



University
of
Prešov

Rector's Order
17/2025

Valid from: 1.11.2025

Edition: 1

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**Marketing strategy
to make the University of Prešov abroad more visible
and attractive and to promote studies for foreign
students**

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Introduction

The marketing strategy to make the University of Prešov abroad more visible and attractive and to promote studies for foreign students (hereinafter referred to as the "Strategy") of the University of Prešov (hereinafter referred to as the "UNIPO" or "University") is one of the key strategic documents supporting the processes of internationalization of the University. It responds to the requirement at the conceptual level to establish processes aimed at increasing the visibility and attractiveness of the University of Prešov abroad, improving the quality as well as increasing the promotion of studies for foreign students.

The strategy responds to the changing needs and expectations of its target groups, as well as to competition in the market, in order to raise awareness of UNIPO, attract new students and maintain good relations with current students, graduates, employers and the wider community.

The main objective of the Strategy is to gradually modify the activities of UNIPO so that there is:

- an increase in awareness of UNIPO abroad,
- a continuous improvement of quality and attraction and retention of foreign students,
- a strengthening of partnerships between UNIPO and relevant actors of the foreign academic environment.

The preparation of the Strategy was initiated by the UNIPO management in 2023. The structure and focus of the Strategy is in accordance with the requirements for a given type of document by the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic, as the announcer of the Call to Support Projects for the Promotion of Universities Abroad. It follows and complements the concept of the Marketing Strategy, which comprehensively addresses the area of marketing activities of the University towards defined key groups (applicants, students, graduates, employees, the public). Several internal staff from the UNIPO strategy and marketing office, from the office of international and external relations, external collaborators in the field, as well as expert foreign staff and other staff from cross-cutting topics were invited for consultations on this strategy.

1 Analysis of the current state

Position of the University of Prešov

UNIPO is one of the largest universities in Slovakia. More than 8,300 students' study at the university. The University provides education at all levels; it is an important regional actor with overlaps to the external environment. The university also regularly ranks in the rankings of various university assessments.

The current position of the University among the evaluated universities in Slovakia according to various metrics is presented in the table:

Ranking / Position among SK universities	SciMago	EduRank	QS Ranking - Europe	UniRanks	Webo metrics	UniRank
UNIPO	10	9	8	9	13	9

The University is aware of the importance of opening to the external academic environment and therefore, with the new term of office of the University's leadership in 2023, it begins to prepare more comprehensive activities aimed at increasing the attractiveness of the University for foreign students and scientific research employees.

SWOT analysis

Strengths • Affordable tuition compared to Western Europe • Location in Central Europe (geographic availability) • Multiple study programmes in English • Existing infrastructure for international students • Active presence on social networks	Weaknesses • Lower position in international rankings compared to Czech/Polish universities • Limited geographical diversity of international students • Insufficient promotion outside the European area • Limited financial resources for marketing
Opportunities • Growing demand for affordable European education from Asia and Africa • Existing Slovak embassies in priority countries • Synergies with Czech and Polish universities in the CEE region • Digitalization of marketing tools	Threats • Intensive competition between Czech and Polish universities • Complicated visa process for some countries • Language barrier (Slovak as the primary language of instruction) • Political instability in some target regions

Current marketing activities

The marketing activities that the University has carried out in the past concerned a project aimed at building a consulting and advisory centre for international cooperation, as well as completing a support infrastructure for foreign students. The result of the project was also the reconstruction of accommodation spaces for foreign Erasmus+ students, the modification of spaces for the creation of the Integrated University Centre for International Cooperation, the creation of a separate website of the centre, including a mobility search engine, the reconstruction of other spaces for the first contact of foreign students at the accommodation facility, as well as several soft activities aimed at cultural and social adaptation of students and support of language skills.

One of the main communication and marketing channels towards the external environment is electronic media. UNIPO has a university website that offers robust information about what is happening at the university and many other processes with the possibility of special content targeting for groups interested in studying students, employees and the external environment. The degree of modifiability of the presented content is very high, the parts of the university adapt it to their specific needs. The university website, as well as the websites

of the university components, contain the possibilities of other language mutations (due to the dominant representation of foreign students, these are mutations in English and Ukrainian). Since the technical side allows it, in non-Slovak language versions, the PU continuously supports content updates with emphasis on specific needs for foreign students. The University is active on social networks. It is one of the most active Slovak universities not only in terms of the volume of contributions, but also in terms of the number of followers. UNIPO carries out online campaigns aimed at foreign applicants for study. The University develops cooperation with partner universities abroad. The aim of cooperation at the *bilateral level is to support the mobility of University employees, students and academic collaboration on joint scientific and other activities*. The University prepares a wide range of promotional materials in Slovak and in a foreign language. These are used for contact communication with foreign students, for the promotion of the University at education fairs abroad, during foreign visits, as well as for other opportunities to communicate with potential applicants for study (e.g. international online portals promoting study programs in a foreign language).

2 Vision

The University of Prešov will establish itself as the preferred Central European university for international students seeking a quality education in English or Slovak, with an emphasis on a personalized approach, accessibility and intercultural openness.

3 Strategic goals

Objective 1: Increase the international visibility of UNIPO

The University will systematically strengthen its presence in the target countries through digital and physical communication channels.

Indicators:

- Traffic to the English version of the website from abroad
- Reach on social networks in target countries
- Participation in international educational fairs
- score in the "International Students" category in the QS Ranking, or U-Multirank in the category "International Orientation"

Objective 2: Increase the number and quality of international students

The University will increase the number of high-quality foreign students from priority countries with an emphasis on geographical diversification.

Indicators:

- Number of applications from foreign students
- Ratio between applicants and enrolled students
- Number of foreign students enrolled
- Geographical diversification
- Retention rate (study completion)
- Number of programs offered in English

Objective 3: Strengthening international partnerships

The University will expand and deepen cooperation with universities and institutions in the priority countries.

Indicators:

- Number of new bilateral agreements with universities in priority countries
- Number of new double-degree programs
- Number of exchange students
- Number of joint research projects with partner universities

Objective 4: Improving the quality of services for foreign students

The University continuously improves the quality of services and support for foreign students in order to successfully integrate and complete their studies.

Indicators:

- Satisfaction rate of foreign students (survey)
- Average time of handling administrative processes (admission, visas)
- Availability of support services in English
- Number of cultural and adaptation events

4 Selection of target areas and countries

When selecting target countries for UNIPO marketing activities, it is important to take into account several factors that affect the potential for attracting foreign students, especially demographic, economic, educational, cultural and linguistic aspects.

The selection of target areas and countries is based on a combination of demographic, economic, educational, cultural, linguistic and other factors listed in the Annex.

1. East and Southeast Asia

Reason: High level of education, economic growth, and a high number of students seeking international educational opportunities. This area also shows a strong tendency to increase investment in foreign education.

2. Europe (including the countries of the former USSR)

Reason: Geographical and cultural proximity to Slovakia, along with a growing interest in international educational opportunities. Countries in this area often have high educational aspirations, but limited opportunities at the local level.

3. North America

Reason: Cultural and historical ties are a specific potential for educational aspirations and interest in studying abroad.

4. Some Latin American and African countries

Reason: Cultural and historical links, as well as the increasing level of English proficiency among young people. This region has potential due to educational aspirations and interest in studying abroad.

Region	Priority countries	Reasons for selection
East and Southeast Asia	India, Vietnam, Indonesia	high demand for study in the EU, English, growing middle class
Europe	Italy, Poland, Ukraine	cultural and geographical proximity
North America	USA	diversification of foreign students, potential for partnerships
Latin America and Africa	Nigeria, Egypt, Brazil	young population, high potential for English programs

5 Target groups

Target groups identify specific segments of foreign students who could benefit the most from studying at UNIPO, and who could also contribute to its academic and cultural diversity. This analysis helps narrowing the scope to specific groups that the UNIPO should focus on in its recruitment and marketing activities.

1. students looking for quality education at affordable prices

- This group includes students who are looking for a higher education in Europe but have a limited budget. The University of Prešov is attractive to them thanks to the combination of quality of education and accessibility.
- Countries: This segment is particularly relevant for students from Central and Eastern Europe, but also from parts of Asia and Latin America.

2. students interested in specific academic programs

- Students who are interested in unique or highly specialized study programs offered by the University of Prešov.
- Countries: Specific countries depend on the specific study programmes offered by the University.

3. students with career aspirations in Europe

- These students want to get an education that will open the door to job opportunities in Europe. For them, the quality of education as well as networking and career development opportunities are important.
- Countries: Interest can come from different regions, including Asia and Eastern Europe.

4. students seeking an international and multicultural experience

- This group includes students who want to live and study in an international environment and gain experiences that go beyond their home culture.

- **Countries:** This segment is attractive for students from countries with a high emphasis on global mobility and international education, such as South Korea or Brazil.

6 Communication channels and tools

Based on the identified target groups and geographical areas, it is possible to create a communication plan aimed at increasing awareness of the university and increasing interest in the university among foreign students.

Channels

1. **Social media** Using platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn to target young people and students. Regular posts and campaigns aimed at specific target groups.
2. **Online advertising.** Use of targeted online advertising on platforms such as Google Ads, Facebook Ads, Instagram Ads, etc. for potential students in specific geographical areas.
3. **Webinars, portals and online events.** Organizing webinars and informative online events where future students can get more information about the university and its offers.
4. **Educational fairs.** Participation in international educational fairs and events where the University can present itself and establish contacts with potential students.
5. **Cooperation with universities.** Building partnerships with universities and educational institutions in target countries to support student exchanges and joint educational programmes.

Tools

1. **Multilingual website.** Creating and maintaining an attractive, informative and multilingual website that will provide all the necessary information for international students.
2. **Video content.** Producing quality videos that present the university, its campus, study programs and student life. This may include storytelling videos from graduates.
3. **Case studies of successful graduates.** To show successful graduates as examples of the possibilities that the university offers.
4. **Online chat for interested parties.** Providing a platform where potential students can ask questions and get quick answers to their questions.

7 Implementation and responsibilities

The Vice-Rector for International and External Relations is responsible for the implementation of the strategy. Operational management and coordination are ensured by employees assigned to the Office of International and External Relations and the Strategy and Marketing Office. Faculty staff, Erasmus+ coordinators, graphic designers, language centres and university students are also involved in the implementation.

8 Review and evaluation system

The implementation of the strategy will be evaluated once a year through selected performance indicators (KPIs).

The evaluation will be prepared by the Vice-Rector for International and External Relations and submitted to the UNIPO management.

Based on the results, updated Strategy Measures for the relevant year will be developed, specifying activities, responsibilities and budget.

ANNEXES

Annex No. 1 – Analytical background

Demographic, economic and cultural factors of the selection of target countries, including the methodology of assessment according to the combined potential.

The annex summarizes the analytical data and argumentation that served as a basis for defining the target countries, target groups and marketing activities of UNIPO. This is a supplementary, methodological-descriptive material that can be updated as necessary without the need to amend the Rector's measure itself.

Baseline summary and selection methodology

The Annex evaluates the selection of target countries for the recruitment of foreign students at UNIPO to bachelor, master and doctoral programs taught in English for the academic year 2026/2027. The selection is based on:

- the demand for study in Central Europe (Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland) and the direction of interest according to the statistics and analysis of StudyPortals,
- historical statistics of the arrival of foreign students in the SR/CR/PL and regional cost competitiveness.
- existence and reach of embassies of the Slovak Republic (visa availability),
- demography and middle-class growth,
- language readiness (English)

Selection aspects

Demographic aspects

1. Indian Subcontinent (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh)

- Population structure. These countries have a large young population. For example, India has one of the youngest populations in the world with a median age of around 28 years.
- Educational aspirations. The high number of students in these countries shows interest in higher education, including study abroad opportunities.
- Language proficiency English is widely used as a second language, which facilitates integration into an international learning environment.

2. Africa (e.g. Nigeria, Ethiopia)

- Young population. Africa has the youngest population of all continents. In Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, more than half the population is under the age of 19.

- Growing demand for education. Rapid population growth and urbanization increase the demand for quality education, including international study opportunities.

3. Southeast Asia (Vietnam, Indonesia, Philippines)

- Urbanisation These countries are experiencing rapid urbanization, which is related to the increased demand for education and career development.
- Development of education. With a growing middle class and improving economic conditions, families are investing more in their children's education, including studying abroad.

4. Latin America (Brazil, Mexico)

- Young and urbanized population. These countries have a large proportion of young population, with high rates of urbanization.
- Interest in international education. There is a growing interest in international educational opportunities in these countries, partly due to limited opportunities at domestic universities.

Economic aspects

Based on economic aspects such as GDP per capita and educational expenditure, it is necessary to reflect on potential target markets for the recruitment of foreign students at the University of Prešov.

1. Asia (with emphasis on East and Southeast Asia)

- Growing GDP. Countries like China, South Korea, and Malaysia are showing rapid economic growth and increasing GDP per capita.
- Investments in education. These countries tend to invest more in education, which means more resources are available for studying abroad.
- Middle class. The growth of the middle class in these countries leads to an increased demand for quality international education.

2. Central and Eastern Europe

- Stable economic growth. Countries such as Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary show steady economic growth and improving living conditions.
- Education access. High level of access to education and interest in study abroad opportunities, especially in neighbouring or culturally close countries.

3. Latin America (e.g. Brazil, Mexico)

- Growing economies. These countries have growing economies, but there is still significant inequality in access to education.
- Investments in foreign education. Increased interest in investing in foreign education to improve career prospects.

4. Middle East (e.g. United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia)

- High GDP per capita. These countries have a relatively high GDP per capita, which may mean a higher ability of families to finance education abroad.
- Interest in "Western" education. Increased interest in Western educational institutions to gain prestige and international experience.

Educational aspects

From the point of view of educational systems and trends, it is necessary to pay attention to potential target markets for the recruitment of foreign students at the University of Prešov, i.e. to consider the quality of local education, trends in study abroad, and access to higher education in various regions of the world.

1. Asia (with emphasis on South and Southeast Asia)

- Quality of local education. There are significant differences in the quality of education in countries such as India, Vietnam or Indonesia. While the top universities are highly ranked, a large part of the population does not have access to such education.
- Trends in studying abroad. The growing middle class and the increasing demand for quality education mean that students from these countries often look for educational opportunities abroad.

2. Eastern Europe (e.g. Ukraine, Russia, Belarus)

- High aspirations in education. These countries have a strong tradition of education with high aspirations but often limited opportunities at the local level, especially in the field of advanced study programmes and research.
- Increased interest in foreign education. Students often look for opportunities to study abroad to gain new perspectives and improve employability.

3. Latin America (e.g. Brazil, Argentina)

- Differences in the quality of education. There are significant differences in the quality of educational institutions, with some excellent universities, but many others struggling with a lack of resources.
- Searching for international opportunities. Students are often looking for international learning opportunities for better career prospects and access to a wider range of professional study programmes.

4. Middle East (e.g. United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia)

- Investments in education. These countries invest large sums in the education sector but often prefer foreign educational institutions for advanced studies.
- International educational programs. There is an increased interest in international study programs, especially those that offer quality education in English.

Cultural and linguistic aspects

When analysing cultural and linguistic factors, it is important to consider how cultural differences and language barriers affect the relations between the University of Prešov and potential foreign students. These factors can significantly affect students' decisions about the choice of study place.

1. Central and Eastern Europe (e.g. Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary)

- Cultural permeation. There are historical and cultural links and connections between Slovakia and these countries, which may facilitate the adaptation of students to the new environment.
- Language proficiency. In most of these countries, there is a high level of knowledge of English, and sometimes Slovak, which can increase the attractiveness of study programs in Slovakia.

2. Balkans (e.g. Serbia, Croatia)

- Cultural similarities. Cultural and historical similarities and connections with the Balkans can be an advantage in attracting students to the University of Prešov.
- Language. Knowledge of English is quite widespread among young people in this region, which facilitates access to international education.

3. Asia (e.g. China, South Korea, Japan)

- Fairly favourable level of English. In some Asian countries, such as South Korea and Japan, the level of English proficiency is quite favourable, which can make it easier to study abroad.
- Cultural differences. Cultural differences can be a challenge, but also an opportunity for students seeking an international experience.

4. Latin America (e.g. Brazil, Mexico)

- Differences in terms of language and culture. Although there are linguistic and cultural differences, interest in studying in Europe is high.
- English as a Second Language. In many Latin American countries, English is learned as a second language, which can facilitate communication and adaptation.

Overview of existing trends according to StudyPortals data and statistics of the Ministries of SK, CZ and PL

- Slovakia currently has about 20% of foreign students (e.g. UNIPO: 1,400 foreign students out of a total of 8300).
- Most foreign students in Slovakia come mainly from Ukraine and subsequently from Russia, India, Kazakhstan, Turkey and Vietnam.
- The Czech Republic has a high number of students from Ukraine and a growing number of students from Vietnam (486), the USA (430) and Israel.
- Poland has a high number of students from Ukraine and strong representation from India (2,700), Turkey (3,800), Uzbekistan (2,100), Azerbaijan (2,500) and Nigeria (1,600) – confirming the trend of the Central European area towards the countries of the former USSR and the Asian, African markets.

Visa/Consular Availability (Embassies of the Slovak Republic)

To quickly verify the practical feasibility of recruitment, it is necessary to target the linking of priorities to the embassies of the **Slovak Republic** (embassies/consular coverage):

- India – the largest source of students outside Europe, high level of English, presence of the Slovak Embassy in New Delhi.
- Vietnam – stable growth of mobility in the Czech Republic and Poland, growing middle class, high interest in Europe. Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Hanoi.
- Turkey – growing number of students in Poland, proximity to the cultural environment, accessible visa centre in Ankara.
- Uzbekistan – a fast-growing market, the presence of the Embassy of the Slovak Republic, students prefer to study in CEE regions. Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Tashkent.
- Kazakhstan – traditionally strong ties to European universities, visa availability in Astana.
- Brazil – interest in European universities, strong ties to EU projects and studying in English. Presence of the Embassy of the Slovak Republic.
- USA – strategic market for academic mobility, potential for short-term and PhD programs, historical and cultural potential. Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Washington, D.C.
- Italy – EU member country, space for academic partnerships, number of students studying in the EU.
- Indonesia – large population, strong demand for international programs, Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Jakarta.
- Nigeria – the largest African economy, young population, Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Abuja.
- Georgia – a growing number of students in the CEE region, the presence of the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Tbilisi.
- Azerbaijan – stable economy, strong interest in Europe, existing diplomatic representation in Baku.

- Egypt – high potential in Africa, Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Cairo.
- Armenia - a growing number of students in the CEE region, the presence of the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Yerevan.
- Thailand - existing diplomatic representation in Bangkok.

Priority recruiting countries

TOP 10 priority countries

1. India
2. Vietnam
3. Turkey
4. Uzbekistan
5. Kazakhstan
6. Brazil
7. USA
8. Italy
9. Indonesia
10. Nigeria

Additional +5 priority countries

11. Georgia
12. Azerbaijan
13. Armenia
14. Egypt
15. Thailand

Note: The list is sorted by combined potential (market size, language, historical data, visa availability, competitive environment and potential online interest). It also considers the existence of Slovak embassies and/or consular coverage in the country.

Selection logic and brief justification with respect to specific countries

- **India, Vietnam, Indonesia** – high population, expanding middle class, demand for study programs in English, strong presence in the Czech Republic/PL (synergy of the CEE region)
- **Turkey, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan** – stable/growing numbers of foreign students in PL/SR, good visa availability
- **Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia** – Caucasus region with increasing mobility towards CEE, cultural compatibility,
- **Nigeria** – the largest African market, young population
- **Egypt** – a large market in North Africa, improving readiness to study in English
- **Brazil, USA, Italy** – expanding diversity outside Asia and potential countries in Africa
- **Thailand** – middle class, English, increasing interest in European programs

Annex 2 – Promotion channels and partnerships

List of official promotion channels of UNIPO, partner universities, embassies of the Slovak Republic and online portals for study programmes in English.

Promotion channels of UNIPO (programs in English: Bc./Mgr. /PhD)

Custom & Partner Channels

- **New promotional materials** (brochures, presentations, leaflets according to study programmes and videos).
- **New UNIPO website:** <https://www.unipo.sk/> and new **faculty websites (so-called landing pages)** of study programmes in English.
- **Keystone Academic Solutions – PU profile and programs in English:**
<https://www.educations.com/institutions/unipo>
- **Social networks of the University of Prešov:**
 - Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/universityofpresov>
 - Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/international_unipo/
 - LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/universityofpresov/>
 - YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRCF4A5k2JVMT1yhQMjDx0g>
- **Student fairs abroad** – participation in destination cities and online fairs
- **Embassies of the Slovak Republic abroad** (co-organization "Study in Slovakia Days"):
<https://www.mzv.sk/sluzby/konzularne-sluzby/zastupitelske-urady>
- **UNIPO partner universities abroad** (mobility, double-degree, recruitment webinars):
<https://www.unipo.sk/zahranicie/zmluvy/univerzitne>
- **Cooperation with local recruitment agencies**

Extra channel for doctoral studies (PhD)

- **EURAXESS Jobs (Slovakia)** – targeted for PhD positions:
https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/search?f%5B0%5D=job_country%3A753&f%5B1%5D=offer_type%3Ajob_offer&f%5B2%5D=positions%3Aphp_positions

Operational recommendations for campaigns

- **Localization:** local graduation dates/admissions periods, transparent visa steps.
- **Emphasis on content:** "Total Cost of Study", accommodation in Prešov, *Graduate Outcomes*, *Alumni Stories* from target countries.
- **Events:** online Q&A (monthly), student fairs; cooperation (co-branding) with Slovak embassies and partner universities.

- **Lead Management:** linking forms from the web/Keystone Education to the web pages (landing pages) of study programs (SLA for response ≤48 hours, nurturing sequences).

Reference sources (links)

- **Where are international students coming from?**
<http://studyportals.com/report/core-audience-by-destination/>
- **Webinar StudyPortals Academy: Building the Global Classroom**
<https://studyportals.wistia.com/medias/9jjn5261ke>
- **Embassies of the Slovak Republic abroad**
<https://www.mzv.sk/sluzby/konzularne-sluzby/zastupitelske-urady>
- **International Students in Slovakia (VAIA)**
https://vaia.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/20241129_Report-o-zahranicnych-studentoch_final.pdf

Sources international rankings

- SciMago: <https://www.scimagoir.com/rankings.php?country=SVK>
- EduRank: <https://edurank.org/geo/sk/>
- QS Ranking – Europe: <https://www.topuniversities.com/europe-university-rankings?countries=sk>
- UniRanks <https://www.uniranks.com/ranking/slovakia>