

Erasmus Policy statement (EPS): DECROLY strategy

DECROLY is a private Vocational Education and Training institution which develops – Basic – Medium and Higher Vocational training grade in different professional families authorised by the Ministry of Education. We have been participating in different Erasmus programmes since 2008, giving us the challenge to make our institution known in other European countries.

By participating in the Erasmus+ Programme, DECROLY will achieve the key challenges of the internationalisation and modernisation of the institution to contribute to the goals of a European Education Area.

So, we will enhance the attractiveness of higher education in Europe, offer our students/staff opportunities to undertake a learning and/or professional experience in another country, promote language learning and linguistic diversity (we develop subjects in English), in this way, we will develop initiatives addressing one or more fields of education training and promote innovation, exchange of experience and know-how in cooperation with Partner Countries involved in education/training or other relevant fields.

Since 2008, DECROLY has been successfully promoting Key Action 1 – Learning mobility and Key Action 2 – Cooperation among organisations and institutions, in different European countries within the Erasmus+ Programme.

The excellent results achieved, encourage us to apply for the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) 2021-2027, to keep on offering our students the opportunity to:

- ✓ Improve the level of key competences and skills, with particular regard to their relevance for the labour market and their contribution to a cohesive society, in particular through increased opportunities for training mobility and strengthened cooperation between the world of education and training and the world of work.
- ✓ Increase a sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, self-empowerment and self-esteem.
- ✓ Improve foreign language competences and intercultural awareness having a more active participation in society and better awareness of the European project and the EU values.

We also promote an innovative, modern, international and well-qualified staff that provides our students more attractive programmes, with new teaching and training methods and more effective activities for the benefit of local communities to actively involve young people and/or to address disadvantaged groups.

To summarize, we urge a modern, dynamic, committed and professional environment inside our institution ready to integrate good practices and new methods into daily

activities, opening to synergies with organisations active in different social, educational and employment fields; planning strategically the professional development of our staff concerning individual needs and organisational objectives, if relevant, capable of attracting excellent students and academic staff from all over the world.

Objectives

DECROLY considers education and training activities as a key role providing people of all ages with the necessary means to participate actively in the labour market and society at large. Our main objectives are:

- ✓ Acquire learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) to improve personal development, involvement as considerate and active citizens in society and the students' employability in the European labour market and beyond.
- ✓ Support the professional development of those who work in education and training intending to innovate and improve the quality of teaching, training across Europe.
- ✓ Enhance notably the participants' foreign languages competence.
- ✓ Raise participants' awareness and understanding of other cultures and countries, offering them the opportunity to build networks of international contacts, to actively participate in society and develop a sense of European citizenship and identity.
- ✓ Increase the capacities, attractiveness and international dimension of our organisation active in the education, training, so that we can offer activities and programmes that better respond to the needs of individuals, within and outside Europe.
- ✓ Reinforce synergies and transitions between formal, non-formal education, vocational training, employment and entrepreneurship.
- ✓ Ensure a better recognition of competences gained through the training periods abroad.
- ✓ Promote environmentally friendly practices.

By signing and agreeing on the principles of the ECHE, DECROLY will achieve the objectives described above participating in the following actions:

1. Key Action 1 – Learning mobility: The Mobility of Higher Education Students and Staff.
2. Key Action 2 – Cooperation among organisations and institutions: Partnerships for Cooperation and Exchanges of Practices, Partnerships for Innovation.

DECROLY's Modernisation and Internationalization

Erasmus+ programme allows us to work with peers in other countries to innovate and modernise teaching and training practice, ensuring that students get the skills they need to succeed in today's world. We can share best practice and work collaboratively to help improve provision, boost growth and create jobs.

Inclusive education with common values and culture are considered drivers for job creation, economic growth and improved social cohesion, as well as a means to experience European identity in all its diversity. The knowledge of two languages in addition to one's mother tongue and digital competences will be acquired through this programme.

We will have knowledge alliances between higher education institutions and enterprises, fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, creativity, employability, knowledge exchange and/or multidisciplinary teaching and learning.

Furthermore, we will get sector skills alliances supporting the design and delivery of joint vocational training curricula, programmes and teaching and training methodologies, drawing on evidence of trends in a specific economic sector and skills needed to perform in one or more professional fields.

DECROLY will have the opportunity to participate in the support cooperation with Partner Countries in the fields of higher education and youth, supporting organisations/institutions and systems in their modernisation and internationalisation process.

Implementation

Although DECROLY is a small institution with about 360 students, sees Erasmus+ as central to its internationalisation strategy and hence has developed a structure for the management of the programme capable of supporting the different projects our institution is involved in.

We have created a *Language and International Relations Department*, integrated by the Erasmus coordinator and five teachers from different professional areas, who have about five-six hours weekly depending on the academic year, to deal with all the mobilities for incoming and outgoing students/staff. This involves and mobilises stakeholders from across the institution in its delivery of Erasmus+ internationalisation activity in line with our institutional strategy.

In this department, everybody has designated different and concrete roles. This department works together with the administrative department and the Executive Team in our institution.

The E. Coordinator serves as a contact person with institutions abroad for all academic questions and with companies for the internship of the students and she is responsible for the overall documents of the Erasmus+ Programme and the Inter-Institutional Agreements. It is the teaching staff of each professional area responsible for selecting outgoing students and the Executive Team select the staff.

For projects KA2, the whole educative community is involved, depending on the field the project is about.

The E. Coordinator and the staff involved in the European projects have a good English level, so they can monitor the mobilities in the best conditions and let us participate in any project proposed. The Department has meetings one hour every

two weeks to share all the tracking about the projects. We have our own office with enough IT equipment and internet connection; all these let us make all the process easy.

DECROLY has also a quality system that measures the quality and quantity of the projects and the result of these-Quality Plan (Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance in ISO 9001:2015).

Every academic year, we apply for mobility projects for students/staff to our National Agency; then the students and staff apply for the mobility to our *Language and International Relations Department*. Once the grants are awarded to the students/staff, the Department starts to manage all the process.

The recognition of courses and the compatibility of study programmes are clarified when an Inter-Institutional Agreement is signed with the incoming students and the institutions. The recognition of the outgoing mobility for training for the students with ECTS Credits is doing by the Regional Ministry of Education, Vocational and Tourism in our Community.

DECROLY issues the Diploma Supplement and the Europass and the companies issue a certificate recognising the mobility period of the student/staff.

Contribution to achieving the objectives of DECROLY's institutional strategy

Since 2008, Erasmus program has been taking part of our PGA (Annually General Programme). Since then, we have noticed that the number of students in our institution has been increasing every year. This increment is due to the possibility for the students to do an Erasmus mobility as it is considered that it enhances employability and improves their career prospects.

The percentage of employment of the Erasmus students is higher regarding the others. 37% of our Erasmus students have found a better job or are working in the same companies where they did the internship abroad in recent years.

We are completely sure that students improve the foreign language competences and have a sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; increase self-empowerment and self-esteem; enhance intercultural awareness and have more active participation in society and this is DECROLY's landmark.

DECROLY is an institution preparing to trigger changes in terms of modernisation and internationalization. We foster quality improvements at the level of education and training, through enhanced transnational cooperation between education and training providers and other stakeholders. We broaden understanding of practices, policies and systems in education, training across countries.

We pretend to prepare student towards the labour market in the best conditions and these Erasmus programme let us achieve this objective. We want to give our students the perspective of Europe as a single territory, knowing that although we are different, with our cultures and believes, we belong to a common space where civic coexistence among the inhabitants of all the countries of the Union is an example for

the rest of the world's citizens. For that, they must improve their level of Community languages, gaining capabilities that allow them to manage easily in the work placement in any country of the European Union to achieve a professional success.

With the staff of the institution, DECROLY has the target of getting a multilingual teaching team. So, it is offering teachers the opportunity of improving their level of languages in the institution itself, provided that they can acquire the level required to enjoy these internships too, and be able to attend training sessions, participate in lectures and take part in working groups, without the level of language as an impediment.

Strategy for searching partners

Our partners are those educational institutions, enterprises and organizations who have a relationship with the studies delivered in our institution, and that show interest for the academic, professional and cultural exchange. They commit, as a partner, with our institution to develop all projects that are good for the students/ staff of both institutions.

We work actively increasing and consolidating agreements with European companies and institutions that provide mobility to our students and staff. For that, DECROLY's *Language and International Relations Department* organizes meetings to fix concrete search objectives.

Our geographical area covers countries like Malta, Finland, Germany, Poland, North Ireland, Ireland and Lithuania.

We have consolidated a net of enterprises and institutions which have been collaborating with us in mobility projects or in strategic partnerships projects and these will help us to increase our net every year.

The new IT system and communication methods, let us establish contacts with institutions, companies and any kind of organizations all over the world, being able to make any arrangements as well as the progress and monitoring of the mobility under the best conditions (e-mails/ Skype/ phone/ WhatsApp and the Moodle platform).

Every year we pay visits to some enterprises to renew agreements and to deal with educative training programs to improve the students/staff mobilities