the full period abroad and consider to which extent they have grown interculturally. They also present their experiences to other students to motivate them to go abroad as well.

Viaa only offers credit mobility. Incoming students are encouraged to get immersed in Dutch culture. They first have an introduction week at Viaa. They all get a Viaa student as a buddy to discover student life in Zwolle, and to figure out practical issues. Further on, when it comes to active participation the English taught programmes, it is required to actively participate in voluntary work as part of the learning experience. In the SPICE programme students live in a host family as part of their intercultural immersion. They also are asked to participate in a Dutch cultural or a sports organisation. In the course Intercultural Explorations, they are coached in connecting their experiences with the theory of intercultural sensitivity (Nunes and Nunes) and to reflect on their personal learning experience. Most of the students look back at these experiences as the most valuable elements of their time in the Netherlands.

## 2.2 When participating in Mobility Activities - After mobility

Please demonstrate your commitment to implement full automatic recognition in your Higher Education Institution.

Please describe the concrete steps you will take to ensure the full automatic recognition of all credits gained for learning outcomes achieved during a mobility period abroad/ a blended mobility, according to the Council Recommendation on Automatic Mutual Recognition<sup>3</sup>.

The credits Viaa students gain abroad, or incoming students gain at Viaa are automatically recognised after completion of the period abroad. This is transparent to all participants since it is described clearly in the learning agreements. So far, Viaa uses a manual way of recognition, which requires several steps on paper and online to finalise the process.

By introducing the Electronic Learning Agreement (ELA) as part of the EWP project in compliance with the timeline of the introduction of the ESC (see the section above under 2.1), the recognition will work more fluently and even more automatically.

Many students of Viaa choose for an internship abroad. Since this is a mandatory part of the study programme and the required credits are described in the learning agreement, these credits in the coming years also will be recognised within the frame of EWP. For those students who plan to stay in the Netherlands, there are options for internationalisation at home.

Please describe your institution's measures to support, promote and recognise staff mobility:

Mobility of staff is an area Viaa pays extra attention to since it falls behind, compared to the mobility of students.

To find out why staff members feel restrictions regarding going abroad for learning or teaching, the Viaa International Office carried out an internal questionnaire regarding limitations for staff members. It became clear that the main factors are: plannability, lack of information about Erasmus+, partnerships and relevant themes and proficiency of English. As a policy to encourage staff to choose for mobility the international office took three actions:

- Promotional visits to all teams of the academies with information regarding Erasmus+ and the partnership network
- The offer of a Cambridge advanced course for staff members

<sup>3</sup> The text of the Council Recommendation on Automatic Mutual Recognition may be found at: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1568891859235&uri=CELEX:32018H1210\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1568891859235&uri=CELEX:32018H1210(01))

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- Offer the option for staff members who plan to go abroad to reserve hours for an international visit in their year plan, recognised by the team managers.

This way staff members feel more space and support to learn or teach abroad.

Proficiency of English has become a point of interest in the professional development plans of all teachers. In the coming years, Viaa plans to make Erasmus+ certificates of attendance at an international partner for teaching or learning as important as the proficiency of English. They have to become part of the personal files of every teacher. This way international mobility will be recognised for professional growth.

### 2.3 For the Purposes of Visibility

Please provide the web link where you will host the Erasmus Policy statement in the future. Please reflect on how you plan to regularly promote the activities supported by the Programme.

Two weblinks are important:

- For Viaa and other Dutch visitors of the website: [www.viaa.nl/voorlichting/naarhetbuitenland](http://www.viaa.nl/voorlichting/naarhetbuitenland)
- For international visitors: [www.viaa.nl/information/scholarships](http://www.viaa.nl/information/scholarships)

Next to the information on the website, the activities of within the Erasmus+ programme will be promoted by:

- Open days: information through a stand of the International Office, including all information regarding study abroad under Erasmus+ . Flyers of the national agency are available.
- Posters: 'Wilweg 'posters, Viaa posters regarding internationalisation, etc.
- Information sessions for students: all study programmes have information sessions for their students in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year. The international Office participates in these sessions in order to inform students about grant options, including Erasmus+.
- Individual information: the international office has sessions with small groups of students who already plan to go abroad. For those who go to a European destination Erasmus+ is a fixed part of the agenda.
- Information sessions for teams of the academies: Partnerships, themes of collaboration, support through Erasmus+ are shared with staff.
- International Magazine: Good practices of Erasmus+ students, incoming and outgoing, are part of the content.

Please describe how you will ensure that the principles of this Charter will be well communicated and applied by staff at all levels of the institution.

First of all, the management of Viaa is well aware of the principles of the ECHE since the president signs the document.

Secondly, the manager of internationalisation and the advisory staff get introduced to the principles, since they read the ECHE application before it will be submitted. They give feedback on how the principles need to have an impact on education at Viaa.

Moreover, the coordinators of internationalisation of all academies are involved once the ECHE is admitted. Together with the International Office, they are responsible to put the principles into practice.

Finally, the participation council in which students, teachers and non-teaching staff are represented will be informed about the ECHE once it is admitted. They will consider whether Viaa puts the principles into practice in the institution as a whole.

## Digitale ondertekening

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