

The Law University of Lithuania (LUL)

What is the current situation of your university's international co-operation in the context of current national, international and European development?

The Law University of Lithuania (LUL) is a State higher education and research institution established just after the restoration of Lithuanian Independence in 1990. Education and Research in the field of law, administration, social work, psychology and related subjects is carried out in 34 departments of five faculties, UNESCO Chair in Culture of Peace and Democracy and 4 research institutes, of Knowledge Society Management, EU Policy and Administration, Forensic Medicine, and International Law and EU Law. There are several public organisations established by the Law University, namely the Institute of Public Administration, Legal Aid Centre, Crime Victim Care Association, where academic staff and students are able to share their theoretical knowledge to the habitants and in such way strengthen Law University's ties with society. Considering Lithuanian and European Legal Traditions, cherishing the most progressive scientific and study experience, acknowledging the statements of Magna Charta of European Universities, Bologna Declaration and documents beyond it on The European Higher Education Area and of other international academic community documents, the Law University of Lithuania has developed modern high quality specialist training system, which unites fundamental and applied origins, combines theory and practice in all degree study programmes. International development strategy of the Law University draws LUL development perspectives in line with the higher education development in Europe and Lithuania, first of all through further development of curricula, so that the LUL students could have access to the diversity of study programmes including multidisciplinary studies in all degree levels (Bachelor, Master and Doctoral), as well as could have possibilities to access and use the most advanced facilities of learning and benefit from European developments in their study or research field through joint researches in international teams and networks and through exchange of students and teaching staff, which adds to the professional knowledge and experience and also leads to the increased competitiveness position in the international labour market of each person. This enhances the LUL standing in the national and international arena and also contributes to the increase of the European cohesion and competitiveness in the world. The development strategy of the Law University is implemented by following the principles: § Training of humanistic and national values, citizenship, humanitarian and legal culture, cherishing of academic traditions; § Study and research unity, academic freedom; § Transparency to society; § Training of a universal personality; § Integration into Lithuanian and foreign academic communities. The principles of activities and development naturally integrate international development and cooperation dimension also demand internationalisation of the University for being an equal, internationally recognised partner in international education and research programmes preparing law and administration, social work and other social services' professionals corresponding and meeting the requirements of open international labour market. The partnerships and projects are carefully chosen to support the national policies towards integration into the European and world communities, NATO and other international organizations, towards information and knowledge society development they are also expected to add innovations into the study programmes in terms of new fields covered or developed into further research projects. The Law University has been taking part in most of the European programmes where Lithuanian institutions were eligible to join. Starting from Tempus, Inco-Copernicus and further to Access and other Phare programmes, Socrates, Fifth (Sixth) Framework, Leonardo da Vinci, Jean Monnet programmes acting both as a partner and a coordinator. International activities are also successfully taking place under other programmes or inter-university cooperation frameworks. For coordination and promotion of international activities with particular regions there are specialized units established under the Centre for International Relations and Studies of LUL, namely Lithuanian – Polish Research and Study Centre, American Study Center, Swiss Law and Administration Study Centre, and French Study Centre. In addition to the participation in the international projects, the LUL expands its membership in international organisations in the field of education and research such as the International Association of Universities (IAU), European Universities Association (EUA), The International Council for Open and Distance Learning, European Association for International Education (EAIE), European Law Faculties Association (ELFA), Dean's European Academic Network (DEAN) and others. The students of the Law University are actively involved in the activities of local, national and

international European Law Students Association's (ELSA) organisation, Student representatives organizations.

Given the strengths and weaknesses of your university's present situation, define your university's aims and priorities for 2003/2004 - 2006/2007 with a special focus on promoting activities in the SOCRATES programme. Describe briefly how the EPS has been developed and how it will be implemented at your institution.

Participation in Erasmus programme is one of the key actions of internationalisation and international cooperation policy supported at all levels of the University's structure. In the framework of institutional competence, the LUL adapts to the continuously evolving needs of the students and teaching staff mobility and related activities, and in such way takes part in the development of European Higher Education Area. Constantly growing number of students and diversification of study fields at the University, growing demand for qualitative student mobility puts forwards the aim to enlarge the scope of partner-Universities and increase the number of study places especially in social sciences for the remaining period of Socrates programme. Bilateral co-operation with the Universities from all the EU countries is sought in the forthcoming years. For the academic year 2003/2004 bilateral agreements with over 40 universities have been signed for students and teaching staff exchange, PROG and IP activities. In the current years the most disturbing issue is a significant imbalance between incoming and outgoing students. Although the LUL already provides over 60 courses in English, German and French languages for incoming students (and local students as freely or alternatively selective subjects), in the forthcoming years there will be more courses worked out and possibly developed into a coherent semestral or degree study programme. The priority project activities for 2003/2005 will be the participation in curriculum development projects and IP, and TN in various fields of law with particular stress on International law, labour law, IT law also other social sciences, especially in social policy oriented projects, such as social inclusion of disadvantaged groups. In the further years (2004/2006) the coordination of PROG or IP or MOD project in the frame of Erasmus will be set as a priority activity especially but not limited to the European (and integration) studies on interdisciplinary aspects (political science, social policy, law etc.). In parallel to Erasmus action projects, participation in other Socrates programmes and measures will be supported, especially in Grundtvig action as the one for adult education and life long learning policy development or Minerva as IT and distance learning innovations policy development projects. On the basis of annual assessment of LUL Socrates and other international activities, on the national and European policy development, the corrections to the further year's priorities will be made. Introduction and/or updating of ECTS as European credit transfer and accumulation system in all the faculties and study programmes of LUL by the end of 2004 and application for ECTS label in 2004 is foreseen because ECTS provides strong instrumental basis for full academic recognition of studies abroad. International strategy and activities of the Law University of Lithuania are advised by the Senate and the University Board, coordinated by the Rectorate and implemented by the Centre for International Relations and Studies jointly with the efforts of the Faculties, Institutes administration and academic staff. European Policy Statement comprises part of the LUL development strategy plan, which was worked out by the working group of the Senate for the years 2002-2007. The common goal of EPS and LUL international development strategy is to project the extent and trends, the maintenance and assessment of international cooperation and programmes, to deliberate means and methods how to deepen the internationalisation of studies and research in the LUL. Specifically EPS monitoring and operating guidance is carried by the LUL Erasmus committee chaired by the Vice-Rector for research, comprising institutional and departmental Erasmus coordinators, ECTS coordinator, senior University management advisor and members of Student Representatives. The Erasmus committee reports to the Rectorate and when requested to the Senate about the current being and perspective proposals for EPS and particular actions within Erasmus programme. General and international activities of the academic community of the Law University of Lithuania are based on the non-discrimination policy towards the nationality, gender, race, confession, geographical location, socio-economic conditions and culture differences and disability. The Law University educates students to respect human rights, encourages the activities of students and academic staff in the organizations, which protect the human rights, especially in the Human Rights Centre and through other activities contribute to the implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedom. The control of equal opportunities and promotion of to all the students and University staff is carried out by the Rectorate and the Senate of the Law University of Lithuania.

How will your institution ensure high quality in student and staff mobility and in Erasmus co-operation projects?

The general structure of Erasmus programme participation, monitoring and supervision at the LUL is combined of the faculty and central levels. There is a LUL Erasmus committee which is responsible for Erasmus programme development at LUL and annually establishes Erasmus student selection commission for outgoing and incoming students, there are faculty Erasmus coordinators, who are responsible for academic quality of teaching, exchanges and academic recognition of studies and teaching abroad, there is the institutional Socrates coordinator and ECTS coordinator, who tune the operation of the exchanges to the rules of Socrates programme and also organize the practical side of studies of incoming students such as housing arrangement, language preparation courses, introduction programmes, mentor system promotion, etc. The joint team collaboration ensures the timely provision of information and consulting for outgoing and incoming students (ECTS information packages, application rules and forms, information days, etc.) The achieved results of the exchanges running and experience gained during the previous years of Socrates programme presumes that operation system of exchanges will remain similar until 2006. The procedure of student exchange consists of (1) selection leading to (2) studies abroad and further (3) academic recognition of studies abroad, which is enabled by use of ECTS. The LUL Erasmus committee sets the rules of selection procedure and forms the Erasmus student selection commission, which runs the two steps selection at the beginning of each year (selection criteria are based on academic merit, foreign language knowledge, personal motivation and communication skills). Faculty and institutional coordinators prepare students for study abroad, follow that ECTS documentation is used and followed (especially the signing by all three parties and changes to learning agreement), arrange linguistic preparation possibilities, monitor the period of studies abroad. Faculty coordinators assure and execute the academic recognition of studies abroad and transfer of credits based on ECTS rules. Academic quality of exchanges is also monitored by the selection of partner universities, exchange of ECTS information, demand for and results of participation in the exchanges by the participants themselves. Teaching staff exchange is seen as an important mean of internationalisation of wider auditorium of students and possibility to advance the quality of taught subjects and foster joint European projects initiation therefore it is carefully sought to guarantee integration of exchanged teaching staff lecturing into normal curriculum of the students both in case of incoming and outgoing teaching staff. In order to foster the mobility of teaching staff and participation in European projects, the LUL developed and approved system of recognition for these activities. Namely through the recognition of teaching abroad and teaching in foreign languages at LUL, and participation in Erasmus cooperation projects as important part of international activity qualified in annual assessment of each member of teaching and research staff. Teaching activities abroad and in LUL (in foreign language) are also calculated into total teaching load of the members of teaching staff. According to the intensity of the international activities members of teaching staff are being promoted. Quality of teaching is assured by the relevant departments and faculty Erasmus coordinators through the selection procedure of Erasmus lecturers and, in case of incoming lecturers, the advance review of teaching proposal and its relevance to the study programmes of LUL. Feedback from the students is also seen as a mean of quality check and assurance of the teaching staff exchange. Special attention is placed on the Erasmus cooperation projects as they are expected (and assessed according to the coverage of the following criteria) to bring innovations into study programmes, teaching methods, research scopes and/or cooperation profile.