



ERASMUS+

Proposal Template

**Administrative Forms (Part A)
Project Technical Description (Part B)**

Erasmus: Key action 1: Erasmus Charter for Higher Education

EACEA-03-2020 ECHE-LP-2020

**Version 1.1
4 March 2020**



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ERASMUS+

PROPOSAL (PART B)

Erasmus: Key action 1: Erasmus Charter for Higher Education

EACEA-03-2020 ECHE-LP-2020

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Applications must be submitted via the Funding & Tenders Portal Submission Service before the call deadline.

Applicants must use this template for their applications (designed to highlight important aspects and facilitate the assessment against the evaluation criteria).

Character and page limits:

- page limit 20 pages
- supporting documents can be provided as an annex and do not count towards the page limit
- minimum font size — Arial 8 points
- page size: A4
- margins (top, bottom, left and right): at least 15 mm (not including headers & footers).

Please abide by the formatting rules. They are not a target! Keep your text as concise as possible. Do not use hyperlinks to show information that is an essential part of your proposal.

⚠ If you attempt to upload an application that exceeds the specified limit, you will receive an automatic warning asking you to shorten and re-upload your application. After you have submitted it, any excess pages will be made invisible and thus disregarded by the evaluators.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	11.02.2020	Initial version
1.1	04.03.2020	Changes in page 10, 1st box after the Erasmus Policy Declaration

COVER PAGE

Part B of the proposal must be filled out by the participants in WORD, assembled and uploaded as PDF in the Funding & Tenders Portal Submission System. The template to use is available there.

Note: *Please take due account of the objectives and Charter's principles to be awarded with the Charter under the call (see Call document). Pay particular attention to the award criteria; they explain how the proposal will be evaluated.*

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COMMITMENT TO THE ERASMUS CHARTER PRINCIPLES

Declaration

I, undersigned, declare that if my institution is awarded with an Erasmus Charter for Higher Education, my institution will undertake to:

- Respect in full the principles of non-discrimination, transparency and inclusion set out in the Programme.
- Ensure equal and equitable access and opportunities to current and prospective participants from all backgrounds, paying particular attention to the inclusion of those with fewer opportunities.
- Ensure full automatic recognition of all credits (based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System – ECTS) gained for learning outcomes satisfactorily achieved during a period of study/training abroad, including during blended mobility.
- Charge no fees, in the case of credit mobility, to incoming mobile students for tuition, registration, examinations or access to laboratory and library facilities.
- Ensure the quality of the mobility activities and of the cooperation projects throughout the application and implementation phases.
- Implement the priorities of the Programme:
 - By undertaking the necessary steps to implement digital mobility management in line with the technical standards of the European Student Card Initiative.
 - By promoting environmentally friendly practices in all activities related to the Programme.
 - By encouraging the participation of individuals with fewer opportunities in the Programme.
 - By promoting civic engagement and encouraging students and staff to get involved as active citizens before, during and after their participation in a mobility or project.

WHEN PARTICIPATING IN MOBILITY ACTIVITIES

Before mobility

- Ensure that selection procedures for mobility activities are fair, transparent, coherent and documented.
- Publish and regularly update the course catalogue on the website of the Institution well in advance of the mobility periods, so as to be transparent to all parties and allow mobile students to make well-informed choices about the courses they will follow.
- Publish and regularly update information on the grading system used and grade distribution tables for all study programmes. Ensure that students receive clear and transparent information on recognition and grade conversion procedures.
- Carry out mobility for the purpose of studying and teaching only within the framework of prior agreements between institutions. These agreements establish the respective roles and responsibilities of the different parties, as well as their commitment to shared quality criteria in the selection, preparation, reception, support and integration of mobile participants.
- Ensure that outgoing mobile participants are well prepared for their activities abroad, including blended mobility, by undertaking activities to achieve the necessary level of linguistic proficiency and develop their intercultural competences.

- Ensure that student and staff mobility is based on a learning agreement for students and a mobility agreement for staff validated in advance between the sending and receiving institutions or enterprises and the mobile participants.
- Provide active support to incoming mobile participants throughout the process of finding accommodation.
- Provide assistance related to obtaining visas, when required, for incoming and outgoing mobile participants.
- Provide assistance related to obtaining insurance, when required, for incoming and outgoing mobile participants.
- Ensure that students are aware of their rights and obligations as defined in the Erasmus Student Charter.

During mobility

- Ensure equal academic treatment and the quality of services for incoming students.
- Promote measures that ensure the safety of outgoing and incoming mobile participants.
- Integrate incoming mobile participants into the wider student community and in the Institution's everyday life. Encourage them to act as ambassadors of the programme and share their mobility experience.
- Provide appropriate mentoring and support arrangements for mobile participants, including for those pursuing blended mobility.
- Provide appropriate language support to incoming mobile participants.

After mobility

- Provide incoming mobile students and their sending institutions with transcripts of records containing a full, accurate and timely record of their achievements at the end of their mobility period.
- Ensure that all ECTS credits gained for learning outcomes satisfactorily achieved during a period of study/training abroad, including during blended mobility are fully and automatically recognised as agreed in the learning agreement and confirmed by the transcript of records/traineeship certificate. They shall be transferred without delay into the student's records, shall be counted towards the student's degree without any additional work or assessment of the student and shall be traceable in the student's transcript of records and the Diploma Supplement.
- Ensure the inclusion of satisfactorily completed study and/or traineeship mobility activities in the final record of student achievements (the Diploma Supplement).
- Encourage and support mobile participants upon return to act as ambassadors of the programme, promote the benefits of mobility and actively engage in building alumni communities.
- Ensure that staff is given recognition for their teaching and training activities undertaken during the mobility period, based on a mobility agreement and in line with the institutional strategy.

WHEN PARTICIPATING IN EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION PROJECTS

- Ensure that cooperation activities contribute towards the fulfilment of the institutional strategy.
- Promote the opportunities offered by the cooperation projects and provide relevant support to staff and students interested in participating in these activities throughout the application and implementation phase.

- Ensure that cooperation activities lead to sustainable outcomes and that their impact benefits all partners.
- Encourage peer-learning activities and exploit the results of the projects in a way that will maximise their impact on individuals, other participating institutions and the wider academic community.

FOR THE PURPOSES OF IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

- Ensure that the long-term institutional strategy and its relevance to the objectives and priorities of the Programme are described in the Erasmus Policy Statement.
- Ensure that the principles of the Charter are well communicated and are applied by staff at all levels of the Institution.
- Make use of the "ECHE guidelines" and of the "ECHE self-assessment" to ensure the full implementation of the principles of this Charter.
- Regularly promote activities supported by the Programme, along with their results.
- Display this Charter and the related Erasmus Policy Statement prominently on the Institution's website and on all other relevant channels.

On behalf of the Institution, I acknowledge that the implementation of the Charter will be monitored by the Erasmus National Agencies and that a violation of the above principles and commitments may lead to its withdrawal by the European Commission.

On behalf of the institution, I commit to publishing the Erasmus Policy Statement on the institution website. <http://ico.metu.edu.tr/information>

Legal representative of the institution

PROF. DR. MUSTAFA VERŞAN KÖK, RECTOR

Signature of the legal representative



Ankara, 13.05.2020

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 Area¹ and explain the policy objectives you intend to pursue).

¹ 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

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

Middle East Technical University (METU)'s application to ECHE 2021-2027 is clearly a reflection and a summary of its vision declaring METU's aspiration to become *'a pioneer university at international level, which transforms its region and the world.'* This vision is also supported by METU's mission statement underlining its devotion to *'attain excellence in research, education and public service for society, humanity and nature by nurturing creative and critical thinking, innovation and leadership within a framework of universal values.'* METU's current mission and vision stand out as clear indicators of how it will strive to achieve ECHE targets in the period covering 2021-2027.

These targets will be achieved thanks to METU's current and future Strategic Plan (SP 2018-2022). In the most recent SP, METU introduced *International Cooperation* as one of the 8 main strategic fields crosscutting in all other activities. In this SP, METU aims to increase the number of outgoing student mobility to 750 annually & international degree & exchange students & staff to at least 10% of its population by 2022. This strategy reflects only the physical and does not reflect the virtual and/or blended mobility. Therefore, another 5% to 10% of its population is expected to participate in any EU programs that fall under the new ECHE period through a type of virtual and/or blended mobility until the end of ECHE 2027. Moreover, in its SP METU aims to increase its EU-funded mobility cooperation with top HEIs in international rankings, such as THE & QS or with the best HEIs in a given country, according to local rankings. Furthermore, in its SP, METU aims to establish collaborations with the institutions having similar curricula & academic strengths.

In line with such institutional tangible and quantitative targets, METU strategically aims to make its campuses multinational in terms of human resources by internationalizing the curricula & enriching the social life of its community, be it local, national or international. Besides, in its SP, METU places significance on improving professional & language skills & international experiences of its administrative staff.

In addition to these socio-cultural empowerment, METU also places much importance in its current SP to staff & graduate student mobility activities due to the critical role it plays to enhance potential research activities & joint publications. As an institution with a novel Techno Park & over 175 graduate programs (covering almost all academic disciplines except for medicine and law related fields), improving future research activities & joint publications is one of the internationalization targets of METU & one of the headline targets in Europe 2020 Strategy. In other words, the university will try to bring together mobility with research activities and initiatives and make them support each other. Therefore, ECHE 2021-2027 is expected to assist these targets while it also will support European Education Area (EEA). Moreover, ECHE 2021-2027 will contribute to the enhancement of research capacity of the university.

In order to support such grand targets, an institution needs capacity, expertise, human capital as well as passion. To justify how METU will be able to achieve these targets within ECHE 2021-2027, we may introduce the institution and its experience in internationalization. As attested by over 900 active exchange or cooperation agreements with universities and research institutions all across the world, METU leads the national universities in terms of depth and breadth of international ties. Moreover, the university is a member of many networks and associations dealing with international education and exchange such as EUA, UNICA, EMUNI, SEFI, UNESCO-International Association of Universities, Digital Education Network, and Black Sea Universities Network. METU actively participates in AIESEC and IAESTE summer internship programs.

The mentioned internationalization was one of the founding missions of METU, that was why English was adopted as the language of instruction in all its degree programs, and this has greatly facilitated METU's efforts to accommodate international students and researchers. METU hosts about 2300 international degree-seeking students from nearly 95 different countries studying toward a myriad of academic degrees.

Furthermore, METU has traditionally been a highly reputable institution in the Near East-Caspian Region. The developments following the collapse of the Soviet system have created an environment conducive for cooperation with the CIS and Central Asian institutions. In a relatively short time, the students from these countries have risen to comprise about 1/3 of the international student body at METU. The University's "Centre for Black Sea and Central Asia" and "Confucius Institute" have played a very important role in organizing joint-research and bringing scholars from the region. The University also offers master's programs in "Asian Studies", "Eurasian Studies" and "Middle East Studies". These are some of the geographical locations and academic areas METU has a strong stance and is expected to support EU's neighborhood policies as well as assist the Union's education targets in those regions.

METU's visibility and reputation increased in the first decade of the Millennium as a part of its international vision, METU has been accepting students from underprivileged Middle East and Central Asia through the projects supported by the Turkish government. Due to Turkey's historical and cultural ties with these countries, METU plans and expects to enhance these relations in the coming years.

The reputation of METU as an excellent research & teaching institution has made METU an attractive destination for exchange students and faculty. Now, each year, there are about 400 incoming and again

500 outgoing exchange students. However, with the initiation of the Erasmus program and with the availability of new funds supporting students and staff when the new period covering 2021-2027 is in place, we believe, the number of both incoming and outgoing students & staff from and to EU countries will dramatically increase.

As for staff exchange, annually over 100 visiting faculty come to METU for research and teaching purposes not only through Erasmus programs but also initiatives such as EURAXESS and Turkish-Government's (TUBITAK) grant program to reverse brain-drain. According to the latest statistics, METU is the institution attracting the highest number of researchers coming to Turkey through these mentioned and many more programs. On-campus accommodation is made available for the visiting faculty, when and where possible. In addition, METU faculty is also encouraged to participate in staff mobility. Annually more than 130 METU staff benefit from the Erasmus Staff Mobility program. METU faculty is also eligible to use "sabbatical leave" abroad apart from the short-term mobility programs. The University requires a minimum of one year's teaching or research activity abroad for tenure-track academic positions. With the implementation of new ECHE, it is expected that it facilitates closer links between METU and European academicians; facilitates new and innovative ideas for educational research cooperation, which may lead to a %5 to %10 increase in staff mobility until the year 2027.

Since METU strives to maintain a high standard of education at international levels, developing international joint degrees is one of the premier aims of the university. Starting from 2003-2004 academic year, 4 joint undergraduate programs have been initiated with the State University of New York, USA. METU has launched 7 joint PhD programs with French universities as well as some master's degrees with some prominent universities in EU countries and in the USA. Currently, METU has 23 international joint degree programs, 4 of which are joint undergraduate programs with SUNY; 6 of which are joint masters programs; and 13 of which are joint doctorate programs. A number of joint MS and PhD programs with selected universities in Europe are also under consideration. The new ECHE period is expected to intensify collaboration for joint/double degree initiatives with METU's European counterparts and thus indirectly support the creation of EEA.

Developing joint distance education programs with other universities and state and private sector institutions is another strategy to be developed in the new ECHE period. METU has an extensive experience in open courseware as well as had/has projects developed by its faculty members or in its Techno Park. Therefore, such an experience will be transferred to the development of new distance education programs with the European partners.

The policy objectives that METU would intend to achieve because of its participation in the Erasmus program are indicated in the METU Strategic Plan 2018-2022. Certain changes are envisaged in the conditions under which the university will operate during the 2021 -2027 term and beyond. We expect the globalization pursued in the sectors of higher education and research to increasingly continue. International competition and collaborations experienced among universities and research institutions in order to attract students, academicians, researchers and research funds will be the main theme in seven years to come. Our university will have to adapt much higher international standards and expectations so that they can compete and become members of collaboration networks. As it is indicated in the METU SP 2018-2022, improving the existing credit system at METU, if deemed necessary, taking the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) stipulated in the Bologna Process as a model; rendering the credit loads and courses within our educational programs compatible with equivalent national and international programs was defined as a sub-strategy. In brief, ECHE 2021-2027 will be one of the key tools for METU's development in internationalization, and will support its efforts in research and innovation.

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)

METU was one of the few pilot project universities when Turkey decided to participate in EU education programs in 2003. Starting from 2004, the university has engaged in EU mobility programs up until now and is determined to continue doing so. Between 2007 and 2012, METU also actively collaborated in Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window (EM ECW) actions and successfully took part in 6 different geographical lots, this being the highest number among Turkish universities. Today, it is one of the very active and key institutions taking part in KA1 and KA2 projects in Turkey. This shows that METU students and staff are very willing to collaborate and take part in EU educational programs and projects. With this high motivation, METU will continue and increase its involvement in both student & staff mobility but also in Erasmus projects.

METU's Office of the President has several distinct offices to support the university's internationalization policies and activities as well as sponsored research at both national and international levels. These

offices work in close collaboration to attain the targets set in METU is current SP and will work in the same manner to keep achieving the new targets between 2021-2027. Such a collaboration was/will be possible thanks to motivation, high professionalism, dedication and a clear labor of division. This enthusiasm led METU to one of the highest standards in the country. As a single institution, METU has a share %9 of all EU's research funds brought to Turkey. This contribution is expected to increase with the support of programs in the new term under ECHE 2021-2027.

Concerning the educational projects under Erasmus, METU has initiated a new team of professional staff to bring the Erasmus project applications, visibility and the success to a new level. This will continue during the new ECHE and it is expected that consultancy, guidance, promotion of Erasmus projects by this team will double the number of Erasmus project grants received by METU faculty members until 2027. It would be claimed that METU became one of the successful institutions in KA1 and KA2 in Erasmus 2014-2020 period. However, with the implementation of the new ECHE term, METU will also concentrate on KA3, Erasmus Mundus and Sports action by increasing their visibility among faculty members and by promoting these relatively less applied actions. The campaign will be carried out in information sessions in the departments, in internal discussion platforms, METU social media tools as well as promotional events such as 'research nights'.

These projects have their own coordinator, team and accounting. Nevertheless, the Erasmus projects development team in International Cooperations Office will also monitor them, which reports to the President's Office for their administrative procedures. When the projects carry out their financial procedures, these will be channeled through some accounting and budgeting offices such as the Directorate of Accrual, Directorate of Strategy Development and the Financial Comptroller office, as it had been in the past.

METU faculty who received EU project grants become eligible for some other incentives at the university. Faculty promotion system is designed to support EU project grants, therefore, an EU project coordinator would get points when they receive the grant and even employ new staff to the research team. One of the Vice President is responsible for academic affairs and offices under this VP also checks and monitors faculty achievements including Erasmus grants so that the faculty could get the promotion as well as receive an extra financial incentive from the Council of Turkish Higher Education (YÖK). Moreover, the Erasmus projects development team at International Cooperations Office works as intermediary among the faculty members, the Office of the President and the grating agency for all bureaucratic procedures including application, authorization, reporting and even as a data provider. During the new ECHE period, this mission will be intensified with online tools to be developed at METU.

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)

As being the leading international research-intensive university of Turkey, one of the strategic priorities of Middle East Technical University is "international cooperation and interaction". METU aims to maintain its cooperation and interaction approach with the stakeholders especially at international level by increasing student & researcher & staff mobility and involvement in cooperation projects particularly under Key Action 2 but also under KA1 as it was the practice in the previous term. With this aim, one of the main strategic goals of METU is to increase the international mobility numbers and inter-university cooperation networks memberships. As it is stated in its 2018-2022 Strategic Plan (http://sp.metu.edu.tr/system/files/odtu_sp_2018_02_08.pdf), METU annually aims to increase both the inbound and outbound international student & staff mobility numbers up to 10 % of the actual numbers, inbound of which are around 400 and outbound of which are around 500, in 2019-2020 academic year. Consequently, METU intends to carry on the already existing rich inter-university cooperation experience with its comprehensive diversity it has attained since 2004 and enhance this experience through establishing new cooperation in the new Erasmus program cycle, during 2021-2027.

In the new Erasmus cycle, one of the priorities of METU would be enabling seamless international mobility through internships, short or long-term student & staff visits, which would help to acquire new skills and competences for both students and staff and increase capacity building through inter-university cooperation among the European Higher Education Area. In this regard, METU's geo-strategic position in the heart of Turkey serving as the center of attraction for students from the Middle East, Balkans and

Asian countries would continue on to encourage the diversity of the international student and staff mobility, during 2021-2027.

With 100% English education and research, METU is compatible with internationalization and has the capacity to offer culturally, socially, and academically rich experiences for the mobility students, academics and staff. METU with its all branches, in fact, gives high priority to coordinate all units involved in internationalization and ensuring institutional support to promote the establishment and development of international cooperation. Given these above-mentioned facts, all types of student & staff mobility are expected to be increased up to an extra at least 10 % annually, in the new Erasmus cycle.

As it is mentioned above, one of the strategic goals of METU with all its devoted branches is to increase the number of inbound and outbound participants within the framework of international mobility. In line with this goal, having international exchange agreements with universities that have similar curricula and qualifications or developing cooperation projects is one of the strategies envisaged in the METU 2018-2022 Strategic Plan. METU aims to increase the number of the KA2 projects up to 20 %, the current numbers of which are eleven as of now, in which METU holds the role of both coordinatorship and/or active partner. Not only the numbers but also the diversity of the types of projects are intended to be increased, as the absence of the Knowledge Alliances and European Universities stands out among the KA2 projects METU has involved in so far. In this regard, the Erasmus Project Development Team at International Cooperations Office, various faculties and institutes at METU have been working on directly developing Knowledge Alliances and European Universities projects or on enhancing their inter-university networks to become a partner in these types of projects. METU's competitive advantage in access to international research funds, mobility programs and resources due to its research infrastructures, qualified researchers, collaborations and experience would serve as a repository and assurance in developing these projects or for seamlessly joining these types of project consortiums. As the growing importance of sectors such as energy, health, chemistry, environment, materials and information, in the world has been acknowledged in METU Strategic Plan 2018-2022 (http://sp.metu.edu.tr/system/files/odtu_sp_2018_11_01.pdf); strengthening international cooperation in these types of KA2 projects for creating economic and social values in sectors of growing importance such as energy, environment, research development will be a top priority for METU in the new Erasmus 2021-2027 cycle.

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.

METU gives special importance to non-discrimination, transparency and inclusion of students and staff. These policies are achieved through some mechanisms as explained below:

First, METU gives utmost importance to ensure equal and equitable access of its members from all backgrounds by declining any kind of discrimination. All mobility programs including Erasmus, calls, applications, selections, placements, etc. are carried out and in line with the directives approved by METU Senate, and these directives are announced on METU's International Cooperations Office website and shared with METU community at any time when an action, information or reporting is required. METU, being an international university with its 2,300 international students from nearly 95 different countries and over 130 international academic staff from various countries, ensures that all members have equal opportunities to apply & benefit from Erasmus programs without any kind of discrimination of race, gender, ethnic background etc. All students and staff are continuously informed that they have equal right of application for the Erasmus program through various channels and tools. Additionally, METU strategically aims to attain multicultural awareness on campus & internationalization at home as they are regarded vital for enhancing the worldview of its students & staff especially through planned outbound and inbound Erasmus mobilities. Besides, METU gives importance to make its campuses multinational in terms of human resources by internationalizing the curricula & enriching social life of members. All these efforts are considered significant to prevent any possible discrimination on the METU campus especially for inbound students. Last but not the least, both inbound and outbound students & staff are continuously informed and trained about the importance of cultural differences and intercultural communication seminars are organized to create a worldview valuing the differences and enjoying such a diversity.

Secondly, all Erasmus project calls are published on the website, are announced on departments' boards and all the information about the calls are sent to students and staff, so that each member of the institution is informed about them. To be more specific about the mobilities; for outbound students & staff, application & selection criteria, deadlines & partner lists are announced through university-wide

information sessions, posters, e-mails, social media & websites. To ensure a fair & objective selection process, selection committees are established making the selections based on pre-defined objective criteria. For transparency, METU keep & share the documents regarding the selection process; selection criteria, list of all applicants with their breakdown of points & website/e-mail announcements about the application call. For inbound students, both METU and its partners inform each other about agreed minimum criteria, calendar & procedures of application. To ensure a fair & impartial selection process, selection committees are established and METU partners are expected to fill a Selection Committee Report. For transparency, both METU & its partners (for inbound mobilities) keep & share the documents regarding the selection process; selection criteria, list of all applicants with their breakdown of points & website & e-mail announcements about the application call.

For ensuring the inclusion of participants with fewer opportunities, candidates with disability & first-time participants are given priority; METU Disability Support Office & its equivalent in the partner institution provide special support for disabled & disadvantaged participants. Specific meetings are organized for these members such as informative sessions organized for disabled members of the institution in cooperation with METU Disability Unit. Moreover, in the selection system, the students and staff with fewer opportunities are given extra points so that they get more advantage to be selected. The students and staff with fewer opportunities who have been selected for the Erasmus program were also given additional grants during their mobility.

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 website².

METU recognizes the importance of digitalization of administrative workload of the Erasmus program and with this purpose; therefore, it has already digitized all its application & selection systems for inbound & outbound student & staff. More importantly, METU gives special importance to the European Student Card Initiative and Erasmus mobile app. It is strongly believed that these tools will decrease the bureaucratic burden for students, staff and higher education institutions.

METU carefully follows the announcements & information sessions & any given deadlines of European Commission & Turkish National Agency about the Erasmus Without Papers (EWP) network. Some staff at METU are in charge of following these developments and ensure a swift transition period for institutional agreements and all other documents related to project management and inbound & outbound mobilities. In line with the given timeline of EWP Network, METU has just begun to manage its inter-institutional agreements for renewal of the new period, which will be followed by online learning agreements. Furthermore, METU has also started to work on integrating its own platforms to the new system to send and receive student nominations and acceptances by 2022 and to send and receive transcripts of records related to student mobility by 2023.

METU participants are also encouraged to download & explore Erasmus Mobile App and the active use of this application is planned for upcoming mobilities. For the upcoming mobilities, participants will also be informed about the details of the European Student Card initiative.

European Student Card initiative will be a digital platform that will allow communication between the information systems of higher education institutions in Europe and the recognition all across Europe and hopefully the world concerning student status and identity. METU will encourage outgoing & incoming students to use the platform that will help them to recognize their status in student mobility, access to campus such as library, transfer of student records and organization of mobility in general. A new information session will be added to METU's incoming students' orientation program, more will be organized throughout the academic semester to give more information about this initiative, and we will guide the students to use it.

As it was explained before, all information provided by European Commission and Turkish National Agency are followed closely and METU is determined to comply with the established timelines. As the goal is to have full deployment and implementation of the new initiative by 2021 as indicated by European Commission, METU is planning to use the new initiative program until the end of 2021.

² https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-student-card-initiative_en

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

METU has an environment-friendly policy from the beginning as creating the biggest green area of the city in its campus. The campus has 4500 hectares with a forested area of 3043 hectares. All trees in these 3043-forested areas are planted and thus a man-made green area was created. The reforestation program, led by METU students and staff, of the campus was awarded with the International Aga Khan International Award in 1995.

Within the terms of the Erasmus program in 2021-2027 period, METU believes in the importance of environment-friendly practices such as reducing paper consumption for administrative work. To give some examples, currently METU accepts all incoming and outgoing student and staff applications online. Moreover, acceptance letters, certificate of participation letters and transcript of records are dealt online. With the use of Erasmus Without Paper tools, we believe that it will be possible to conduct all procedures without papers.

Another environment-friendly practice of Erasmus program might be virtual mobility that might reduce the use of airplanes and therefore Carbon footprint. As it was experienced online teaching during the Coronavirus crisis, increasing virtual mobility would be a better option compared to physical mobility that requires air travel for short periods. Moreover, using webinars on a regular basis, delivering presentations online, holding virtual meetings should receive priority, rather than flying extensively from one continent to the next.

Moreover, internationalization at home practices is important since they will provide mobility opportunities for the students without being mobile. Regarding the fact that the number of globally mobile students are growing each year causing extra CO2 emissions, virtual mobilities are gaining importance. Hence, METU plans to increase its efforts for internationalization at home practices by integrating projects like COIL and so on to contribute to the reduction of CO2 emissions. Both for benefits of the international student mobilities and for environmental-friendly practices, METU plans to develop policies to shape future models of such mobilities by providing rich & diversified virtual mobility opportunities.

To increase the number of trees in the campus area, every semester there is a tree-planting event in which hundreds of baby-trees are planted to barren lands of the campus, this festival is organized by METU, and all students & members including incoming international students are invited to this event. Moreover, beginning from this year, recycling devices are placed at the several points at the campus to increase the students' awareness for recycling. When students put any recyclable material to these machines, they collect bonus points to be used in the Book Store of METU. In addition to these activities, plogging events are held by at Lake Eymir (METU campus lake). Adapting the "plogging" workout that emerged in Sweden as an environmentally friendly sports activity and spread all over the world, METU aimed to clean the environment while running as a "run and collect garbage" event. Many students and staff including incoming students are invited to this program and it was aimed that their awareness about environment-friendly practices will increase. Moreover, the incoming Erasmus students will be advised to actively participate in "Zero Waste" and "Sustainable Campus" projects and these projects will be promoted during the orientation programs.

In general, the future plans of the university aim to follow some environment-friendly strategies like the following:

- 1) To reduce air pollution, the students and staff will be advised to travel by train, if possible, for both reaching and returning and visiting other countries during their mobility. Moreover, the students and staff will be advised not to visit their home country during the mobility, unless there is an important reason for that.
- 2) To increase awareness about environment-friendly practices, international relations office will prepare flyers, posters, online sessions etc. to motivate the students and staff for a greener option to travel
- 3) Cooperation with partner universities will be increased to learn more about the good practices in terms of environment-friendly practices and concrete ideas in different parts of the World
- 4) Institutional strategy will be developed on how to contribute to a sustainable environment and special policies will be developed by the university. For instance, Zero Waste Management System will be soon started in our campus to prevent waste at our university and the system includes all the processes of reducing waste, accumulating at its source, temporary storage, separate collection, transportation and processing.
- 5) Research projects will be developed by different departments of the university on how to develop sustainability policy of the university

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

Community outreach and social responsibility have always been parts of METU's mission. Independent public opinion surveys rate METU among the most trusted & relied upon institutions in society. Public and private sector institutions seek counseling and consultancy from METU as the most reliable information and solution partner.

In terms of internationalization, METU believes the importance of integration of international students with society seeking to become the seat of cultural values & encounters through strengthening international cooperation & promoting tolerance towards, respect for & recognition of other cultures. With this purpose many seminars, training sessions and activities are organized for both outgoing and incoming students.

In terms of outgoing students, an orientation program is organized each semester before mobility takes place. During the orientation programs, the outgoing students are advised to learn the local language, to have friends from the host country, to give effort for social engagement in the host countries. During their mobilities outgoing students are encouraged to take photos & videos related to the local culture of the host country and write postcards & blogs to share with other members of METU. Sometimes, photo contests or various events are organized to share these photos and videos. More importantly, outgoing students who completed their mobilities are invited to give a speech about their experience to the future outgoing students to share the culture and daily life of the host country. By doing so, the preparedness of the participants increases leading them to better engage with the local community by hearing the first-hand experience of their counterparts.

In terms of incoming students, another orientation program is organized at the beginning of each semester. During the program, the students are informed about the university and the city. A guided city tour is also organized to initiate the interaction of these students with the locals in the city. Moreover, a special course was specifically designed for incoming students on Turkish society and culture. Both of them help the integration of the students to Turkish society. We believe that integration of incoming students in the local community will have additional benefits for the public in the host countries. What is more, incoming students are placed in the same dormitories on campus with local students at METU campus so they have a chance to learn more about Turkish lifestyle, Turkish foods etc. They are not isolated with themselves instead they are integrated into the Turkish students. Furthermore, one of the student clubs, ESN METU branch actively works with incoming Erasmus students. Each semester they organize various SOCIAL ERASMUS projects. SOCIAL ERASMUS is one of the most popular projects of ESN organizations where incoming students participate in various volunteer activities under the coordination of this student club. This project aims at building bridges in society by bringing international students closer to local communities. For all these projects, METU works with ESN METU in cooperation and collaboration and provides necessary financial and technical support whenever necessary. Furthermore, regular meetings are organized with ESN METU members to discuss future projects both within and outside the university.

METU also believes the importance of student clubs within the university to increase the civic engagement of the students. Even though they are visiting the university for only one or two semesters, incoming students are also encouraged to take part in one of the 95 student clubs. This is performed with the belief that such opportunities should be provided for students to participate in decisions and social life through forming student clubs so that they can socialize, better tolerate the differences, belong to a group, feel secure, take responsibilities, collaborate, and hence actively practice active citizenship in the university context.

In the near future, METU also plans to increase the active citizenship and civic engagement of students by

- 1) Providing concrete practices to help them integrate and participate in local community initiatives. For this purpose, a stronger cooperation and collaboration will be established with ESN METU and the number of SOCIAL ERASMUS projects will be increased.
- 2) Getting in touch with various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to establish projects for Erasmus students in which they will work for the community
- 3) By emphasizing the values like democracy, respect for diversity, social inclusion more in all lectures and in the campus life. METU ESN and the international office plans to develop seminars, workshops and other types of activities to increase the awareness of all incoming and outgoing students about these concepts.
- 4) Benefitting projects of ADIM ODTU, a social project initiated by METU to serve the needs of the METU students or the campus with the help of the other members of the university. Up to now, several projects have been completed by this initiative such as 'renewing auditoriums, serving meals to students studying in the library during midterm & final exam periods, providing Internet connection to students who are in need during distance education times because of Coronavirus' etc. Hence, new projects including outgoing and incoming students to work together for each other & other students & local community will be put into action. Even undergraduate students might develop new projects, which help their integration to society and local community, and they might apply to ADIM ODTU for funding. Information about ADIM ODTU initiative is given to incoming students during the orientation program so that they might apply during their mobilities.

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 Recognition³.

METU is a highly dedicated higher education institution in terms of ensuring full recognition of mobility periods. It has effectively implemented the rule to ensure that all outgoing students take at least 30 ECTS credits in their mobility semesters abroad. This is operationalized through the experienced staff at METU International Cooperations Office. Moreover, METU was successful to assign departmental coordinators to each department separately. Currently, more than seventy-five departmental coordinators have been assigned and thus, students who wish to spend their semesters abroad now have the opportunity to discuss the courses as well as their mobility period abroad and with their departmental coordinators. One of the major advantages of having an academic advisor at the home institution is that the course recognition process is undertaken successfully in terms of academic desirability. Having the qualitative aspects of the recognition process in mind, departmental coordinators are at the utmost importance for ensuring the recognition process procedurally, as well. Departmental coordinators are very influential in recognition processes at their departments for students who could prepare their learning agreement before the mobility takes place. Since the departments are the main units for academic recognition, starting the course selection process with the departments has a vital role in ensuring full automatic recognition.

The same process and concerns are valid for traineeship students, as well. Full automatic recognition of traineeship abroad via the recognition tools is a major concern for METU. As a consequence of this endeavor, METU has facilitated an International Student Practice course, which is accessible for all METU students. This helps students feel free and relieved to start their traineeships abroad. Recognizing the internships into curriculum is a contested issue, as it is because either the already-existing internship scheme follows a strict structure, or the department does not have an internship scheme as well. Facilitating such a course, therefore, provided both students and departments to present flexibility to already-existing strict traineeship schemes with an extra course, or offered a new opportunity to students with no mandatory traineeship schemes at their departments. This is very crucial from two points. As first, the course becomes a very instrumental solution to recognize the traineeship activity abroad that is indicated in the diploma supplement. As second, this process is ensured thanks to the departmental coordinators' efforts, as well. This factor increases the chance of recognition for traineeship activity both qualitatively and procedurally.

In addition to 'before and after the mobility learning agreement' documents, METU required students to prepare Academic Approval Sheet, a document that basically serves the same purpose with learning agreement but a binding one for the faculties and departments when the recognition is concerned. All these precautionary measures before the mobility takes place enable a foreseeable mobility period for students, departments and the international office by eliminating possible conflicts regarding the recognition process. The result of such efforts is the full automatic recognition ensured at METU.

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

In parallel to student mobility, METU has always given great importance to the mobilization of its staff. This importance is indicated through different Erasmus projects allowing the exchange of staff between METU and its European or non-European partners. Staff Mobility, as an activity that supports the professional development of HEI teaching and administrative staff, provides opportunity for training events abroad and job shadowing & observation periods & training at a partner HEI, or at another relevant organization in the program and partner countries. Mobility of staff has some side but positive effects which allow students who are not able to participate in mobility to benefit from the knowledge and expertise of the staff who has participated in. The university already experienced the positive impact of staff exchange, which fosters the motivation to continue and increase the number of mobilities. Staff mobility also has been a great opportunity for administrative staff as well for their personal development and international experience, considering their lower chance to go abroad during their work and thus Erasmus projects much contributed to this aim so far.

³ 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))

METU International Cooperations Office notifies all academic and administrative staff about staff mobility opportunities by announcing calls via several communication channels and making them visible for everyone. Application of both teaching and administrative staff is encouraged by departmental coordinators and METU ICO. Application calls are not only announced through web pages but also through internal networks, e-mail groups campus-wide to ensure every staff is informed on the mobility opportunities. In addition to these initiatives, METU International Cooperations Office provides guidance in each step of staff mobility. From helping them to use mobility announcements, to mentor them through communication with the host institute.

Transparent principles and equal criteria are applied in selection of participants in staff mobility to give every applicant the chance to benefit from the programs. The criteria for staff is announced on the international office website and selection and placement is carried out with the help of strict guidance of the objective criteria METU tries to enable participation of as much as higher number of staff in mobility programs, selection criteria is defined accordingly by the METU Exchange Programs Committee, a group of academic administrators and directors from faculties, graduate schools, Registrar's Office (Student Affairs), Office of Personnel and the intensive language school and finally the International Cooperations Office. Having not participated in any Erasmus program is one of the criteria that gives a higher placement chance for each individual applicant. Each department and unit of the university supports its staff to participate in mobility programs by directing them to complete their mobilities in most relevant receiving institutions that would most contribute to their work experience.

In terms of incoming staff mobility, in addition to regular individual mobilities which is supported by departments, METU ICO has organized 4 International Staff Weeks so far which attracted more than 200 incoming staff from about 30 countries worldwide. They evaluated these staff training experiences as highly useful reporting their experience as a great networking event and that they have learned many things about METU. These events have served the purpose of increasing communication and understanding problems that may occur regarding mobilities between METU and its partners.

Mobilities of both academic and administrative staff are recognized by METU through the certificates they receive during their mobility. Participation Certificate issued by the receiving institutions, containing the number of hours employed, can be registered as professional training or teaching activity abroad.

METU will support and take all possible measures to foster both incoming and outgoing staff mobility to provide teaching and training staff with opportunities for their personal & professional development more intensively in the coming years as attested by its SP 2018-2022.

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.

METU members will be continuously informed about the principles of Charter via published documents as well online tools and platforms. First, in order to make the Charter more visible for each member, explanatory documents will be posted in front of METU's International Cooperation Office. Secondly, the Erasmus Policy statement within Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) 2021-2027 will be displayed constantly on METU International Cooperation Office's website: <http://ico.metu.edu.tr/information>. In addition to its general position on the website, the statement will also be included and emphasized in all phases of the students & staff mobility through documents and announcements that will take place under the Erasmus program as well as it will be presented within the informative meetings organized for students and staff on campus.

In order to increase the popularity and awareness of the program among the METU community, different digital media tools will be made use to reach the participants and let them learn further about the activities supported by the program. In accordance with the departmental advisors who have academic knowledge and assets, METU ICO offers a special course for its international incoming students, as stated above. Within this course, different academicians from various disciplines at the university teach courses each week. The content of the course is enhanced by the participation of various faculty members. The course activities are shared with the students and other interested stakeholders throughout the semester. Furthermore, at the end of the course, students provide their final projects via holding some exhibitions at the office hall. In addition, the student mobility opportunities & activities supported by the program are regularly shared with METU students by means of planned student-advisor meetings, promotional visits to departments for introducing the program activities and online announcements on different platforms. The calls for staff mobility are also shared via the Presidency' office at METU with our members throughout the university.

Another important way to promote the activities within the program is that METU ICO prepares a program calendar for students and staff to inform them about the mobility details (e.g. dates, deadlines,

requirements, and important announcements) and to make activities better known among the stakeholders, these calendars are prepared in hard and softcopy brochures. The soft copies are published on the ICO website, and hardcopies are distributed to the related departments, library, cafeteria, campus dorms and in other public areas of the university. Concerning the incoming mobilities to METU, ICO communicates with its partners in an open and accessible way in order that both parties are well aware of the activities proposed by the Erasmus program and that they stay in constant contact with each other. Meanwhile, it is worth to mention that METU ICO participates in national and international conferences, meetings, fairs, and events to promote its activities and success in maintaining and strengthening program activities. Finally, considering that increase and the importance of distance & online communication rather than face-to-face communication during the COVID-19 epidemic, the activities will also be promoted on social media platforms, and the effective use of online facilities at METU ICO will be supported.

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.

As it was also explained in the previous part, all METU members will be informed about the Charter principles via written and published documents and informative meetings. Moreover, all principles of this Charter will be clearly and openly explained in METU ICO's webpage. METU also plans to change its exchange programs directives in line with the new ECHE period and announce it on ICO website and distribute it to all METU communities in all phases of mobility and the program through various printed or online tools. The exchange directives include and indicates that all calls planned and shared by the office will include the principles of non-discrimination, transparency, and inclusion as it has been in the previous ECHE Program, too. The program details regarding student & staff application and selection will be comprehensive, fair, and objective for all METU members. As explained in detail in previous parts, the first-time participants as well as participants with special needs are prioritized in the selection process in order to prevent the participants who have previously joined the program from attending it repeatedly, which will also be inserted in program directives that will be approved by METU Senate. In order to increase the spread of the program principles among the participants, presentations, introductory videos, and other communication ways will be used, as well. Collaboration and cooperation with METU personnel, both administrative and academic staff, plays an important part in promoting the principles of this Charter in that the more acquired the staff are with the core principles of the Charter, the more transparent and accountable the university will be in implementation of the rules and principles in this Charter. Written briefings and guidelines will be shared with these personnel, and open and immediate communication will be maintained via e-mails, phone calls and other methods. Erasmus mobile application will also be promoted to the participants and they will be directed to check and try to make the utmost use of it, too. In order to support the participation of METU members, all program calls with the related principles are explained in an explanatory e-mail, and it is delivered to the personnel via METU Presidency' Office in order to get them familiar with the program in addition to its rules, details and priorities. Finally, the International Cooperation Office will monitor regularly to enhance the proper adaptation of the principles as well as official directives and guidelines approved by the university senate. To conclude, the University Exchange Committee will meet at least twice a year in order to control and supervise the processes followed within the program.