



## INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGY OF AFYON KOCATEPE UNIVERSITY

Afyon Kocatepe University was founded in 1992 but the history of university goes back to 1974 when Afyonkarahisar Finance and Accounting School was established as a branch of Eskişehir Economics and Trading Sciences Academy. Since then, more than 140.000 students have graduated from our university, and we have continued our efforts to contribute to the prosperous future of our country through the student-centered comprehensive education and the research studies at our university. Now, we have eleven different faculties titled “Faculty of Education”, “Faculty of Science and Letters”, “Faculty of Fine Arts”, “Faculty of Law”, “Faculty of Administrative Sciences”, “Faculty of Islamic sciences”, “Faculty of Engineering”, “Faculty of Technology”, “Faculty of Tourism”, “Faculty of Veterinary” and three graduate schools under the name of “Graduate School of Natural and Applied Sciences”, “Graduate School of Health Sciences” together with “State Conservatory” and “School of Foreign Languages”. There are also fourteen other vocational schools in districts of Afyonkarahisar city. In current situation, AKU has 36.492 students and 1031 academic staff.

The key areas of Afyon Kocatepe University are administrative areas (business administration, finance, international trade and finance, public science and administration, economics), engineering fields, Islamic sciences, veterinary, education (teacher training with subject specialization), fine arts, sports, law and foreign languages. These areas are key elements for initiative of bilateral cooperation with countries in the world. We believe that exchange of ideas and initiating joint projects will widen the perspective of students and make a great contribution to academic development of young generation.

Our university aims to equip its students with world-class professional knowledge and skills through its faculties, graduate schools, schools, vocational schools, and research centers. It also strives to educate students as the individuals who are self-confident and respectful for human rights, environmental issues, and the national and moral values of the society.

Moreover, they are expected to be aware of the domestic and global problems and also appreciate national and global interests.

Given the strategic goals and objectives in AKU's Strategic Plan for 2019-2023, we always claim to be among the good universities at regional, national, and international levels with the support of the academic members, the students, and the public of Afyonkarahisar as a whole. Afyon Kocatepe University has a vision of highly qualitative education, scientific and technological productivity, social and economic contribution, cooperation of university and industry together with international academic work. We undertake the mission of making our students skillful enough to build a career outside of the country, to work in European and Non-European Countries and to contribute regional and global economic market.

Our university carries out International Exchange Programs such as Erasmus+, Mevlana and Farabi (Internal Exchange Program within Turkish Universities) successfully in the context of international relations. Thanks to these exchange programs both funded by Turkish Higher National Education Council and European Commission; our students have the opportunity to have education for one semester or two semesters at the partner universities. In addition to the individual capacity of our university of our university, we have been collaborating with neighbor cities and universities for two internship consortiums, and we have been sending several students for internship to different European Countries since 2015. Also, we are eager to cooperate with our partner institutions under the frame of Key Action 2: Cooperation for Innovation and Exchange of Good Practices (Strategic Partnerships, Knowledge Alliances, Sector Skills Alliances, Capacity-Building), Jean Monnet Activities and Sport Actions.

In terms of internationalization; we have sent 1558 outgoing student to European countries in Erasmus+ student exchanges with studies and internship since 2005. In addition to outgoing students, we have accepted 116 incoming students from European countries in Erasmus+ student exchanges with studies and internship from the beginning of the same year. We have 117 Erasmus+ KA103 Inter-Institutional Exchange Agreement with European countries like Germany, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Spain, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Greece.

In Mevlana Exchange Program, we have signed agreements with a great number of universities from a variety of countries. These are especially Central Asian countries like Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and other countries like Georgia, Malaysia, Romania and Ukraine. In International Credit Mobility, we are able to have EU grant with

Malaysia, Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Kosovo, Moldova, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Algeria since 2015. So, AKU has the required experience to prolong the mission to cooperate with other countries and universities in the world.

AKU joined Erasmus+ KA107 International Credit Mobility in 2015 which is the beginning year of the program. Since then, we have signed 43 agreement with Non-European countries like Albania, Algeria, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Morocco, Palestine, Republic of Korea, Ukraine, Georgia, İran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Malaysia, Moldova, Uzbekistan and Pakistan. For the time being, we have sent 23 students to our Non-European partner countries and we have accepted 43 students from our Non-European partners within the scope of Erasmus+ KA107 International Credit Mobility. Additionally; we have sent 114 staff to our partners and we have accepted 106 staff to our university both in teaching and in training in Erasmus+ ICM.

Considering the objectives to foster quality improvements, innovation excellence and internationalization at the level of education and training institutions (Erasmus Guide 2020, p. 26), to become a center for international students and academic staff (2020 Turkish Presidency Yearly Plan; 10th Development Plan of Turkey, p. 563) and to be a well-recognized university globally (AKU's Strategic Plan for 2019-2023), AKU has been signing new institutional agreements with Western Balkans (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosova), Eastern Partnership Countries (Moldova, Georgia, Belarus, Ukraine), South Mediterranean (Algeria, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia), Federation of Russia, Asia and Middle Asia (Nepal, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan), Latin America (Brazil, Colombia), Middle East (Iraq, Iran), South Africa, African Caribbean and Pacific States (Botswana, Cameroon, Mauritius), and other industrialized countries (Australia, Chile, Taiwan, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Korea). We aim to cooperate and foster new connections with the institutions in the countries given above, and these exchanges are expected to contribute to AKU's first goal of its strategic plan which is "to provide teaching and training on international level".

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