Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

From the KTH Erasmus Charter for Higher Education 2014-2020, call 2014

KTH has traditionally been very active in student mobility even if experiencing a constant net imbalance in incoming and outgoing flows. Currently more than 30% of the KTH graduates spent at least one semester abroad but the management has decided that this figure will need to be further increased in order to tackle the imbalance, allow new exchange agreements and enhance the graduates’ career opportunities. Due to new national and internal regulations and the related budgetary constraints, the need of balancing the exchanges has emerged as one of the main objectives within the internationalization policy of the institution. The process started in 2011 and the rationalization of the exchange agreements will be completed under the new generation of EU programmes by 2015.

The “Student Loan Guarantee” scheme will be one of the tools KTH will focus on in order to recruit students from the European underrepresented areas by increasing its presence and visibility for the local students and inviting them explicitly to apply to KTH programmes within this funding scheme.

Bachelor level mobility has been so far very limited but programmes entirely taught in English are currently being designed, which will allow to increase the fluxes at this level as well. In particular, this first level mobility will be the main tool for KTH to be more visible and attractive towards big markets where the competition for the best achieving students is particularly fierce and where mobility at Master level has proven to be particularly complicated.

This process will be carried out by trying to maintain a fair geographical distribution and by establishing and promoting a minimum level of cooperation also with the best technical universities in the countries that have so far been not so attractive for KTH students. Nevertheless, special focus will be given to those partners that share a membership within the same strategic university networks, those listed in the internal ranking of the prioritized partner universities, the partners in the KTH prioritized regions (Brazil, China, India, Southeast Asia) and those with which KTH is planning to create specific strategic alliances by 2016 (12 alliances will be running by this date). Most of these very same objectives have been established by the KTH long term vision named “Vision 2027” and addressed by the KTH Development Plan 2013-2016.

Staff mobility within the frame of the EU programmes has been rather limited in the past if compared with the potential of the institution although spontaneous mobility takes place anyhow at School level and it’s our intention to channel these activities under the umbrella of the new programme in order to rationalize their scope, maximize their impact and promote supplementary activities.

Inviting Staff from enterprises to teach specific modules aimed at providing the students with real life approach is currently limited to individual initiatives. Since cooperation with companies is constantly mentioned by the University Management as a priority for the future, this tool offered under the new programme will need to be fully exploited through a central coordination and from a top-down approach both in terms of decision making and support to the activities.
Staff Mobility, Industrial staff mobility and e-learning tools will be used as key elements of the Internationalization at Home process that will allow also the share of non-mobile students to get in touch with the international arena although without leaving the home institution.

Since spontaneous mobility doesn’t reach the full potential of the institution, specific workshops, seminars or international weeks sessions will be organized through a direct input from the Management in order to bring together a number of staff members at different levels and carry out benchmarking exercises and other actions that will be allowed under the specific sub-programme.

KTH established double degree agreements with its strongest partners well before the introduction of the Erasmus Mundus scheme. Under the Erasmus Mundus programme KTH turned out to be one of Europe’s most successful applicants being currently the Institution with most coordinated projects both at Master and Doctoral level. Moreover, a dual master scheme has been developed under the umbrella of the CLUSTER (www.cluster.org) consortium with a set of joint programmes in specific discipline areas that allow students to earn joint/double degrees from 2 partner universities. KTH is a member of the T.I.M.E. network (Top Industrial Managers for Europe), a consortium focusing exclusively on the development of double/joint master programmes and of the Nordic 5 Tech alliance that has developed, among other activities, a Nordic Joint Master program scheme.

The Strategic Partnerships action matches perfectly the KTH goal to carry out those strategic goals that cannot be achieved as a single institution by channeling them through the existing strategic networks with the involvement of social actors, companies and institutions covering other educational levels. The tool will be used to intensify and upgrade the cooperation with the strategic partners and try to set up new long term goals matching the modernization agenda for Higher Education and the EC newly published Strategy for the Internationalization of Higher Education in particular by addressing the changing international patterns:

- Exploiting the decline in the US attractiveness
- Exploiting the increased ability of students from emerging countries to afford studies abroad
- Spreading of internationalization to all sectors
- the increasing competition with Russia, China, Japan,
- Internationalization at home and e-learning as full components of the overall internationalization process
- the trend of education becoming more and more competitive and commercial
- Joint degrees

Knowledge alliances will be addressed by KTH as an opportunity to foster a further integration of the knowledge triangle by introducing new modules based on the industry-academia cooperation in the existing master programmes and by creating specific summer/winter schools focusing on innovation and entrepreneurship, possibly linked with the EIT activities.

Although development cooperation is not mentioned among the top priorities of KTH, the institution intends to exploit the experience accumulated over the past years within the Tempus programme and the many internal driving forces committed to this kind of activities. For this reason a centrally steered approach will be fostered trying to rationalize the efforts towards focus regions and activities that will be prioritized, mainly Institution Building.
KTH is committed to influencing the future developments within the EHEA by acting as a key driving force within the networks and strategic alliances it participates in. Therefore it is KTH intention to be active in the third Action of the new Programme to contribute to those policy areas identified by the EC in which we feel that an added value can be provided. The size of the institution, its past experience and performance in the internationalization of HE and its current goals are definitely going to be an added value for the modernization process at continental level.

The areas in which KTH will decide to be active will be selected yearly by the University Management and will take into consideration different factors among which the EU priorities, the internationalization strategy of the institution as well as the long-term international strategies of the university, the topics identified by the university networks and the national higher education agenda. KTH has the ambition to foster constant internal modernization and contribute to the achievement of the Modernization Agenda objectives through international cooperation as follows:

- Increase the number of higher education graduates by recruiting more and better performing students from the global arena (with a target of 1.000 top level non-EU students to be recruited by 2016) also through an improved offer of study abroad opportunities and by embedding Internationalization at Home and e-learning elements in the standard programmes. The findings of the recently completed LLP ATTRACT project on the attractiveness of studies in science and technology (www.attractproject.org) will also be exploited in this sense.

- Improve the quality and relevance of teaching and researcher training through an upgrading of its staff international profile and by attracting foreign professionals both from partner universities and from multinational companies to take actively part to the teaching and training process within formal programmes.

- Provide more opportunities for students to gain additional skills through study or training abroad, through the full exploitation of the study abroad opportunities covered by the Programme and beyond with a particular focus on joint programmes and mobility within networks of excellence.

- Strengthen the "knowledge triangle" by combining the new funding opportunities with the ongoing EIT related activities and by making full use of the training and educational opportunities that the Knowledge-Alliances will offer.

- Create effective governance and funding mechanisms in support of excellence through the organization of comparative studies, benchmarking exercises and specific institution building and knowledge transfer activities with the prioritized partners.