

# Erasmus Policy Statement 2021–2027

## Karelia2030 strategy and Erasmus

For Karelia University of Applied Sciences, Erasmus Programme serves as one of the key tools in implementing the organisational strategy with the international partner networks and within selected innovation ecosystems. Karelia2030 strategy focuses on five themes: 1. development of continuous and digital learning models and smooth education pathways for re- and upskilling; 2. development of international degree programmes embedded with education-based immigration, and systemic growth in international RDI and global knowledge transfer; 3. development of well-being services in sparsely populated areas; 4. expertise in intelligent production and services; and, 5. contribution into the carbon neutral solutions. The overall aim is to become a genuinely international higher education community.

All the strategic themes are linked to the goals of internationalisation and modernisation of education as described in the European higher education policy. They also address inclusion, innovation and interconnectivity and thus promote the creation of European Education Area. Karelia aims to build new international degree programmes (Industrial Management 2020, ICT 2021, European Active Ageing 2023), increase accessibility of education and develop smooth and digital education pathways for continuous and inclusive learning, increase the volume of international exchange and degree students and staff members, increase innovation and the amount of international RDI funding and develop tools for global knowledge transfer. These goals meet with common European values and strengthen both the students' and staff's European identity. Erasmus Programme offers opportunities for systematic and high-quality student and staff mobility, U2B and HEI partnership development, internationalisation of education and strategic RDI actions serving the Karelia2030 aims.

Karelia works for shaping the future towards a more positive direction. At the time of disruption and challenging global trends, fostering the prosperity and well-being of the somewhat remote and sparsely populated region is the uttermost goal of the strategic choices. In North Karelia, the population is ageing faster than anywhere else in Finland. The economic expectations of the region are decreasing. Yet high-level expertise and a lot of potential are available, and with systematic co-creative, multi-sectoral approach in selected high-quality networks it is possible to address the challenges. For its part, Erasmus programme fosters the co-creation of new knowledge and practices.

Karelia is committed to provide equal opportunities to all Bachelor and Master students as well as academic and non-academic staff. For students, sustainable and high-quality short- and long-term mobility pathways for studies and traineeships are actively elaborated. Staff mobility is highly encouraged to deepen the partnerships, share good practices, contribute to the English taught programmes and modules, develop competences and co-create new practices. Blended mobility and online collaboration will be explored and developed to ensure internationalisation for all. As a whole, Erasmus Programme helps

to address the challenges, develop transversal and professional competences, support the relevance of education and thus strengthen Karelia's organisational competitiveness and boost the regional prosperity.

## Implementation of the Erasmus actions

Karelia takes part into all Erasmus Key Actions: KA1, Learning mobility; KA2, Co-operation among organisations and institutions, and KA3, Support to policy development and co-operation operating with the tools that support the implementation of the Karelia2030 strategy. However, as Karelia is relatively small, it works taking realistic steps at a time and building strong networks to ensure the desired impacts.

First, Key Action 1, Learning mobility, is an integral and essential part of internationalisation of at Karelia. International office and coordinators ensure that all the students are offered opportunities to join the Erasmus mobility and that the studies and training successfully completed on exchange are fully acknowledged towards students' degrees following Karelia's internationalisation policy. Staff mobility in its turn is promoted via superiors and embedded into professional performance planning. Incoming and outgoing learning mobility promotes international encountering that support the development of transversal and professional competences. Learning mobility also contributes to international education and programmes by enabling staff collaboration and networking. It also promotes internationalisation at home via international courses, modules and student communities. Systematic learning mobility meets with the Karelia aims to grow numbers of international exchange students and increase international academic collaboration.

Second, Key Action 2, Co-operation among organisations and institutions, offers several tools for strategic development and operations of the Karelia internationalisation to meet with the goals of EHEA. Following the strategy, international research and development projects within the strength areas of well-being services in sparsely populated areas, intelligent production and services as well as carbon neutral solutions are pursued with the international key partners. With win-win venture and co-creation the networks Karelia aims to build joint degrees, modules, courses and programmes; develop businesses and seek new markets; create research communities and communities of practice and contribute into academic discussion shaping the higher education and European partner regions to a more positive direction. Karelia aims to create European University Alliance to work for these goals. Karelia staff is systematically encouraged to contribute into the initiatives.

Third, Key Action 3, Support to policy development and co-operation, enables shedding light into complex issues of migration. With the help of the programme, Karelia aims to promote education-based migration and build inclusive society practices with its national and European networks. As Karelia is one of the Finnish

HEIs actively integrating immigrants into higher education, it looks for opportunities to encompass systemic promotion of inclusive society into its international collaboration.

## Impacts of the Erasmus

The main aim of the Erasmus programme participation is the possibility to learn from each other, gain added value and build sustainable practices for the strategic development. Karelia has set both qualitative and quantitative objectives for the programme participation.

First, in KA1 Karelia wants to ensure that international dimension is embedded into degree programmes, a good variety of relevant programmes and studies is available in English, course descriptions are updated and timely available, and both incoming and outgoing student mobility enabled. In addition, students' international traineeships and blended mobility are actively promoted to ensure that mobility volumes meet with the goal of EHEA (20 % of student population). Second, in KA2 and KA3, Karelia wants to build win-win consortiums in the key areas of active ageing, carbon neutrality and wood construction as first priorities; create a joint European master degree on Active ageing; grow the amount of international RDI funding up to 1 M€ until 2022 and up to 1,5 M€ until 2024 (other funding tools included); and apply for Erasmus University Alliance as a coordinator in 2024 at latest. At Karelia, KA2 and KA3 actions foster internationalisation of education following the strategic aims and also address the need to promote inclusiveness and accessibility of education, strengthen relevance and sustainability of education and develop digital tools.

The envisaged impacts of the participation into Erasmus programme include promotion of graduate employability, HEIs' expertise, attractiveness, image and reputation building as well strategic and sustainable development of practices and collaborative international partner networks. Students and staff gain knowledge and experiences in learning, teaching, research, development and innovations; strengthen professional, transversal and multicultural competences and co-create new knowledge and practices that meet with the strategic goals.

The impact follow-up is an integral part of the Karelia leadership and quality management process, where all the main areas of the strategy implementation are carefully reflected and looked after three times a year. In addition, the KA1 impact follow-up is done at the degree level; and for KA2 and KA3, qualitative short- and long-term impact follow-up is part of the organisational project review and assessment process.