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Strategy of Internationalization of the University of Prešov for 2025 – 2029

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Global Context:

Today's global challenges require greater expertise and more flexible institutional responses. Universities are key organizations in addressing such 21st-century challenges, especially as graduates enter a highly competitive and increasingly globalized labour market. Building a comparative advantage in the global knowledge society requires, above all, vision and leadership. In addition, questions remain regarding the strategies and tactics needed to keep pace with growing global competition. Internationalization is increasingly being promoted as a means for universities to gain a competitive advantage and enhance quality and visibility in the context of globalization. From this perspective, globally engaged universities are better positioned to establish and maintain excellence in research and to promote innovative programs. Internationalization is one of the main processes of change influencing the development of higher education in most countries. The international dimension of higher education is one of the most significant phenomena, yet it often suffers from conceptual ambiguity. To better understand the issues related to international cooperation in higher education, it is possible to identify the main sub-areas of internationalization that characterize the thematic map of the discussed field, such as: 1. Student and faculty mobility; 2. Mutual influences of higher education systems on one another; 3. Internationalization of teaching, learning, and research content; 4. Institutional strategies for internationalization; 5. Knowledge transfer; 6. Cooperation and competition; 7. National and supranational policies concerning the international dimension of higher education.

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2. Mutual influences of higher education systems on one another;
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7. National and supranational policies concerning the international dimension of higher education.

Mission of the University of Prešov

The mission of the University of Prešov in Prešov is to conduct educational activities, promote learning, preserve and advance knowledge, support independent scientific research and creative artistic work, and thereby contribute to the educational and cultural development of society, as well as to develop all processes at the university so that they meet European quality standards (*see the Long-Term Plan of the University of Prešov for 2021–2027 with an outlook to 2029*). The university is responsible for advancing education in the spirit of the values of democracy, humanism, and tolerance, and guides students toward creative, critical, and independent thinking, healthy self-confidence, and an understanding of, preservation,

dissemination, and enrichment of the national cultural heritage and diverse cultures in the spirit of cultural pluralism.

Vision of the University of Prešov

The vision of the University of Prešov in Prešov is rooted in its more than a quarter-century of operation as an independent and successful educational and research institution; it builds on a tradition of higher education and research in Prešov spanning more than 350 years, and is adapted to current conditions and future challenges. This vision is built on the values to which the university is committed: wisdom, humanity, academic freedom, Christian traditions, people, responsibility, and cooperation. The vision is based on four equally important pillars: education, research, sustainability, and responsibility. The University of Prešov is a leading educational and research institution, recognized both domestically and internationally. It promotes innovation and creates a motivating environment for the creative work of both staff and students. It upholds the principles of social and environmental responsibility and plays a significant role in the economic and social development of the region (*see the Long-Term Plan of the University of Prešov for 2021–2027 with an outlook to 2029*).

The University of Prešov is an international university that attracts students, doctoral candidates, faculty, and researchers from Europe and around the world. It supports two-way mobility and exchange programs, builds strategic project partnerships with the socioeconomic environment, and systematically works to improve organizational solutions for effective international cooperation in the fields of research and teaching. It is an active partner within the EUA, QHelix, 3Seas, and other consortia.

Foundations of the Internationalization Strategy of the University of Prešov

- Long-Term Plan of the University of Prešov for 2021–2027 with an Outlook to 2029
- Strategy for the Internationalization of Higher Education by 2030 (Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic)
- European Strategy for Universities (COM/2022/16). Strategic vision and measures for universities in the EU.
- Achieving the European Education Area by 2025 (COM/2020/625). A framework of objectives and milestones for the EHE through 2025+.
- Digital Education Action Plan 2021–2027 (COM/2020/624). Priority actions for digital education and skills.

Strategic Objectives

The international dimension is an integral part of all pillars of development at the University of Prešov (UNIPO)—teaching and learning, research, infrastructure, services, and strategic partnerships. UNIPO's main strategic objective is to systematically improve the quality of education and research and to strengthen its competitiveness within the European higher education area as well as on a global level. Directly related to this is the promotion of internationalization processes—ensuring the effective functioning of the university as an international institution prepared to address the challenges of the 21st century. The strategy defines the main objectives, which are broken down into four priority areas for assessing the level of internationalization. Their implementation is outlined annually in an Action Plan that identifies self-assessment criteria and indicators for individual departments. The results of the self-assessment support planning, ongoing evaluation, and funding for both current and planned internationalization activities from the UNIPO Competitiveness Fund. The fulfillment of strategic objectives in the process of increasing the level of internationalization at UNIPO is complemented by the development of cross-cutting and supportive measures.

Objective 1. Support for internationalization processes—ensuring the effective functioning of the university as an international institution prepared to respond to the new challenges of our time.

Measures:

1. Active participation of the university in international cooperation networks and the development of international partnerships.
2. Systematic efforts to strengthen the university's position in the most important international academic rankings,
3. Leveraging UNIPO's participation in international university cooperation networks to develop and implement activities that support international cooperation. Efforts to involve the university in policy-making processes within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA).
4. Digitization and development of administrative processes in the field of international cooperation.
5. Strengthening comprehensive training and support for administrative and service units in handling bilingual (SK/EN) tasks.
6. Enhancing staff competence in English-language administration through targeted training and ongoing support.
7. Systematically strengthening the key competencies necessary for the development of international cooperation among employees (training and development programs, language courses).
8. A sustainable academic environment—creating a bilingual environment for academic information and services.

9. Systematic development of administrative units providing comprehensive support to international students, doctoral candidates, researchers, and other international visitors to the university (e.g., Welcome Office, Euraxess, Career Counseling, etc.).

Goal 2. Promoting intercultural and global, sustainable education — supporting modern and innovative educational approaches for all students and fostering openness to cultural diversity. The goal is to create a sustainable learning environment for all members of the university community. The process of internationalizing teaching and learning at UNIPO—the study programs offered at the university should foster global competencies and, through their curriculum content, enable graduates to communicate and work in various intercultural contexts.

Measures:

1. Enhancing the competitiveness of study programs and internationalizing their content,
2. Expanding the range of offerings and introducing support mechanisms for programs taught in English and other foreign languages,
3. Creating a bilingual environment for study-related information and support services for the entire academic community
4. Developing joint study programs with foreign institutions at the bachelor's and master's levels
5. Development and implementation of scholarship programs for outstanding students from partner institutions and from countries identified as strategic target destinations for cooperation in education and research
6. Preparing and supporting UNIPO students and staff in the development of intercultural competencies.
7. Supporting the automatic recognition of learning outcomes acquired through international mobility.
8. Supporting and expanding forms of international mobility to enable the broadest possible participation of UNIPO students, doctoral candidates, and staff in international mobility programs, including active participation in the Erasmus+ program.
9. Supporting the acquisition of international accreditation for academic programs.
10. Collaborating with domestic and foreign institutions and businesses to develop student internships with the aim of strengthening students' practical experience and increasing the competitiveness of UNIPO graduates in the international labor market.

Objective 3. Presentation and Visibility of the University of Prešov– Promotion, Marketing, and Recruitment

Measures:

1. Systematically increasing the university's international visibility through high-quality foreign-language versions of the UNIPO website and communication media.
2. Creating a program to promote the university's achievements and increase its visibility on the international stage.
3. Targeted marketing activities through international channels and campaigns (social media and online formats) aimed at increasing the university's international visibility, as well as extensive collaboration with UNIPO alumni.
4. Continuous presentation of UNIPO at fairs and recruitment events abroad; participation in international events (primarily EAIE, NAFSA, and APAIE education fairs).
5. Collaboration with international student recruitment agencies and international platforms/portals; establishment of a central recruitment unit and close collaboration with the faculties.
6. Development and monitoring of the University of Prešov's marketing strategy in the area of internationalization. International marketing channels and campaigns (online campaigns, social media campaigns). Creation of a broad concept for all target groups—students, academics, and partners.

Objective 4. Supporting internationalization in science and research at the University of Prešov

Measures:

1. Targeted recruitment of foreign researchers and doctoral students (primarily through EURAXESS).
2. Support for activities aimed at modernizing and internationalizing doctoral studies (in collaboration with individual university departments).
3. Creation of a scheme to attract research talent from abroad (start-up packages and others).
4. Support for postdoctoral positions for applicants from abroad.
5. Strengthening participation in international research consortia and networks through domestic and international grants and systematic support for mobility.
6. Actively promoting opportunities for international research funding programs.
7. Systematic promotion of scientific results and achievements of individual UNIPO departments in the international arena.
8. Collaborate with regional and national stakeholders, including in the area of research infrastructure (national and regional innovation strategies, global challenges, sustainability challenges, etc.).

Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Internationalization Strategy of the University of Prešov

The implementation and monitoring of the strategy's fulfilment constitute a systematic process. The Office for International and External Relations, under the leadership of the relevant vice-rector and in cooperation with the Council for International and External Relations (an advisory body to the vice-rector), is responsible for its implementation. Specific responsibilities for achieving individual objectives, measures, and indicators are defined in annual action plans. Evaluation of progress is conducted on an ongoing basis and concludes with a final assessment.

The ongoing evaluation of the strategy's implementation, including compliance with the established scope of measures, timeframe, and budget, will be regularly assessed at annual intervals (always as of March 31) using established measurable indicators for individual objectives and measures in the Action Plan and presented in the annual performance evaluation report. Based on the results of monitoring the status of implementation, it will be possible to update the strategy through action plans in accordance with the principles and processes of the internal quality assurance system for higher education.

A final evaluation of the strategy's implementation will be conducted after the strategy's final year of validity.

The results of the interim and final evaluations of implementation are reflected in the university's annual reports and are subject to discussion by the university administration, the Scientific Council, and the Board of Trustees, or other bodies as determined by the university administration.

The evaluation will be prepared by the Office of the Vice Rector for International Relations and submitted to the UNIPO administration. Based on the results, updated measures for the strategy for the relevant year will be developed, specifying activities, responsibilities, and the budget.

The draft Internationalization Strategy for 2025–2029 was prepared by the Vice Rector for International and External Relations in collaboration with external partners. Subsequently, members of the UNIPO administration and members of the Council for International and External Relations had the opportunity to submit comments by October 25, 2025. Their suggestions were taken into account, and on October 28, 2025, the document was reviewed by the UNIPO administration.

In Prešov, October 28, 2025