MAPPING THE INTERNATIONALISATION STRATEGY LANDSCAPE ACROSS THE EHEA

2025 AND BEYOND

NATIONAL POLICIES FOR INTERNATIONALISATION PROJECT (NAP)

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EAIE
European Association for
International Education

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About the European Association for International Education

Founded in 1989, the European Association for International Education, better known as the EAIE, is the European centre for expertise, networking and resources in the internationalisation of higher education. We are a non-profit, member-led organisation with a mission to enable the international higher education sector, demonstrate the impact of internationalisation, and influence and engage policymakers and the public in support of our vision.

About the Academic Cooperation Association

Working under the motto "the European voice of national organisations for the internationalisation of higher education", the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) is a leading European association supporting research, innovative practice-development and smart policymaking in international higher education. Created in 1993 as a member-driven platform, ACA provides a shared voice to national agencies for the internationalisation of higher education in Brussels and represents them in Europe and globally. Within ACA, the member organisations enhance their capacities and join forces in supporting and 'doing' internationalisation. In parallel, the association has a long track record in conducting sound research and providing expert advice on key developments in international higher education to different actors.

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Executive summary

WHY FOCUS ON NATIONAL POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR INTERNATIONALISATION?

Internationalisation has become a defining feature of higher education in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), shaped by regional, national and institutional ambitions and dynamics. Notably, European-level frameworks (such as the Bolonga Process) and funding instruments (such as those administered by the European Union) have resulted in shared goals and tools across the region. However, national governments play a pivotal role in translating European-level aspirations into national action. They provide strategic direction, resources and coordination mechanisms necessary for coherent and effective policy-making and policy implementation, and they exert important influences on institutional practice.

Making sense of the full landscape of national-level policies, strategies and approaches to internationalisation in higher education is challenging, however, given the number and diversity of contexts and policy-making realities across the EHEA. Noting a gap in current and easily accessible information about such policies and strategies, and with a shared interest in raising the level of awareness about these efforts, the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) and the European Association for International Education (EAIE) joined forces in 2024 to undertake the *National Policies for Internationalisation Project (NAP)*. The aim of this exercise was to produce a current snapshot of national strategies and policy frameworks for internationalisation of higher education, capturing both the diversity of national approaches and the evolving policy landscape shaping internationalisation as of 2025.

MAPPING THE INTERNATIONALISATION POLICY/STRATEGY LANDSCAPE – PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

In order to effectively mapping the policy/strategy landscape for internationalisation in higher education across the EHEA, the ACA–EAIE research team undertook extensive desk research and review of national strategic policy documents, considered key academic and policy literature and conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with policymakers and national higher education experts. Key informants also provided validation support on each country-specific profile included in the report. Altogether, this work provides an overview of the national-level policy/strategy landscape for internationalisation in higher education across the EHEA from three key perspectives:

- **Broad historical context:** Chapter 1 presents a retrospective on the emergence of strategies/policies within the EHEA and the evolution of policy dynamics over time, to help place the current realities of national-level action in this area into appropriate historical context.

- **Current country-specific details:** Chapter 2 provides specific information on each of the EHEA's member states (excluding the Russian Federation and Belarus, which are currently suspended). It includes concise overviews of defined strategies/policies focused on internationalisation in higher education, cases where higher education is included within broader national strategies for the internationalisation of education, and other national efforts reflecting different forms of policy engagement in the area. These brief country profiles succinctly map the key strategic documents as well as core characteristics, while guiding the readers to the actual source documents for an in-depth read.

- **Future considerations:** Chapter 3 offers reflections on key current trends and implications for the future, informed by the research findings and by the authors' collective experience in the field, further enriched by semi-structured interviews with experts from different country contexts. These reflections look beyond formal policy documents to depict the realities and complex factors affecting internationalisation now and in the future.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED? KEY TAKEAWAYS

- While it is increasingly recognised that national governments are central actors in setting priorities, enabling implementation and signalling long-term commitment, **the existence of a formal national strategy does not, in itself, signify a more advanced or effective approach to internationalisation**. Many countries achieve significant outcomes through other policy channels, institutional initiatives, or sector-driven collaboration and address a wide range of strategic activities via these efforts.

- **Defined strategies**—*ie* "specific and explicit policy endeavours already adopted at the national level, which can be considered active policy-making aimed at advancing some aspect(s) of internationalisation" (Crăciun's, 2018)—**are less commonly in place across the EHEA than other forms of national-policy engagement with internationalisation.** Just 13 of the 47 EHEA higher education systems reviewed in this study were found to have defined strategies in 2025.

- **Current strategies go beyond predecessor strategies, reflecting further development and innovation in the field.** Most strategies are in a 2.0 stage of maturity, *ie* showing further evolution from the previous strategic period as conceptualised by Crăciun (2018). For example, alongside the typical physical mobility of students and staff, current strategies support virtual exchanges or forms with integrated digital components (like blended mobilities). The same can be seen with respect to cooperation: several strategies make a clear distinction between bilateral and multilateral cooperation, sometimes highlighting the strategic relevance of one or both of these modalities.

- **The majority of strategies portray a view of internationalisation as an important tool for quality enhancement, and for national and institutional development.** Institutional capacity building and capacity enhancement are often quoted in the current strategies, which seem to be framed by an impact-driven approach. Complex portfolios of internationalisation activities are no longer pursued on their own (or to measure achievement against external targets or metrics), but because of the results that such portfolios can deliver for the countries, the higher education institutions and/or the individuals involved in the respective activities.

- **Ensuring better access to internationalisation activities is of nearly unanimous concern,** with the most recent strategies setting clear objectives for making specific activities more inclusive, or 'for all'.

- **Both the local and the global have increased in importance.** Strengthening regional level cooperation is still regularly underlined (*eg* between Visegrad 4 countries, or the Western Balkan, Baltic or Nordic countries). However, in terms of student recruitment, an increasing number of countries show interest in venturing beyond Europe and list a diverse set of measures meant to help them recruit particularly non-EU/EEA students.

- Whether a country is big or small, or has a dedicated strategy linked to internationalisation within higher education or not, **key European-level frameworks and initiatives (such as the Bologna Process or EU-funded programmes, including Erasmus+ mobility and the European Universities alliances) are widely perceived as valuable.** For smaller countries, in particular, these channels offer opportunities to access resources and networks that can help advance their internationalisation interests in ways that would be difficult for them to achieve alone. However, these resources also appear integral to the policies, strategies and approaches for many larger countries, as well.

- **Along with the new, there is still plenty of 'the old'.** Strategies consistently refer to remaining obstacles that need to be tackled to ease international cooperation, chief among these visas for non-European students and improving recognition of credits and qualifications earned abroad.

- **The factors impacting national strategies for internationalisation are both external in nature *(ie intern*ational, and even global) as well as internal (*ie stemming from the particular national context).** All in all, the challenges and opportunities presented by these factors point to a new balance, characterised by continued commitment to internationalisation on the one hand, and greater caution and adaptability on the other.

- There is a general impression of **volatility** framing internationalisation across the EHEA, with repeated and unpredictable crises framing the international education sector, even as opportunities and openness towards internationalisation persist in many systems. In this uncertain environment, there is a growing expectation for new strategies to be more adaptive and forward-looking, able to predict some of these developments and help prepare for them.

- Despite—or perhaps due to the context of volatility noted above—**establishing a national strategic direction for internationalisation in higher education is considered vital by many stakeholders.** This feels particularly urgent in countries where support for internationalisation faces a more complicated political or social environment, as a nationally adopted strategy helps make a stronger case for this work.

POSSIBLE FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR NATIONAL POLICIES/ STRATEGIES FOR INTERNATIONALISATION

While this project did not undertake a scenario-building exercise for the future, the conversations conducted with national experts indicated consensus around the notion that the sector should work strenuously to prevent negative scenarios. With this in mind, several courses of action stand out as likely to positively shape future policy/strategy development in this area:

1. **Showing the tangible value of international education.** To ensure future funding and support for the sector, there is a widely agreed-upon need to investigate and document the impact of internationalisation more thoroughly at all levels.

2. **Widening the conversation around internationalisation beyond the inner circle.** It is essential to present the results of critical analyses of internationalisation's impact in a way that resonates with the most relevant stakeholders and reach a wider range of national and European policy actors beyond the field of education. Engaging the wider public to better understand and appreciate the value of internationalisation is another important ingredient for policy success.

3. **Future strategy-making – a (partial) break from the past**. Newer policy documents are more expansive, casting a wider vision and reaffirming the core values and principles of internationalisation, while focusing less on the nitty-gritty of strategy implementation. They also openly acknowledge the high degree of uncertainty and volatility of our times, emphasising ingrained flexibility, the need to cultivate agility to be able to deal with unforeseen events and provide accurate responses and the mastery of crisis management. Mid-cycle, if not yearly, strategy reviews are also an increasing practice, highlighting the nature of newer strategies as **living documents**.

Looking ahead, it is likely that future strategies will not be strategies 'as usual'. They will likely be more adaptive, inclusive and evidence-driven, widening the conversation around internationalisation to engage other key players beyond higher education and providing tangible proof of its impact. In doing so, the next generation of policies/strategies may be well positioned to help secure the policy commitment and appropriate resources that the sector truly needs.

Overall, the NAP project report aims to serve as a useful reference for policymakers and stakeholders seeking accessible and up-to-date essential information about national policies, strategies and related efforts focused on internationalisation in higher education across the EHEA. By additionally incorporating retrospective reflections on how policy-making in this area has evolved as well as considerations for possible future developments, this resource aspires not to stand as an 'endpoint' but rather to serve as a catalyst for continued exchange of information, insights and—ideally—collaborative discussions on policy developments in this area.

Introduction

This report is a coproduction of the European Association for International Education (EAIE) and the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA), each organisation following a distinct pathway that led to joining forces for this special endeavour.

In late 2022 and early 2023, the EAIE held nearly two dozen online meetings with national agency representatives from across the European Higher Education Area. The purpose of that 'listening tour' was to gain a better understanding of current trends and issues of interest to these national-level actors, in view of shaping the third edition of the EAIE Barometer survey, an extensive data collection exercise focused on frontline professionals working in international higher education. One recurring theme in these conversations was an interest in knowing more about the national policies or strategies for internationalisation currently in place in other countries across Europe.

This realisation served as an important impetus for the EAIE to produce an EAIE Barometer spin-off report focused on national and European-level influences on internationalisation (Rumbley & Hoekstra-Selten, 2024), which gave an indication of how frontline professionals perceive the effects of these dynamics on their higher education institutions (HEIs). However, that work did not allow for a comprehensive

cataloguing of national policies or strategies, nor did it offer space to explore the perceptions of national-level experts on the key issues framing discussions about or approaches to internationalisation in different national contexts.

For ACA and its member organisations—ie national-level agencies funding and supporting the internationalisation of their higher education systems—the topic of national policies and strategies is by no means a new one. Importantly, ACA members have been and continue to be regularly involved in such strategy-making processes at national level as co-authors or key stakeholders. They are also often responsible for putting such policies in practice, in close collaboration with higher education institutions in their respective systems. ACA members actively use the association's framework to consult with counterparts from other countries to learn from the latest developments in these different contexts. At the same time, some important predecessor studies in this field have been published in ACA's publication series—from the 2004 volume by Jeroen Huisman and Marijk van der Wende (eds.) *On Cooperation and Competition. National and European Policies for the Internationalisation of Higher Education* to the 2012 *European and national policies for academic mobility. Linking rhetoric, practice and mobility trends* (Ferencz & Wächter, eds.). Additionally, the association regularly facilitates peer learning between its member organisations on this salient topic, with relevant strategy

updates covered at most ACA leadership meetings. While all of these actions form part of ACA's 'inner life', a written account of these important developments for a larger audience was long overdue.

Recognising this shared need for an updated picture, the EAIE and ACA joined forces in 2024 to undertake the *National Policies for Internationalisation Project (NAP)*. The aim of this collaboration was to produce a current snapshot of national strategies and policy frameworks for internationalisation of higher education. This report is the result of that exercise, capturing both the diversity of national approaches and the evolving policy landscape shaping internationalisation as of 2025. It offers a concise yet comprehensive picture of how internationalisation is being strategically pursued at the national level across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), while also providing insights into the dynamics that both challenge and empower these strategic efforts.

The report is divided into three chapters. Chapter 1 presents the contextual framework for the project, including a retrospective on the emergence of these strategies/policies within the EHEA and the evolution of policy dynamics over time. Chapter 2 provides country-specific information on each of the EHEA's member states—excluding the Russian Federation and Belarus, which are currently suspended. It includes concise overviews of defined strategies/policies focused on internationalisation in higher education, cases where higher education is included

within broader national strategies for the internationalisation of education, and other national efforts reflecting different forms of policy engagement in this area. These brief country profiles are based on desk research and validation activities with country experts. They are meant to very succinctly map the key strategic documents as well as core characteristics, while guiding the readers to the actual source documents for further in-depth reading. Chapter 3 offers our reflections on key current trends and implications for the future, informed by the research findings and by our collective experience in the field, further enriched by semi-structured interviews with experts from different country contexts. These reflections look beyond formal policy documents to depict the realities and complex factors affecting internationalisation now and in the future.

Overall, this report aims to serve as a useful reference for policymakers and stakeholders seeking accessible and up-to-date essential information about national policies, strategies and related efforts focused on internationalisation in higher education across the EHEA. Importantly, it is not an 'endpoint' but rather is envisioned to serve as a foundation for continued exchange of information, insights and—ideally—collaborative discussions on policy developments in this area.

CHAPTER 1

The evolution of national internationalisation strategies in the EHEA

Internationalisation has become a defining feature of higher education in the EHEA, shaped both by regional ambitions, such as the intergovernmental Bologna Process or the more formal framework of the European Union (EU), as well as within the realm of individual European countries (part of them also EU Member States) who still preserve the rights to organise their education systems in line with national development priorities and aspirations for external visibility and engagement. While European-level frameworks and funding instruments have provided shared goals and tools, the actual implementation of internationalisation is driven largely by national-level policy-making and by specific institutional contexts. This leads to some shared features but also considerable diversity in how internationalisation is pursued across the EHEA.

In this higher education space, national governments play a pivotal role in translating European-level aspirations into national ones, with influence on institutional practice. They provide strategic direction, resources and coordination mechanisms necessary for coherent and effective policy-making and policy implementation. As de Wit *et al*. (2015) note, national-level policies are crucial instruments for translating European-level goals into practice, particularly through support for institutional implementation in programmes such as Erasmus+. These frameworks help foster alignment across education systems while still allowing room for national variation both in strategic goals-setting as well as enactment.

This pursuit of internationalisation related objectives at European and national levels has led to an increasing interest in how national strategies shape and support internationalisation in higher education. While higher education institutions and EU institutions and stakeholders are often the focus of relevant discussions, it is increasingly recognised that national governments are central actors in setting priorities, enabling implementation and signalling long-term commitment. As Helms *et al*. (2015) and de Wit *et al*. (2019) argue, national strategies not only coordinate efforts but also express political will and provide direction, positioning countries competitively in the global higher education landscape.

EUROPEAN POLICY LANDSCAPE: A RETROSPECTIVE ON HOW NATIONAL INTERNATIONALISATION STRATEGIES CAME TO BE

The emergence of national internationalisation strategies in the EHEA cannot be detached from the broader trajectory of European integration in higher education. As Crosier and Parveva (2013) explain, the vision of a European Higher Education Area was first articulated in the 1998 *Sorbonne Declaration* and formally launched with the *Bologna Declaration* in 1999, signed by 29 countries. The Declaration aimed to increase the competitiveness, transparency and attractiveness of European higher education by promoting mobility, mutual recognition and comparability of degrees.

Successive ministerial communiqués, in Prague (2001), Berlin (2003) and Bergen (2005), further elaborated this vision by adding policy dimensions such as lifelong learning, social inclusion, qualifications frameworks and stakeholder engagement. These developments culminated in the formal launch of the EHEA in 2010, fostering a shared European framework within which national reforms could be aligned.

While these early documents did not explicitly call for the creation of national internationalisation strategies, they nonetheless helped—alongside growing cooperation on education within the EU—to create a favourable policy environment in which such strategies could later develop more organically. They achieved this by placing at the heart of the process multiple elements that are core to such strategies, from international openness and cooperation—both within the EHEA and with

countries beyond it— to international student mobility with a focus on balance, the (automatic) recognition of degrees and periods of study abroad, and increasing access and participation in higher education and mobility ('the social dimension'). These elements subsequently became key objectives not only at the European level but also at the national one.

The Bologna Process also led to the establishment of a set of tools and frameworks, further reinforcing this trajectory, such as the *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance or the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes*, as well as promoted the wider use and further development of EU tools, such as the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and the Diploma Supplement, ultimately facilitating further convergence between higher education structures and practices. These instruments fostered trust and cooperation across countries, enabling institutions to align their offerings and providing national policymakers with a strong basis for designing their own internationalisation agendas.

A turning point came with the Bergen Communiqué (2005), after which the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) drafted the External Dimension Strategy, which ministers formally adopted in London in 2007 as *A Strategy for the European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting.* This strategy explicitly called for Europe to position itself globally, not only through structural reforms but through policy coordination and promotional activity. The strategy's five core policy areas, (1) Improving information on the EHEA; (2) Promoting European higher education to enhance its world-wide attractiveness and competitiveness; (3) Strengthening cooperation based on partnership; (4) Intensifying policy dialogue; and (5) Furthering recognition of qualifications, signalled the need for coordinated action across national systems. Although the strategy did not mandate national-level responses, it was adopted within a broader policy context in which EHEA countries committed to aligning their national steering documents with shared Bologna objectives. As Klemenčič (2019) notes, ministers and the European Commission agreed "to align their national policies and strategies (ie their national steering documents) to these objectives," thereby encouraging countries to reflect shared

Bologna objectives, including those related to internationalisation, within their national steering documents, even though such alignment remained voluntary.

THE EMERGENCE OF NATIONAL INTERNATIONALISATION STRATEGIES

Over the past two decades, national internationalisation strategies in the EHEA have undergone significant evolution. Between the early 2000s and mid-2010s, a first generation of such strategies began to emerge. These were shaped by a combination of internal goals, such as quality enhancement, institutional capacity building, and economic competitiveness and external pressures, including increased global student mobility and international academic competition (Crăciun, 2018).

European Union programmes played a catalytic role during this period. Initiatives such as the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007–2013 (including Erasmus) and the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7), which later evolved into Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020, highlighted the benefits of coordinated national frameworks for accessing and optimising European funding. In this context, de Wit *et al*. (2015) describe Erasmus as both a gateway policy and an incentive, not only facilitating mobility but also demonstrating the need for national-level support structures. The programme also increasingly encouraged the strategic use of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE), directly incentivising the strategic use of the programme's instruments and funding at the institutional level.

FROM FRAGMENTATION TO STRATEGIC MATURITY

Initially, however, many national responses were fragmented or implicit, characterised by ad hoc initiatives, scattered funding or soft policy language. Crăciun (2018) describes this phase as one of "semantic inflation", wherein internationalisation was rhetorically embraced but not yet embedded in coherent, operational strategies. Over time, this gave way according to the same author to "active policymaking", as formalised strategies were crafted by national ministries and agencies, often integrating core components, such as inbound and outbound mobility, international research collaboration, joint degrees and national higher education branding.

This gradual evolution toward strategic maturity is further elaborated by Matei and Iwinska (2015), who offered a comparative lens on how different countries navigated this shift. They observed that many systems followed a recurring pattern: starting with European incentives (*eg* Erasmus), moving through national-level pilot initiatives and eventually consolidating these efforts into formalised strategies with clear objectives, institutional integration and governance mechanisms. However, this progression was neither linear nor uniform. Instead, it was shaped by national context, marked by different policy approaches, varying degrees of experimentation and selective adaptation across the EHEA.

To better conceptualise this diversity, Polak's (2017) model of internationalisation maturity, originally developed at the institutional level, offers a helpful framework for assessing national trajectories. The model identifies key dimensions of maturity, including strategic coherence, governance structures, sustainable funding and political commitment. These remain essential components for the effective development and implementation of national internationalisation strategies across the EHEA.

MAPPING NATIONAL-LEVEL DEVELOPMENTS IN INTERNATIONALISATION POLICY ACROSS THE EHEA

In light of this complex and evolving policy landscape, it has become increasingly important to gain a clearer picture of how national-level internationalisation strategies and policies for higher education are currently structured across the EHEA. While past studies (including those by ACA) have identified common trends and recurring elements, the diversity of national approaches—shaped by differing policy logics, development timelines and educational contexts and availability of resources—as well as the changing rhetoric around internationalisation in several European countries, combined with wider geopolitical challenges, highlight the need for an updated and structured overview of this landscape. The *National Policies for Internationalisation Project* addresses this gap, by offering a current snapshot of national strategies and policy frameworks, capturing both the diversity of approaches and the evolving policy landscape as of 2025.

The objectives of the project are threefold:

- To provide an up-to-date overview of national-level internationalisation strategies across the EHEA[1];
- To concisely map recurring priorities, gaps and emerging approaches to strategy-making across countries;
- To support policymakers and stakeholders by presenting how strategic directions for internationalisation are framed at the national level.

By mapping these strategies, the project aims to build a clearer understanding of how countries position internationalisation within their higher education policy agendas—both in response to European frameworks and national goals—and how this shapes their engagement within a dynamic international education environment.

METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE

To better understand how national governments across the EHEA approach the internationalisation of higher education, this project combined structured desk research, document analysis and targeted consultations. The findings are based on a review of publicly available national-level policy documents and related literature.

This cross-cutting analysis drew from three primary sources:

- National strategic and policy documents, identified through initial desk research, including databases such as Eurydice, and subsequently verified through direct outreach to national authorities, internationalisation agencies and international higher education experts with deep knowledge of specific national policy contexts (presented in overview form in Chapter 2, but also informing Chapters 1 and 3);
- Academic and policy literature, which informed the historical framing of Chapter 1;
- Semi-structured interviews with policymakers and national higher education experts, used to inform both the current state of play and the forward-looking insights presented in Chapter 3.

While each source played a central role in shaping specific chapters, together they informed the overall structure and analytical approach of the report, spanning from contextual framing (Chapter 1) to country-level mapping (Chapter 2), and future-oriented reflections (Chapter 3).

To guide the selection and analysis of material from the outset, it was essential first to establish a clear definition of what qualifies as a "national internationalisation strategy" or policy in the field of higher education. For this purpose, we adopted Crăciun's (2018) definition, which describes such strategies as "specific and explicit policy endeavours already adopted at the national level, which can be considered active policy-making aimed at advancing some aspect(s) of internationalisation."

This definition could be applied more broadly to encompass both stand-alone strategies and wider policy documents, such as those focused on education, talent development, innovation or economic growth that incorporate the internationalisation of higher education as an active component. All such documents were reviewed as part of this project to ensure a comprehensive mapping of national approaches. However, the analytical focus was placed on those strategies and policies explicitly dedicated to the internationalisation of education and higher education. We distinguished therefore between countries with dedicated internationalisation strategies or policies and those pursuing other forms of national-level policy engagement. The aim of this was not to assess, but simply to provide a structured and very concise overview of the current landscape across the EHEA, referencing all relevant policy documents that could be consulted for a comprehensive understanding.

By adopting this two-category framework, the project recognises both the formalised strategies and policies that demonstrate explicit national commitment to internationalisation, as well as the wide spectrum of other policy approaches that—although less comprehensive—reflect the realities of internationalisation policy across the EHEA. It is important to underline that this differentiation between

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[1] References to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the corresponding countries analysed in this report concern its active membership as of 2025.

countries with dedicated strategies and those pursuing other forms of policy engagement carries no normative weight. The existence of a formal national strategy does not, in itself, signify a more advanced or effective approach to internationalisation. Many countries achieve significant outcomes through other policy channels, institutional initiatives, or sector-driven collaboration. The purpose of this mapping is therefore descriptive, *ie* to portray the diversity of national frameworks rather than to compare or rank them.

Earlier research has also shown that national approaches to internationalisation differ in important ways, for example, whether they are comprehensive or fragmented, the degree of government involvement, the reliance on specific policy instruments such as legislation or funding and the extent to which they are institutionalised (Crăciun, 2015). These insights informed our understanding of the diversity of national approaches, but they were not used as strict criteria in defining our two categories as described below. Instead, they helped shape the design of the country factsheets and overview paragraphs presented in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2

National internationalisation strategies and approaches in the EHEA – A 2025 perspective

As described in the previous chapter, structured desk research and document analysis were undertaken to provide a cohesive picture of how national governments across the EHEA approach the internationalisation of higher education. This analysis took place between January and October 2025 and is based on publicly available national-level policy documents and related literature, as well as expertise provided by national experts.

The distinction was made between countries with dedicated internationalisation strategies or policies and those pursuing other forms of national-level policy engagement. The aim of this was not to rank or assess but simply provide a structured overview of the current landscape across the EHEA. Below, each country has been linked to one of two categories:

DEFINED STRATEGIES

This category comprises stand-alone national strategies/ policies, adopted and in force in 2025, that explicitly focus on the internationalisation of higher education, including cases where higher education is part of a wider internationalisation strategy for education. The strategies vary in scope and emphasis with some taking a broad approach to system-wide internationalisation, and others prioritising international talent attraction or other forms of student mobility. Together, they represent refined, active, and strategic policy-making at national level. Countries with such specific strategies are presented below through dedicated country factsheets.

OTHER NATIONAL APPROACHES TO INTERNATIONALISATION

This category covers all other forms of national-level policy engagement with internationalisation. Internationalisation may appear as part of broader education or higher education strategies or policies, feature in national development plans or be addressed in legislation or regulatory acts. In some cases, stated goals or interests are general or not explicitly current in 2025, with limited guidance for implementation, while in others the responsibility is largely left to individual institutions. These approaches reflect a diverse policy environment for internationalisation across the EHEA, illustrating varying degrees of direction, legitimacy, and support. Countries in this category are presented below through concise overview paragraphs, briefly highlighting the nature and extent of activities and pointing to relevant documents for further reading.

DEFINED STRATEGIES

This group consist of the following countries: Austria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Switzerland, Türkiye, United Kingdom.

Austria

Austria's *National Mobility and Internationalisation Strategy for Higher Education 2020–2030* serves as a comprehensive roadmap for integrating international and intercultural dimensions across the country's entire HE system. It covers public universities, universities of applied sciences, private universities and university colleges of teacher education and emphasises "internationalisation of the curriculum" as a core guiding principle. The strategy supports a wide variety of institutional pathways, allowing flexibility based on each institution's remit, ways of working and framework conditions. Its subtitle, "Many routes to internationalisation", reflects this openness to diverse approaches in achieving the strategy's overarching goals.

Name of strategy/document:
National Mobility and Internationalisation Strategy for Higher Education 2020–2030

Strategic priorities and actions:
The strategy presents an overarching vision for internationalisation in Austrian higher education by 2030, framed by five main goals, supported by 37 objectives for implementation:
1. Promote an all-encompassing culture of internationalisation at higher education institutions.
2. Promote mobility for all members of higher education institutions.
3. Develop and implement innovative digital forms of mobility.
4. Facilitate effective skills improvement and institutional learning.
5. Strengthen the global mindset and international position of Austria's higher education institutions.

A selection of interesting action points:
- Develop or refine institutional internationalisation strategies that involve all actors within the HEI.
- Integrate international and intercultural aspects into staff recruitment and development, acknowledging engagement with "internationalisation at home" as part of career development.
- Increase mobility for students from under-represented groups by providing targeted support.
- Improve the recognition of students' achievements abroad and ensure they count towards their overall performance.
- Simplify entry and residence procedures for non-EU students and staff and strengthen ties between international graduates and their former host institutions in Austria.

Target regions/countries:
The strategy references dynamics within the European Union and the European Higher Education Area. It also expresses an interest in addressing the challenges faced by non-EU students and academics and in promoting involvement in Africa-UniNet, which serves as an example of the global engagement of Austrian HE institutions.

Supporting instruments:
The implementation of Austria's *National Mobility and Internationalisation Strategy for Higher Education 2020–2030* is supported through a mix of national and European funding mechanisms. At the national level, the Federal Ministry of Women, Science and Research (BMFWF) provides targeted support through performance agreements with institutions and dedicated project funding aligned with internationalisation goals. The strategy also leverages major EU programmes such as Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe to promote mobility and academic cooperation.

To facilitate implementation and coordination, a national platform for higher education institutions was launched by the OeAD – Agency for Education and Internationalisation (from mid-2021) as a central hub for best practice exchange, monitoring, and stakeholder engagement.

From 2025 onwards, the "Internationalisation Award" further raises awareness of good practices linked to the strategy.

Other useful resources:
- *Strategy for Research, Technology and Innovation of the Austrian Federal Government 2030*

Czech Republic

Czech Republic's *Strategy for the internationalisation of higher education for the period 2021+* was developed as part of the national Strategic Plan for Higher Education and sets out the country's main priorities for advancing internationalisation in the sector. It is structured around six thematic pillars and is designed to guide both institutional and national-level initiatives through 2030.

The strategy is implemented through a combination of targeted national funding schemes and EU-level programmes and is operationalised via annual implementation plans issued by the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

Name of strategy/document:
Strategy for the internationalisation of higher education for the period 2021+

Strategic priorities and actions:
The strategy identifies six core priorities aimed at strengthening the internationalisation of Czech higher education, supported by 14 implementation objectives:
1. Develop students and staff's global competences.
2. Internationalise higher education study programmes.
3. Simplify the process for recognising education abroad.
4. Create an international environment at institutions and promotion abroad.
5. Strengthen the strategic management of internationalisation.
6. Internationalisation activities of the National Accreditation Bureau.

A selection of interesting action points:
- Expand international mobility opportunities through physical, virtual and blended formats, with special attention to inclusive access for students with special needs or from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Develop and implement joint, double and multiple degree programmes with foreign partners, and integrate mobility windows directly into curricula.
- Adopt automatic recognition of qualifications from EU countries and deploy digital tools such as Erasmus Without Paper and the Single Digital Gateway to simplify procedures.
- Enhance student services through institutional Welcome centres, scholarships for international students, integration activities and dedicated visa facilitation measures like "Student mode".
- Support institutional capacity-building by encouraging institutions to develop internationalisation strategies and providing national platforms like CZEDUCON[2] for coordination and knowledge exchange.

2   CZEDUCON was rebranded as CEEDUCON in 2025.

Target regions/countries:
The strategy does not prescribe a fixed list of target countries but encourages Czech higher education institutions to develop international partnerships based on their own strategic priorities. At the same time, it highlights the importance of strengthening cooperation with key regional and European partners, particularly in the context of qualification, recognition and academic collaboration. Priority areas include the Visegrád four (V4) countries (the Slovak Republic, Poland and Hungary), as well as Slovenia, Germany, Austria and Ukraine. Broader regional engagement is also encouraged through networks such as NORRIC (Nordic countries), the Benelux and the Baltic states.

Supporting instruments:
The strategy is supported through a combination of national and international funding instruments. Key among them is the State Budget of the Czech Republic, which underpins a wide range of internationalisation activities. The Programme to Support Strategic Management of Universities provides funding for the development of institutional strategies, including those focused on internationalisation. The Centralised Development Programme supports collaborative projects between institutions, such as curriculum internationalisation, joint degrees and digital tools for mobility and recognition. The MEYS Scholarship Programme funds outgoing student and staff mobility as well as scholarships for incoming international students. Additionally, scholarships for Czech language and cultural courses (eg summer school of Slavonic studies) promote the Czech Republic as a study destination. The strategy also leverages EU funding schemes such as Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe and promotes the use of digital platforms like Erasmus Without Paper and EMREX. The strategy is also guided by accompanying implementation plans (in Czech), which set out key priorities and implementation milestones

Other useful resources:
- *Concept for a unified presentation of the Czech Republic*
- *Export strategy of the Czech Republic, 2023–2033*
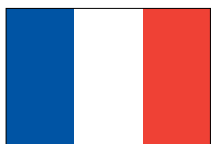
France

France's *Bienvenue en France/Choose France – France's Strategy to Attract International Students*, launched in November 2018 and operationalised in 2019, is a government-led initiative aimed at strengthening the country's global position as a destination for international students. Politically initiated at the highest level, the strategy was introduced as part of a broader effort to make France's higher education system more attractive, accessible and competitive internationally. The strategy identifies key systemic barriers (*eg* visa complexity, lack of coordinated welcome support *etc*) and outlines concrete measures to reach 500,000 international students by 2027.

Name of strategy/document:
Bienvenue en France/Choose France – France's Strategy to Attract International Students

Strategic priorities and actions:
To strengthen France's position as a leading destination for international students, the *Bienvenue en France* strategy sets out one main objective to "reach 500,000 international students by 2027" supported by six key actions designed to improve the student experience, enhance institutional outreach and increase global visibility:

1. Simplify visa procedures.
2. Double the number of French language and English-taught programmes.
3. Create a "Bienvenue en France" quality label for institutions.
4. Apply differentiated tuition fees and triple scholarship opportunities.
5. Expand France's academic presence abroad.
6. Launch a global communication campaign ("Choose France").

A selection of interesting action points:

- Creation of new French higher education campuses abroad. France is investing in transnational education through new campuses and joint institutions abroad to expand its academic footprint and reach students who may not come to France.
- Activation of the France Alumni global network. Campus France coordinates an international platform connecting over 250,000 former students of French HEIs, turning them into ambassadors for France's academic and cultural influence.
- Institutional and student services improvements. Introduction of "guichet unique" (one-stop support desks), student housing assistance and appointment of designated contact persons within host institutions for international students.
- Development of diplomas for refugees and displaced students. A new category of institutional diplomas is being developed to support refugee and displaced learners, with intensive French-language training and pathways into degree programmes, part of France's inclusive academic diplomacy.

- Post-graduation return visa for Master's graduates: from 2019, non-EU students who earned a Master's in France can seek employment, thanks to a special residence permit, promoting long-term academic and professional mobility.

Target regions/countries:
The strategy prioritises both traditional and emerging regions for international student recruitment. Particular focus is placed on francophone countries, due to established linguistic and cultural ties; emerging economies, such as countries in the Indo-Pacific region and Brazil which represent growing demand for higher education; and non-francophone Sub-Saharan Africa, identified as a region for strategic outreach. In addition, the strategy reinforces France's historical academic connections with regions like the Maghreb and West Africa, aiming to consolidate and expand long-standing student mobility flows.

Supporting instruments:
The implementation of the *Bienvenue en France* strategy is supported through a mix of public investment, institutional incentives and service improvements. A key €10 million investment by the Ministry of Higher Education was allocated to enhance reception and support services for international students. Two additional funding mechanisms provide targeted support: a seed fund (2019) managed by the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs for joint academic projects with foreign institutions and a €20 million annual support fund (since 2020) managed by the French Development Agency for developing international campuses and shared infrastructure. The strategy additionally leverages EU programmes (*eg* Erasmus+). Other measures include increased scholarships (*eg* Eiffel Excellence) and simplified visa and residence procedures.

Other useful resources:
- Roadmap for France's soft power (in French)

Germany

Germany's internationalisation strategy (2024–2034) is jointly issued by the Federal and State (Länder) Governments, reflecting a coordinated national commitment. The first national strategy was introduced by the Federal Government in 2008, followed by a revised version in 2017—making two federal-level strategies to date. The new 2024 strategy was jointly developed by the Federal and Länder Ministries, who also issued a previous joint strategy in 2013. Other key documents include the *DAAD Strategy 2030,* which guides the work of the German Academic Exchange Service, developed based on a participatory approach with institutions, student organisations, ministries and other stakeholders. The German context also includes complementary regional strategies (see below).

Name of strategy/document:
Internationalisation of the Higher Education Institutions in Germany – Strategy of the Federal and Länder Ministers of Science (2024–2034)

Strategic priorities and actions:
The Federal and Länder governments pursue three overarching goals: (1) enhance Germany's attractiveness as a destination for higher education and research, with continuing reducing obstacles to recruitment, integration and retention, while fostering sustainable brain circulation and brain gain; (2) expand internationalisation opportunities for students, researchers and HE staff through physical and virtual mobility, "internationalisation at home", with a focus on inclusion by leveraging digital formats and (3) deepen and expand European and international collaboration in research and teaching between HEIs from smaller projects to larger initiatives, such as strategic alliances. The strategy emphasises the need, in a challenging geopolitical climate, to enhance cooperation with like-minded partners who share values of academic and scientific freedom, and to diversify international cooperation geographically while taking greater account of national interests. Four central action fields are set, described in more detail in the strategy:

1. HEIs as drivers of international mobility. Strengthen individual experiences of internationalisation and take into account societal contexts and impacts.
2. Legal and structural framework: Further improve the conditions for successful internationalisation.
3. International cooperation in a changing global context: Shape cooperation in a goal-oriented and sustainable way.
4. Digital transformation: Make use of the opportunities for academic exchange offered by digitalisation.

The four central action fields are supported by 23 suggested options for action, listed in Annex 1, supported by 87 measures to help achieve the strategy's objectives.

A selection of interesting action points:
- Improve international students' academic success rates by examining the possibility of creating digital Studienkolleg programmes for the preparation of prospective students, including assessment tests for admission where required under individual Länder law, and home country online preparation for studying in Germany.
- Advance the digitalisation and internationalisation in HE development by examining the opportunities and challenges of artificial intelligence in international cooperation, particularly in student recruitment, orientation, selection and registration processes, and language learning.
- Harmonise the recognition of foreign HE qualifications and credits for beginning or continuing studies in Germany, by suggesting to explore the establishment of centralised, digitally enabled one-stop shops at the institutional level.

Encourage international students to stay in Germany by fostering closer cooperation between HEIs and employers through practical training during studies, mentoring, networking, transition support structures, onboarding management and development of joint programmes such as German courses with specialist language.

Germany

Target regions/countries:

The importance of strengthening cooperation with partners who share values of academic and scientific freedom in today's challenging geopolitical climate is highlighted. It also mentions the need to broaden the geographical diversity of international cooperation between HEIs, while placing greater emphasis on national interests.

Supporting instruments:

Further supporting instruments include the continuation of European, regional and national mobility programmes, such as those offered by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the DAAD and the individual Länder programmes. Additional programmes, like DAAD's Campus Initiative International Experts, support the strategy with its aims to attract international talent to HE and the labour market through recruitment support, preparation, academic success and career transition. The UAS-International programme strengthens international structures in Universities of Applied Sciences by, for example, supporting mobility implementation and embedding international partnerships in institutional structures.

Other useful resources:

- *Future Research and Innovation strategy[3] (in German)*
- *Strategy on China of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany*
- *Academic cooperation with China: a realistic approach*
- *India as a Strategic Partner*

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3 *Zukunftsstrategie Forschung und Innovation.* English translated title provided by the authors.

Ireland

Global Citizens 2030 Ireland's International Talent and Innovation Strategy is Ireland's international further and higher education, skills, research, innovation and science strategy. It builds upon Ireland's many achievements over the past decades as a leading location for high quality education and excellent research in a small, advanced economy. Rooted in a joined-up approach across government, the strategy aims to place Ireland at the global forefront in attracting, retaining and developing talent, and in fostering international partnerships in research, innovation and higher education.

Name of strategy/document:
Global Citizens 2030 Ireland's International Talent and Innovation Strategy

Strategic priorities and actions:
The strategy is structured around six strategic pillars that collectively aim to position Ireland as a leading destination for international talent, research and innovation:
1. Talent and innovation at the heart of Ireland's global footprint.
2. A first-choice destination for international learners, researchers and innovators.
3. Global citizens in multi-national, multi-cultural and diverse workplaces.
4. Enhanced influence in European education and research.
5. A new level of North–South and East–West collaboration.
6. Thought leadership in international education, research, innovation and science policy.

A selection of interesting action points:
- Appoint six Talent & Innovation Attachés in key strategic priority locations around the globe by 2030. The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) began this process in 2025, with the first two attachés taking up their roles in San Francisco and Boston.
- Introduce the International Education Mark (IEM). A quality assurance label launched in 2024 to boost Ireland's appeal as a trusted destination for international students.
- Implement "Innovate for Ireland". A major PhD initiative co-funded by government and industry to attract global research talent.
- Create new North–South and East–West mobility schemes. Designed to complement Erasmus+ and Turing, enhancing student and staff exchange across and beyond the island.
- Develop a research programme on talent and innovation policy. Led by DFHERIS, this will focus on addressing challenges relevant to small, advanced economies.

Target regions/countries:
The strategy does not specify a fixed list of target countries or regions. However, within the framework of the Team Ireland for Talent and Innovation brand, the strategy outlines plans to enhance Ireland's global presence by expanding cooperation and visibility in priority global locations. These include the West and East coasts of the United States, major EU capitals, London, Asia and the Middle East. These areas are identified in the context of strengthening Ireland's international talent footprint and may involve the expansion of DFHERIS's attaché network and international representation.

Supporting instruments:
The strategy is supported by substantial national funding through initiatives such as the multi-million euro Innovate for Ireland PhD scheme, the €1 billion Shared Island Fund (supporting cross-border education, mobility and infrastructure) and dedicated lines like the North–South Research Programme. Furthermore, EU programmes—including Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe—are recognised as key to advancing international mobility, research cooperation and talent development.

A dedicated *Work Programme (2023–2027)*, included in Appendix 3 of the strategy, outlines clear deliverables, timelines and responsible actors for each strategic action.

Other useful resources:
- *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (2011)*

Italy

Italy has its own *Strategy for the internationalisation of the Italian higher education* system for 2024–2026, which is a continuation of the *Strategy for the internationalisation of the Italian higher education system 2017–2020*[4]. The document focuses on two core points: financing transnational education initiatives with a total funding of 50 million EUR and of 80 million EUR respectively, to encourage the internationalisation of HEIs within both the University and the Arts and Music sectors. The document aligns with EU-level initiatives, such as the *European Strategy for Universities* (2022), *Council Recommendation on building bridges for effective European higher education cooperation* (2022) and the *Skills and Talent Mobility Package* (2023).

Name of strategy/document:

Strategy for the internationalisation of the Italian higher education system 2024-2026[5]

Strategic priorities and actions:

In the introduction of this strategy two core points are mentioned: financing transnational education initiatives with a total funding of 50 million EUR and encouraging the internationalisation of HEIs within the arts, music, and dance (80 million EUR available for specific projects).
There are 4 macro objectives mentioned:
1. Strengthen the culture of internationalisation and complete the spectrum of skills.
2. Promote mobility and increase attractiveness.
3. Promote and support bilateral and multilateral international cooperation.
4. Strengthen European cooperation as a tool for internationalisation.

A selection of interesting action points:
- Expand the number of courses in the vehicular language and facilitate the activation by institutions of study paths aimed at issuing double degrees and, where possible, joint degrees.
- Create a national database of scholarships provided by the various actors of the Italian higher education system, in order to provide international students with a complete picture of the possibilities of scholarships and facilities that the Italian system makes available.
- Promote the creation of institutional networks of alumni and facilitate the expansion of existing ones. For example, in the case of the Alumni Farnesina network, created by the MAECI to bring together its former scholarship holders, it will be possible to collaborate in order to create a stable bond over time with the alumni, understood as promoters of the Italian system in the world.
- Promote systems for recognising HEIs training credits, such as block chain, in order to facilitate truly internationalised study paths.
- Support the European Universities, the involvement of Italian institutions in European and international networks with particular attention to the expansion to institutions from non-EU countries considered strategic.
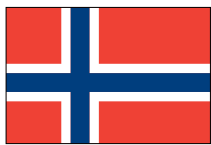
Target regions/countries:

European Union, North America and the G7 countries; countries of the Mediterranean, the Middle East and the Balkan Peninsula; countries in the African continent, with a special focus through the *Piano Mattei*; countries with advanced or growing economies in Asia, Latin America and Oceania. In addition to the areas and countries mentioned above, there are all the countries that, regardless of their location, show potential interest in introducing the teaching of the Italian language in the curriculum with the implementation of teacher training projects for the teaching of the Italian language in local schools. Countries with a large presence of Italian citizens (including second or third generation) play a central role.

Supporting instruments:

The strategy implementation is supported by resources from the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), including €50 million for transnational education (TNE) projects and €80 million for the internationalisation of artistic, musical and dance institutions (AFAM). Additional tools include a planned national database of scholarships, providing international students with a consolidated overview of funding opportunities, and the Universaly platform, which promotes Italian higher education globally and serves as the main entry point for international applicants. The successful implementation of national objectives is further supported by the Alumni Farnesina network, developed by Uni-Italia, the national reference body for the promotion of study in Italy abroad, on behalf of MAECI and by Uni-Italia centres abroad, serving as reference points for guidance and promotion of study opportunities in Italy.

Norway

Norway's internationalisation efforts are guided by targeted strategies. Central among these are the first-ever *Strategy for Norway's participation in Erasmus+ and the European Education Area*, and the *Strategy for Norway's participation in Horizon Europe and the European Research Area*. Beyond European partnerships, the *Panorama Strategy* (2021–2027), developed by the Ministry of Education and Research, builds on its predecessor (2015–2020) and aims at increased quality in higher education, research and innovation through bilateral cooperation with countries outside the EU and EEA. The Erasmus+ and Panorama strategies have distinct yet complementary roles: the former outlines priorities for European cooperation via Erasmus+, while the latter focuses on partnerships with priority non-EU countries.

Name of strategy/document:
Panorama. Strategy for cooperation on research and higher education with Brazil, Canada, India, Japan, China, Russia, South Africa, South Korea and the USA (2021–2027)

Strategic priorities and actions:
A central goal is to strengthen the connection between education, research and innovation, including business sector cooperation in partner countries, based on five main priorities outlined in more detail in the strategy:
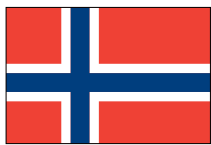
1. Constructive interaction amongst higher education, research and innovation cooperation. Encouraging early student involvement in international research cooperation and linking researchers' cooperation to mobility, guest lectures, joint supervision, cooperation on curriculum, study programmes *etc*.
2. Good links to working life and the business sector. Cooperation with academic communities abroad is a fundamental element in strengthening expertise, competitiveness and market access for research-intensive/performing businesses. International collaboration in education, research and innovation may create opportunities for companies, while business cooperation can provide opportunities for educational/research environments.
3. Good student mobility. Increasing mobility, supported by the *White Paper's* goal of making international mobility an integrated part of study programmes, aiming for 50% of graduates to study or train abroad.
4. Good interaction between bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Aligning international arenas for HE and research ensures complementary efforts, including Norway's participation in multilateral fora like UNESCO and OECD. Emphasis is placed on synergies (Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe).
5. Research-based knowledge to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (2030 Agenda). Incorporating the SDGs into the strategy opens important topics aligned with Norwegian research interests, including *eg* marine research and migration. Applied and basic research is emphasised, including business sector involvement.

A selection of interesting action points:
Cooperation is promoted by facilitating: 1) a long-term strengthening of academic interactions between Norwegian and strategy country institutions, 2) more systematic contact and coordination across the various ministries' areas of responsibility in Norway and 3) increased knowledge of and more accessible information about matters that could influence the possibilities of achieving good interaction between HE, research and business communities.

Actions include, but are not limited to:
- Financial instruments for institutional cooperation and mobility. The UTFORSK programme supports educational activities and works towards increasing quality and relevance of study programmes. Close interaction between research, HE and links to working life, business communities and student mobility are central. The INTPART programme promotes long-term institutional cooperation with Panorama countries. It aims to advance institutional cooperation in HE and research, fostering networking and knowledge exchange.
- Representation of Innovation Norway in most Panorama countries; an instrument for innovation and development of enterprises and industry, offering support to Norwegian research institutions/companies for networks and partnerships.
- Forum for key actors at Government and agency level to facilitate systemic contact between Norwegian parties for follow-up of the strategy, through mutual exchange of information and experiences, advice on specific matters and discussions on potential new initiatives or priorities, aligned with the strategy's objectives.
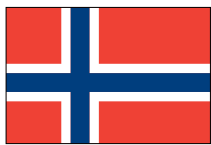
Norway

Target regions/countries:

The focus is on nine countries outside of the EU/EEA of strategic importance to the knowledge sector: Brazil, India, Japan, China, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Canada, South Korea and the US. While South Korea, Canada and the US were added in the second Panorama strategy, collaboration with the two latter has been ongoing for many years, supported by a dedicated strategy (2008–2012 and 2012–2016). Moreover, bilateral programmes supporting higher education cooperation with the Russian Federation were implemented from the 1990s, but notably, cooperation with the Russian Federation has not received funding since 2022 under any mechanism. In addition, the strategy emphasises that as Erasmus+ also facilitates mobility and cooperation with countries outside Europe, it is important that these instruments are used to strengthen cooperation with Norway's strategic partners outside the EU.

Supporting instruments:

Key supporting instruments include *A world of opportunities – international student mobility in higher education. Meld. St. 7 (2020–2021) Report to the Storting (white paper)*, fora for key actors at Government/agency level, and representation at embassies in the target countries. Financial instruments include INCP2 (bilateral programme for educational cooperation between Norwegian and Indian institutions), the UTFORSK and INTPART programmes. Another supporting initiative is the Norwegian Panorama Virtual Exchange/COIL Partnerships. Moreover, the Research Council of Norway has schemes involving some of the Panorama countries, such as Money Follows Cooperation. Lånekassen (the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund) offers financial support for students, including language course funding. Additionally, synergies with Erasmus+, Horizon Europe as well as aligning international arenas for higher education and research cooperation to ensure complementary efforts are emphasised.

Other useful resources:

- *Long-term plan for research and higher education 2023–2032. Meld. St. 5 (2022–2023) Report to the Storting (white paper)*
- *Strategy for Norwegian engagement with African Countries*
- *Action plan for internationalisation 2021–2027, The Research Council of Norway*

Norway

Name of strategy/document:
Strategy for Norway's participation in Erasmus+ and the European Education Area (2021–2027)

Strategic priorities and actions:
Four overarching objectives are defined:
1. Help to solve major societal challenges.
2. Strengthen collaboration between education, training, the labour market and society.
3. Expand access to international learning environment.
4. Contribute to the development of policy and framework conditions.
5. The strategy's overarching objectives are described in terms of various focus areas, supported by 30 targeted actions: five actions aligned with the first objective, four with the second, 11 with the third and 10 with the fourth. Additionally, 23 quantitative targets are set. These span 1) Mobility, 2) Partnership for cooperation, 3) Partnerships for excellence and 4) Societal challenges. For example, under Mobility, 30,000 students are expected to undertake study or training abroad, including 4,500 internship placements. Under the centralised actions the goal is to establish at least 15 Erasmus Mundus collaborations and to have a minimum of seven Norwegian HEIs participating in a European Universities alliance.

A selection of interesting action points:
- Bufdir (Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs) and HK-dir (the Directorate for Higher Education and Skills) should develop a national strategy for inclusion and diversity to increase participation among underrepresented groups in Erasmus+ (objective one).
- HK-dir shall establish arenas for cooperation such as conferences and create meeting places for municipalities, county authorities, employers and the education sector to share experience and best practice and establish structures for increased mobility (objective three).
- HK-dir shall develop plans to increase blended mobility and virtual cooperation in order to facilitate internationalisation at the institutions (objective three).

Target regions/countries:
Countries participating in Erasmus+, EU Member States and associated countries.

Supporting instruments:
Key supportive instruments include *A world of opportunities – international student mobility in higher education. Meld. St. 7 (2020–2021) Report to the Storting (white paper)*. In addition, some targeted actions linked to the strategy's four overarching objectives, such as developing a national strategy for inclusion and diversity, serve as implementation tools to increase participation among underrepresented groups.

Romania

In Romania, the internationalisation of higher education has been shaped by two key policy developments. *The Government Decision 1524/2024*, which introduces the country's first dedicated strategic framework for the internationalisation of the higher education system, was adopted in 2024 with certain objectives extending through 2030. This framework was established as secondary legislation to the *Higher Education Law 199/2023*[6] (in Romanian), adopted in 2023, which includes a dedicated chapter on internationalisation.

Name of strategy/document:

Government Decision 1524/2024 on a strategic framework for the internationalisation of the higher education system[7] (in Romanian).

Strategic priorities and actions:

The document comprises six chapters and 17 articles, supported by a set of objectives, tasks and statements. These outline areas of responsibility assigned to both HEIs and the Ministry of Education. The six chapters cover:

1. General provisions.
2. Priorities and objectives.
3. The role of central institutions with responsibilities in the field of internationalisation of higher education.
4. The role of HEIs, planning and implementation.
5. Funding and resources.
6. Monitoring and updating the strategic framework.

The 17 articles address a range of areas, some accompanied by objectives. One of these focuses on academic mobility, with the objective of achieving the targets set at European Union level by 2030, specifically ensuring that at least 23% of graduates complete at least one mobility period. The framework also promotes increased inclusion, aiming to ensure that by 2027, at least 20% of mobility participants are from disadvantaged backgrounds. Other objectives relate to attracting international students and the establishment of bachelor's programmes taught entirely in international languages, with the of increasing the number of international students by at least 35% by 2030.

A selection of interesting action points:

- The establishment of a Council composed of representatives from key stakeholder organisations to coordinate the internationalisation of higher education and facilitate the exchange of information on relevant policies.
- Developing micro-credentials with physical and online teaching, including in foreign languages and using digital resources to increase flexibility in the educational offer.
- Developing social programmes aimed at consolidating alumni groups from individual HEIs or collectively across Romanian HEIs in key global regions or cities, as well as developing international alumni ambassador programmes.

Target regions/countries:

Establishing academic partnerships, mobility and research activities with HEIs worldwide is highlighted. Additionally, the framework emphasises that the internationalisation of higher education must align with Romania's national priorities, international processes and the treaties to which the country is a signatory, including:

- Romania's position as a member of the European Union, the European Education Area and the European Higher Education Area.
- The fact that Romania is an important member state of the Francophone movement.
- The strategic partnership between Romania and the United States of America.
- The historical/traditional ties that Romania has with countries outside the EU.

Supporting instruments:

Supporting instruments include, for example, dedicated national funding aimed at supporting HEIs in the process of internationalising the higher education system. These measures include scholarships to support international mobility and internships for Romanian students, scholarships for international students and other economic mechanisms designed to support HEIs in implementation. European funds are also highlighted, such as Erasmus+. In addition, the Ministry of Education provides financial support to HEIs participating in projects linked to the European Universities alliances, as well as for the transfer of good practices. This transfer of knowledge and skills will also be facilitated by the Ministry between HEIs that are part of networks and those not yet involved in such consortia.

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6   *LEGEA învățământului superior Anul 191 (XXXV) —* Nr. 614. English translated title provided by the authors.

7   *CADRU STRATEGIC din 27 noiembrie 2024privind internaționalizarea sistemului de învățământ superior.* English translated title provided by the authors.
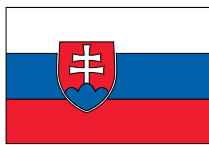
Slovak Republic

The *Higher Education Internationalization Strategy 2030* is the first Slovak national strategy focused exclusively on internationalisation in higher education. Initiated by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic in the context of broader national reforms and aligned with European policy frameworks, it sets out a structured vision for building a more open and globally connected higher education system. The strategy is outcome-oriented, featuring concrete key performance indicators to guide implementation and track progress through 2030.

Name of strategy/document:
Higher Education Internationalization Strategy 2030

Strategic priorities and actions:
The Slovak higher education strategy presents an ambitious and forward-looking vision for internationalisation by 2030, aimed at transforming the country's higher education system into a globally competitive, inclusive and innovation-driven environment. It outlines three core objectives, supported by 16 implementation measures. The objectives are:

1. Improving the quality of higher education through internationalisation. Focuses on (i) the development of quality study programs provided in foreign languages, (ii) the international dimension of study programs enabling international experience at home, (iii) a quality working environment for academic and research staff and (iv) opening of job positions for academic and research staff working abroad.
2. Increasing the availability of international experiences during studies. Focuses on (i) making information about study opportunities at Slovak HEIs widely available to foreign students, (ii) the active promotion of study opportunities at Slovak institutions among potential applicants , (iii) the modernisation of the admission procedure and active recruitment of potential foreign students, (iv) the integration of students from abroad in the academic environment and student social life, (v) providing support for existing scholarship programs to open up to the international mobility programs for students, academic and research staff and artists and (vi) promoting the automatic recognition of learning outcomes achieved during mobility period.
3. Modernising higher education in the context of internationalisation. Focuses on (i) using the possibilities of evaluating the quality of internationalisation processes, (ii) providing support for networking at the higher education level and modernisation of administration processes and (iii) enabling the use of digitisation and information and communication technologies in the internationalisation of teaching.

A selection of interesting action points:
- Expansion of foreign language programmes. Institutions are actively developing study programmes delivered in foreign languages and in partnership with international institutions. This directly supports the country's goal of becoming more competitive within the European Higher Education Area.
- Transparent and accessible international student recruitment. The government is streamlining admissions through simplified, continuous-review processes, while also improving online visibility through platforms like Study in Slovakia and outreach via Slovak embassies.
- Targeted scholarships and integration support. The Slovak Republic is increasing scholarship availability for full-degree foreign students and aligning funding with actual living costs. Additional support includes Slovak language courses and English-language student services to ease integration.
- Legislative reforms to attract global talents. Efforts are underway to adjust visa, residence and work regulations to be more welcoming to foreign students and academics. Reforms also include introducing public health insurance options for international students and revising tuition policies to boost competitiveness.

Target regions/countries:
The strategy underscores the importance of maintaining a balanced geographical approach to prevent the formation of large monocultural student groups, foster cultural exchange and promote a more inclusive and globally representative academic environment.

Supporting instruments:
Key supporting instruments include the National Scholarship Program, Erasmus+ and other mobility schemes (*eg* CEEPUS), the Recovery and Resilience Plan and HRS4R for researcher recruitment. Digital platforms like Study in Slovakia and embassy outreach also support visibility and international engagement. The strategy also foresees the use of monitoring and evaluation tools with performance indicators to guide and assess progress.

Slovenia

Slovenia's strategy for internationalisation in higher education, which appeared as an action point in the Government of Slovenia's 2022 *Resolution on the National Higher Education Program until 2030* (ReNPVŠ30), was adopted in 2023. The resolution focuses on improving the quality of higher education and increasing its responsiveness to the needs of the Slovenian economy and broader society. The internationalisation strategy itself sets out a specific vision and goals for the country's higher education and science sectors, both in terms of effective integration of international aspects as well as related administrative efficiencies.

Name of strategy/document:

Strategy for the internationalisation of higher education and science in the Republic of Slovenia until 2030[8] (in Slovenian)

Strategic priorities and actions:

The strategy identifies three priority areas that are integral to the promotion of internationalisation in Slovenian higher education:

1. Active involvement of Slovenian higher education in the European Union and the European Higher Education Area.
2. Internationalisation at home.
3. International student mobility.

A selection of interesting action points:

- Cooperation in the EU. For example, raise and strengthen bilateral cooperation with key European partners (including neighbouring countries like Austria, Italy, Croatia and Hungary, the Western Balkan countries, and Germany and France).
- Cooperation with global partners. For example, strengthen existing bilateral cooperation with global partners (such as Japan, the USA, Brazil, Türkiye, Israel, India); establish connections with African countries and leverage and strengthen opportunities and possibilities for cooperation with the countries of the Southern Mediterranean.
- Remove administrative barriers to strengthen Slovenia's attractiveness as a destination for higher education academic, research and administrative staff, professional associates and students.
- Establish a Knowledge Platform to foster dialogue between policymakers and stakeholders in the fields of higher education, research and innovation and to strengthen synergies between these areas.

Target regions/countries:

Principally the Western Balkans (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Serbia and North Macedonia), alongside Southeastern and Central Europe. Some emphasis is also placed on Africa, the Southern Mediterranean, various key EU countries (including Austria, Italy, Croatia, Hungary, Germany and France) and several large-economy non-EU countries, including Japan, the US, Brazil, Türkiye, Israel, India and China.

Supporting instruments:

The strategy highlights the establishment of a Knowledge Platform to facilitate dialogue between policymakers, HEIs and stakeholders, while implementation builds on existing instruments such as Erasmus+ and national scholarship programmes, European Universities alliances, joint study programmes/degrees and Study in Slovenia for attracting international students.

Other useful resources:

- *Resolution on the National Higher Education Program until 2030 (ReNPVŠ30)*[9] (in Slovenian)

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8   *Strategija internacionalizacije visokega šolstva in znanosti v Republiki Sloveniji do 2030.* English translated title provided by the authors.

9   *Resolucija o nacionalnem programu visokega šolstva do 2030.* English translated title provided by the authors.

Switzerland

Since 2018, Switzerland has had a national internationalisation strategy titled *Switzerland's International Strategy on Education, Research and Innovation (ERI) – Strategy of the Federal Council*. This document—an update from the original 2010 version—has an open time-frame and mainly provides guidelines for Swiss ERI actors to freely engage in international activities and strengthen Switzerland's international attractiveness as a globally leading country in ERI. The country also has a specific European policy (on the participation in EU programmes), a *Foreign Policy Strategy 2024–2027* and the *Federal education, research and innovation policy 2025–2028*, a broad document including separate sections on HE and internationalisation.

Name of strategy/document:

Switzerland´s International Strategy on Education, Research and Innovation – Strategy of the Federal Council

Strategic priorities and actions:

This strategy consists of two guidelines: one focusing on the continuous creation of optimal framework conditions for Swiss ERI actors to freely engage in international activities; the other on strengthening Switzerland's international attractiveness as one of the world's leading countries in education, research and innovation. These guidelines each have two objectives, which are further explored in specific actions. The four objectives are:

1. Infrastructures, programmes and services abroad are open to Swiss actors and help them to safeguard and improve the quality of their own services.
2. Switzerland makes use of the available opportunities for the cross-border promotion of young professionals and scientists. It promotes transnational research and learning mobility as well as the international recognition of Swiss educational qualifications and extracurricular practical experiences.
3. Switzerland is and will remain a high-quality focused, globally renowned and competitive location for education, research and innovation. The Swiss ERI system knows how to assess the relevance of nascent global trends and how to proactively use them.
4. Switzerland is globally perceived as an attractive location for high-quality research institutions and innovation-based companies.

A selection of interesting action points:

- Switzerland stays actively involved in shaping and developing the Bologna Process, as one of the initial signatory states.
- The rules on recognition must continue to evolve and ensure a certain degree of parallelism to the legal situation in the EU. Agreements on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications should be extended to countries with similar educational systems.
- Promoting young scientists is one of Switzerland's ERI policy's priorities. Selected for excellence, swiss talents should have opportunities to measure themselves against the best in their field worldwide, take part in competitions and spend time abroad at internationally renowned centres of excellence. To this end, the Confederation provides subsidiary support to funding organisations, institutions and networks.
- The swissnex network will help strengthen Switzerland's profile as a world-leading hotspot for innovation and knowledge. The current swissnex locations and their outposts are established in some of the world's most innovative hubs outside Europe. Together with the science counsellors based in Swiss Embassies, they network and advise the Swiss ERI actors, thereby also strengthening Switzerland's profile as a world-leading hotspot for innovation and knowledge

Target regions/countries:

The strategy document has an annex outlining groups of bilateral agreements; these include the EU and alpine countries, OECD countries, BRICS countries and others. North and South America, Africa and Asia are also mentioned linked to specific funding opportunities. Deepening the HE relationship between Asia and Europe is also specifically mentioned.

Supporting instruments:

The strategy is supported by both national and international funding instruments. Federal funding plays an important role and Swiss ERI actors are encouraged to make use of available infrastructures, funding instruments and services. The strategy leverages EU funding schemes such as Horizon Europe and Erasmus+. Other instruments include the Swiss National Science Foundation's (SNSF) project funding and internationalisation support offered by Innosuisse. Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships are awarded to foreign nationals and are open to all states with which Switzerland maintains diplomatic relationships, with the offer for industrialised countries being determined on a reciprocal basis. The scholarships are primarily designed for young postgraduate researchers with the aim of establishing long-term scientific cooperation.

Türkiye

Türkiye's strategy document (2024–2028) was produced by the Turkish Council of Higher Education (CoHE) and launched in early 2025. In parallel, the Turkish Higher Education Quality Council has prioritised internationalisation in its 2024–2028 strategic plan, while the overarching 2024–2028 development plan produced by the office of the President of Türkiye also encourages internationalisation and global engagement by research-intensive institutions.

Name of strategy/document:

Internationalisation in higher education strategy document (2024-2028)[10] (in Turkish)

Strategic priorities and actions:

The strategy articulates two overarching goals:

1. To enhance the internationalisation level of Turkish higher education and make Türkiye a hub for qualified international students and academics. This goal is supported by 10 specific objectives.
2. To develop institutional capacity for internationalisation. This goal is supported by four specific objectives.

The objectives are also accompanied by performance indicators for the academic years 2024–2028.

A selection of interesting action points:

- Increase the numbers of international students and academics. By 2028, Türkiye aspires to enrol 500,000 international students and raise the share of international academics from 1.57% to 5%.
- Boost engagement and visibility through expanded participation in Erasmus+ and other exchange programmes, international academic cooperation activities and international agreements with governments and institutions.
- Create the "Turkic World Higher Education Area" and encourage Turkish HE institutions to open branches abroad, *eg* in Central Asia, the Balkans, the Middle East and Africa.
- Implement Türkiye's International Student Admission Exam (TR-YÖS). To attract more qualified and numerous international students, the Türkiye International Student Admission Exam (TR-YÖS) is conducted by the Student Selection and Placement Centre (ÖSYM) in six languages (Turkish, German, Arabic, French, English and Russian) at 87 centres in 60 countries. With this initiative, state institutions will no longer organise their own exams for international student admissions. Plans are in place to increase the number of exam centres in the coming period.

- Appoint higher education attachés in Turkish embassies to promote Turkish higher education and support Turkish students abroad.

Target regions/countries:

Principally Central Asia (notably the Turkic nations), the Balkans, the Middle East and Africa, as well as the EU. In addition to the mentioned regions, particular emphasis is placed on other countries through the establishment of HEIs in these areas. First, the Türkiye–Azerbaijan collaboration is highlighted through the creation of the Türkiye –Azerbaijan University. Additionally, the strategy outlines the establishment of the International University of Turkic States in Uzbekistan.

Supporting instruments:

The strategy is supported by various national and international instruments. National initiatives include various examples of scholarships (such as the CoHE Scholarships, Türkiye scholarships (YTB), Türkiye International Exchange Scholarship Programme (TIES) which supports short-term mobility and the CoHE International Fellowship Programme to attract PhD students), but also other nationally funded instruments. Examples are the Study in Türkiye Portal for international student recruitment, the TR-YÖS Exam and the YÖKSİS & TÖMERSİS systems which help with student tracking and Turkish language education. Furthermore, EU programmes including Erasmus+ are recognised as an important supporting instrument to advance international mobility and cooperation. The strategy also includes reference to a monitoring and evaluation framework, with performance indicators and reviews consisting of quarterly, semi-annual and annual reports.

Other useful resources:

- *2024–2028 THEQC Strategic Plan*
- *Twelfth Development Plan (2024-2028)*

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10 *Yükseköğretimde Uluslararasılaşma Strateji Belgesi (2024-2028)*. English translated title provided by the authors.

United Kingdom

The UK published their *International Education Strategy*, which set goals leading to 2030, in 2019. As education is a devolved policy area, the strategy primarily represents the policy of the UK government, though the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were engaged in its development. The 2019 strategy is now six years old and no longer fully reflects the current political and policy landscape in the UK. Some targets have already been met and immigration measures have since evolved. The strategy has been updated regularly since 2019, and the government is working on publishing a new strategy soon.

Next to this overarching UK strategy, there is a separate *Scottish International Education Strategy* which is included as a separate document in the overview below.

Name of strategy/document:
International Education Strategy: global potential, global growth

Strategic priorities and actions:
The main objective is to drive ambition across the UK education sector, aiming to increase education exports to £35 billion by 2030. As part of this, the UK set a goal to grow the number of international higher education students studying in the UK to 600,000 by 2030 (goal already met at the time of writing this report).
There are five main targets linked to this:
1. Appoint an International Education Champion to spearhead overseas activity, open international opportunities, develop strong international partnerships in new and established markets and help tackle challenges and barriers.
2. Ensure Education is GREAT promotes the breadth and diversity of the UK education offer more fully to international audiences, from early years through to higher education.
3. Continue to provide a welcoming environment for international students and develop an increasingly competitive offer.
4. Establish a whole-of-government approach by implementing a framework for ministerial engagement with the sector and formalised structures for co-ordination between government departments both domestically and overseas.
5. Provide a clearer picture of exports activity by improving the accuracy and coverage of annually published education exports data, developing an approach with a strengthened methodology and a better range of sources.

These five targets are supported by a total of 23 action points.

A selection of interesting action points:
- The UK Government appointed an International Education Champion in 2019. The Champion is tasked with increasing international opportunities for the UK sector, connecting the education sector to overseas opportunities and helping to overcome any challenges and barriers to growth.
- The UK Government will work with Universities UK International (UUKi) and the sector to identify and share good practice in how institutions effectively support international students into employment and further study, both in the UK and when they return to their home country.
- The Department for Education and Department for International Trade will work with the HE sector and the British Council to assess more accurately the overall value of TNE to the UK economy.
- The Department for International Trade will encourage the sector to grow TNE by engaging in dialogue with countries with recognised export potential.

Target regions/countries:
Four high-value campaign regions are identified in the document: China and Hong Kong, the Middle East and North Africa, Latin America and the ASEAN group of nations. Other potential growth regions are Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Central Asia and India. It is also considered important to engage with continental Europe and to strengthen relationships with the US, Australia and Canada.

Supporting instruments:
Important supporting instruments for this strategy include the appointment of Professor Sir Steve Smith as the International Education Champion and the Education is GREAT campaign, which is a global marketing initiative to showcase the diversity and quality of UK education. The Turing Scheme was initiated to replace Erasmus+ for outbound mobility and provides funding for UK students to study/work abroad. Regarding monitoring and evaluation, annual progress updates are provided on the strategy, with the most recent one available covering 2023.

Other useful resources:
- *The UK's modern industrial strategy*
- *Restoring control over the immigration system: white paper – GOV.UK*
- *Universities Wales views on internationalisation*

United Kingdom (Scotland)

Name of strategy/document:
Scotland's International Education Strategy

Strategic priorities and actions:
The Scottish Government's vision is to become more active internationally, forming connections and partnerships across the globe with countries who share its ambitions to alleviate poverty, achieve net zero and be an attractive place to live, work, visit, study and do business.

Within that context, the ambitions for Scotland's first International Education Strategy (IES) are:
1. To work with HE institutions to attract students, staff and researchers from outside the UK, to help diversify the international student population and support them to maximise their contribution to Scotland.
2. As an outward-looking, inclusive nation that values international education capabilities and export potential, Scotland will work with institutions to maximise the social, educational and economic contribution globally.
3. As a world leader in international education, research and knowledge exchange, Scotland will deepen global collaborations and engagements.

Across these three ambition areas there is a total of 10 concrete action points.

A selection of interesting action points:
- Develop a Scottish Education Exchange Test and Learn project in 2023/24 and build on this to develop a Scottish Education Exchange Programme.
- Launch a Talent Attraction and Migration Service (TAMS) in 2024 that provides information and advice for students considering staying in Scotland after qualifying.
- Promote HE institutions' TNE offer globally through collaboration with the UK Government and British Council.
- Work with the sector to maximise participation in the Horizon Europe programme, monitor Scottish institutions' performance and identify areas for improvement.

Supporting instruments:
Interesting supporting instruments mentioned in the strategy are the development of a Scottish Education Exchange Programme (SEEP) and the use of a Talent Attraction and Migration Service (TAMS). SEEP is currently in its third year; an evaluation of years one and two has taken place and will be published soon. TAMS has since been rebranded as SMS (Scotland's Migration Service) and launched in 2024. There is also a dedicated International Research Collaboration Fund (specific to Horizon Europe) that ran in 2024–25 and a second year is to be announced. Regarding monitoring and evaluation, there is a dedicated International Education Strategy Governance Group that oversees the implementation and ensures accountability, with meeting notes publicly available.

OTHER NATIONAL APPROACHES TO INTERNATIONALISATION

This group consist of the following countries: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium – Flemish Community, Belgium – French Community, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, San Marino, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine.

Andorra

In Andorra there is no stand-alone strategy concerning the internationalisation of higher education at the national level. As confirmed by national authorities, Andorra is a part of the EHEA and the country works together with other member states on many objectives, including internationalisation.

Albania

Albania does not yet have a dedicated strategy focused exclusively on the internationalisation of higher education. However, the _National education strategy 2021–2026_ [11] (in Albanian) incorporates clear internationalisation objectives within its broader reform agenda, including the development of joint degree programmes with EU higher education institutions, stronger international partnerships and the creation of a national platform for internationalisation, backed by an annual €10 million fund to stimulate joint programmes with EU institutions. These objectives are reaffirmed in the _Higher education policy document 2030_ [12] (in Albanian), approved in February 2025, which underlines the importance of internationalisation of higher education in Albania. A forthcoming _National strategy for the digitalisation of higher education_ and the May 2025 Council of Ministers decision easing procedures for the entry of foreign students in Albania, further reinforces this agenda, reflecting a system-wide commitment to internationalisation of higher education.

Armenia

In Armenia, there is no stand-alone national strategy exclusively focused on internationalisation in higher education. However, aspects of internationalisation are integrated in the _State program for the development of education of the Republic of Armenia until 2030_ [13] (in Armenian). The programme emphasises alignment with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and Bologna commitments, including student and staff mobility, recognition of Armenian qualifications abroad and support for joint and double-degree programmes. The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport is the national authority for higher education and plays a coordinating role in international cooperation at the policy level. Participation in Erasmus+ remains the principal driver of international cooperation, mobility and institutional capacity-building. Implementation varies across higher education institutions, with challenges related to limited domestic resources and reliance on external funding, alongside opportunities in diaspora engagement and digitalisation.

11   _Draft-Strategjia kombëtare e arsimit 2021-2026._ English translated title provided by the authors.

12   _Dokumenti i politikave për arsimin e lartë 2030._ English translated title provided by the authors.

13   _ՀՀ ԿՐԹՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄԻՆՉԵՎ 2030 ԹՎԱԿԱՆԻ ԶԱՐԳԱՑՄԱՆ ՊԵՏԱԿԱՆ ԾՐԱԳԻՐԸ._ English translated title provided by the authors.

Azerbaijan

In Azerbaijan, there is no stand-alone national strategy exclusively focused on internationalisation in higher education. However, the Ministry of Science and Education of Azerbaijan publicly describes its overall focus on higher education as being directed at "[implementing] the formation of an internationally competitive system of higher education," with specific reference to "internationalisation of the higher education system" as one of five articulated "activity directions". In support of these efforts, the 2023 *Statute of the State Agency for Science and Higher Education under the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan*[14] (in Azerbaijani) established a new body to support higher education reform and international cooperation. In parallel, national-level commitments to internationalisation are evident in government support for student mobility and international talent attraction through several key scholarship programmes and general efforts to promote the higher education sector abroad.
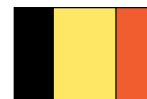
Belgium – Flemish Community

In the Flemish Community of Belgium, there is no single overarching internationalisation strategy for higher education. Instead, internationalisation is addressed through a combination of ongoing initiatives and policy references embedded in broader strategic documents. These include the still-active 2013 *Brains on the Move* action plan on mobility, federal and regional government agreements that refer to international activities in higher education, talent attraction and student migration and funding mechanisms such as Erasmus+ national co-financing and VLIR-UOS scholarships for students from developing countries. Additional coordination exists through employment and development cooperation policies. While internationalisation remains a visible theme, stakeholders note that momentum has slowed, and certain efforts may require renewed attention and coordination. The approach to internationalisation also tends to vary between higher education institutions across the country, with all being active in internationalisation, but some demonstrating stronger ambitions and levels of engagement than others.

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14 *Azərbaycan Respublikasının Elm və Təhsil Nazirliyi yanında Elm və Ali Təhsil üzrə Dövlət Agentliyinin ƏSASNAMƏSİ.* English translated title provided by the authors.

Belgium – French Community

In the French Community of Belgium, there is no stand-alone HE internationalisation strategy. Yet, internationalisation is addressed in broader strategic documents and statements. For example, the _Community policy statement 2024-2029_[15] (in French) includes several pages outlining the French-speaking community government's intended measures such as encouraging internationalisation within the European Universities alliances and setting up a simplified authorisation procedure to run programmes with foreign partners. In addition, the Walloon government and the French-speaking community government published an _International policy note_[16] where both governments insist on the importance of reinforcing the visibility of HEIs internationally. The international relations committee of ARES (The Academy for Research and Higher Education) adopted the _Inter-institutional strategy for the internationalisation of HEIs in the French-speaking community_[17] in 2024, which outlines the 2024–2028 strategic plan for coordinating and supporting ARES members in their internationalisation efforts. It focuses on improving the attractiveness of HEIs/internationalisation, stimulating innovation and promoting and embodying fundamental values.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

In Bosnia and Herzegovina there is no stand-alone internationalisation strategy for higher education; instead, internationalisation is embedded within broader frameworks at state and entity level. At the country-wide level, the _Priorities for the Development of Higher Education in BiH 2016–2026_[18] (in Bosnian)— developed under an EU/CoE project as a policy framework/roadmap—explicitly list internationalisation as one of seven key areas, calling for mobility, joint degrees, foreign-language programmes and stronger international cooperation structures. At the entity level, the _Republika Srpska's Strategy for the Development of Science, Technology, Higher Education and the Information Society 2022–2028_[19] (in Serbian) treats internationalisation as a strategic priority, with emphasis on mobility, EU programme participation and global visibility. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina's _Strategic Directions for Education 2016-2020_[20] (in Bosnian) also refer to internationalisation, including a dedicated (though limited) section on science and technology cooperation, while more broadly linking it to Bologna and Lisbon Convention implementation, Erasmus+ mobility and EHEA alignment.

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15   _Déclaration de politique communautaire 2024–2029 - Avoir le courage de changer pour que l'avenir s'éclaire_. English translated title provided by the authors.

16   _Note de Politique internationale 2024–2029_. English translated title provided by the authors.

17   _Stratégie interinstitutionnelle d'internationalisation des ees de la FWB à l'Horizon 2028_. English translated title provided by the authors.

18   _Prioriteti za razvoj visokog obrazovanja u BiH za period 2016.-2026._ English translated title provided by the authors.

19   _Стратешка платформа развоја науке и технологије, високог образовања и информационог друштва у Републици Српској._ English translated title provided by the authors.

20   _Strateški pravci razvoja obrazovanja u FBiH za period 2016–2020._ English translated title provided by the authors. Document supplied by the Federal Ministry of Education and Science of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. For access inquiries, please contact the Ministry.

Bulgaria

Bulgaria has no stand-alone national strategy exclusively focused on internationalisation in higher education. However, the _Strategy for the development of higher education in Bulgaria, 2021-2030_[21] (in Bulgarian) names "Internationalisation of higher education and inclusion in international educational and scientific networks" as the fourth of ten priority areas and objectives for the development of the country's higher education. The stated goals in this priority area include building functioning networks between Bulgarian and foreign higher education institutions; internationalisation of the social and educational environment in higher education institutions; promotion of incoming and outgoing mobility; and improving the image of Bulgarian higher education abroad. The Ministry of Higher Education and Science and Bulgaria's higher education institutions are the leading actors responsible for advancing this work, supported by organisations including the Erasmus+ National Agency and the State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad.

Croatia

Croatia does not have a current stand-alone strategy for the internationalisation of higher education. The most recent overarching document, the _Strategy for Education, Science and Technology_ (2014), outlined a systemic, evidence-based and inclusive reform of education, research and innovation to meet national needs and global challenges. Internationalisation featured as one of the strategic directions, particularly in aligning with European and global standards. Key strategic goals and initiatives are also integrated within broader national policy frameworks: the _Implementation Programme of the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth (2024–2028)_[22] emphasising mobility, institutional cooperation and raising the international visibility of Croatian HEIs; the _National Plan for the Development of the Education System until 2027_[23] promoting international engagement and participation in EU and global programmes; and the _National Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia until 2030_[24] supporting openness, global competitiveness and international collaboration in education and research (all three documents available in Croatian).

22 _Provedbeni Program Ministarstva Znanosti, Obrazovanja I Mladih za razdoblje 2024. –2028. godine._ English translated title provided by the authors.

23 _Nacionalni plan razvoja sustava obrazovanja za razdoblje do 2027. godine._ English translated title provided by the authors.

24 _Nacionalnu razvojnu strategiju Republike Hrvatske do 2030. godine._ English translated title provided by the authors.

21 _Стратегия за развитие на висшето образование в Република България 2021–2030 г._ English translated title provided by the authors.

Cyprus

Cyprus' Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth states that it aims to "establish Cyprus as a regional educational and research centre" and as a "hub for international scholars and students". However, there is no published stand-alone national strategy exclusively focused on internationalisation in higher education nor an official body for actively promoting it. A focus on Europe is seen in the country's engagement with the European Universities alliances, the Bologna Process and European Commission-funded programmes, such as Erasmus+ and the Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions. Regional orientations are visible through the provision of government scholarships for students from developing countries in Africa and the Middle East and a focus on Euro-Mediterranean engagement. Cyprus has also signed international agreements and memoranda of understanding with a range of different countries around the world to facilitate the mutual recognition of academic qualifications and cooperation in the areas of science, research and higher education.

Denmark

In Denmark, there is no stand-alone national strategy exclusively focused on internationalisation in higher education. However, _Denmark's national reform programme 2023_ articulates several objectives connected to internationalisation, including increasing the number of international students in areas that require a highly educated workforce and also the number of higher education study places in English. The Danish Agency for Science and Higher Education administers national-level efforts to attract international students and encourage Danish participation in a number of international mobility and cooperation initiatives—including Erasmus+, Nordplus and the Danish Trainees Abroad Programme. The ministry also focuses on encouraging Danish students to study outside the country through a dedicated "Grab the world" initiative to provide "information and inspiration" to prospective participants in outbound international mobility for study, training or volunteer experiences abroad.

Estonia

In Estonia, there is no stand-alone national strategy exclusively focused on internationalisation in higher education. However, Estonia's overarching _Education Strategy 2021–2035_ includes an explicit sub-goal on "Promoting internationalisation and learning mobility". Aspirations in this area include increasing the mobility of teaching staff, particularly within the European Union; facilitating greater inclusion of international academic staff; creating opportunities for short-term mobility of Estonian students; providing foreign language learning and education in foreign languages; and marketing Estonian education. The strategy also addresses making Estonia an attractive environment for Estonians who have completed their education abroad and for foreign nationals who have completed their education in Estonia. The strategy's implementation is coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Research and supported by a broad-based steering committee composed of representatives from a range of government ministries and stakeholder organisations from both civil society and the private sector.

Finland

Finland does not have a stand-alone internationalisation strategy; instead, the topic is embedded across several national policies. The _Vision for HE and research in 2030_ (2017), offered a broad roadmap where internationalisation was mentioned. The policy _Working together for the world's best education (2017–2025)_ (in Finnish, with a shortened English version) outlined seven action areas to promote internationalisation and led to the establishment of the Team Finland Knowledge network. The intersectoral _Talent Boost 2023–2027 programme_, launched in 2020, supports international recruitment and education-based immigration. In 2022, the _Vision for strengthening the international dimension of Finnish HE and research by 2035_ was adopted, placing internationalisation more firmly at the centre. Building on this, the Ministry of Education and Culture is preparing for 2026 a new _Vision for HE and research_ with broad stakeholder input and internationalisation as a core component. The government programme also references internationalisation, reflected in performance-based steering of HEIs through agreements with the Ministry.

Georgia

Georgia does not have a stand-alone strategy dedicated to the internationalisation of higher education. Instead, internationalisation is referenced within the _2022–2030 Unified National Strategy of Education and Science of Georgia_, though without concrete implementation mechanisms. The strategy highlights selected achievements including Georgia's strong Erasmus+ participation (ranked 6th globally with 10,400 scholarships awarded), cooperation between 37 HEIs and partners in 33 European countries and international students representing 8.7% of enrolments. At the same time, it notes challenges including unequal access to mobility, limited infrastructure for virtual exchange and integration issues for foreign students. While the government intends to promote internationalisation, for example through joint and dual-degree programmes and "internationalisation at home", these remain broad commitments rather than operationalised objectives. Further evidence of Georgia's efforts in this area can be found in the _2022–2024 Action Plan of the Unified National Strategy_ and its respective monitoring reports published in 2022 and 2023 (accessible here).

Greece

Greece does not currently have a stand-alone national strategy dedicated to internationalisation of higher education. However, internationalisation has become a clear policy priority in recent years, supported through legislative reforms, most notably laws 4610/2019 and 4957/2022, as amended by 5094/2024 (in Greek). These laws expanded the role of Greek HE institutions by enabling the development of foreign-language undergraduate programmes (primarily in English), facilitating international joint and dual degrees and streamlining procedures for mobility and institutional cooperation. Additionally, the government-backed Study in Greece initiative plays a key coordinating role, serving as a national platform to promote Greek higher education globally and foster partnerships with international institutions. The strategic intent reflected in these developments is supported by legislative and institutional measures aimed at accelerating the internationalisation of institutions by strengthening the diversity of the academic community and by fostering collaboration, joint research and global academic partnerships in a more systematic way.

Holy See

Hungary

The Holy See has no stand-alone strategy concerning the internationalisation of higher education at the national level. However, the Vatican's Dicastery for Culture and Education states that "it is developing strategic plans for further development of the Church's higher education globally", noting that "Catholic and ecclesiastical universities form the largest educational network in the world, structured institutionally, geographically and thematically." Within this framework, international cooperation is channelled through global and regional networks, most notably the century-old International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU) and, more recently, the World of Catholic Universities (WCU) platform, which brings together Catholic universities worldwide and facilitates collaboration.

Hungary does not have a stand-alone strategy dedicated to the internationalisation of higher education. Instead, it is addressed within the broader strategy *Shift in Higher Education – Medium-Term Policy Strategy 2016*[25] (in Hungarian), which remains in force through successive action plans. The strategy and its appendices outlines policy directions regarding mobility, presence of international students in Hungary, outward migration of Hungarian students, and international research. Appendix 2 presents internationalisation-related objectives, including increasing student and researcher mobility, strengthening the international embeddedness of RDI-focused HEIs, expanding Hungarian education abroad and enhancing the international dimension and labour market relevance of doctoral training. The latest *Action Plan 2025–2026*[26] (in Hungarian) advances these aims by prioritising mobility, HEI internationalisation, global visibility and participation in European and international research cooperation. In response to an EU Council decision (2022/2506) excluding certain Hungarian HEIs from some direct EU funding, the government launched the 2024 Pannónia Scholarship Programme to provide alternative international mobility.

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25 *Fokozatváltás a felsőoktatásban, középtávú szakpolitikai stratégia 2016.* English translated title provided by the authors.

26 *A Fokozatváltás a felsőoktatásban középtávú szakpolitikai stratégia 2016" 2025–2026. évekre szóló cselekvési terve.* English translated title provided by the authors.

Iceland

In Iceland, there is no overarching internationalisation strategy for higher education. However, the government mentions themes of higher education, internationalisation and mobility in its public dashboard for benchmarking in relation to the national *Financial plan 2026–2030*[27] (both in Icelandic). This includes an indicator for international students pursuing degrees in Iceland and Icelandic exchange students studying abroad. The need for a national-level internationalisation strategy has been highlighted by Rannís (the Icelandic Centre for Research) in a note[28] that was published in 2024 (in Icelandic) as a contribution to a public consultation on the government's plans to introduce tuition-fees for students from outside the EEA, EFTA, Faroe Islands and Greenland.

Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan's *2019-2025 national strategy for internationalisation in higher education* gave way to the *Concept for the Development of Higher Education and Science in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2023-2029* which includes a dedicated section on internationalisation of higher and postgraduate education. With an overarching goal "to increase the attractiveness of higher and postgraduate education and position Kazakhstan's higher education institutions in the international educational space," focal points for the country include opening branches of Kazakh HEIs abroad, attracting talented international academics and students, creating a unified Central Asian higher education space and a Network University of the Council of Turkic States, and exploring the establishment of branches and representative offices of prestigious foreign universities in Kazakhstan. Further development of dual-degree and global programmes, as well as various forms of internal and external academic mobility for students and faculty, is also planned. Specific key target indicators and results have also been articulated.

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27 *Fjármálaáætlun 2026–2030.* English translated title provided by the authors.

28 *Umsögn við frumvarp til laga um breytingu á lögum um opinbera háskóla, nr. 85/2008 (gjaldtökuheimildir opinberra háskóla).* English translated title provided by the authors.

Latvia

Latvia does not yet have a stand-alone national strategy for higher education internationalisation, but one is expected to be adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers in 2026. For now, several existing policy documents address the government's strategic interests in this area. _Education development guidelines 2021–2027_[29] includes the task of "Ensuring internationalisation and international cooperation for the development of modern and high-quality education." Key actions include supporting internationalisation planning and implementation and attracting highly qualified academics. The draft _Human capital development working plan 2025–2027_[30] also highlights "attracting foreign students" within the broader goal of recruiting skilled employees to Latvia. Additionally, a group of universities has signed a goodwill agreement with three ministries, committing to ensure quality education and services for international students, while state bodies provide practical support.

Liechtenstein

Liechtenstein does not have a dedicated national strategy for the internationalisation of higher education. Its approach is shaped by its small size and reliance on international cooperation, particularly with Switzerland and Austria. Liechtenstein participates in Swiss initiatives and EU programmes like Erasmus+. Around 90% of its higher education students study abroad, mainly in Switzerland and Austria, supported by formal agreements such as the Intercantonal University Agreement and a bilateral recognition treaty with Austria. Liechtenstein is aligned with the Bologna Process and actively contributes to the European Higher Education Area, including participation in the working group on internationalisation and mobility.

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29   _Par Izglītības attīstības pamatnostādnēm 2021.–2027. gadam._ English translated title provided by the authors.

30   _Cilvēkkapitāla attīstības rīcības plāns 2025.–2027. gadam._ English translated title provided by the authors.

Lithuania

In Lithuania, there is no stand-alone national strategy exclusively focused on internationalisation in higher education. However, the _Implementation plan of the 19th Government of the Republic of Lithuania_[31] (in Lithuanian), covering the period 2025–2028, includes a section on "Promoting higher education that creates international value". The document emphasises the goal of creating a model for attracting international students to promote the visibility of Lithuanian higher education abroad; supporting the cultural, social and economic integration of foreign students studying in Lithuania and improving the migration procedures applicable to such students. Other elements of the implementation plan include creating conditions for interdisciplinary, joint doctoral programmes with institutions from other countries, as well as developing a sustainable funding model for centres of Lithuanian studies (Baltic studies) abroad.

Luxembourg

Luxembourg does not have a stand-alone national policy for internationalisation in higher education. Its approach is shaped by its small size and individual higher education institutions (such as the University of Luxembourg) have made their own decisions on whether and how to implement international cooperation initiatives. There are many international connections with neighbouring countries such as Germany, Belgium and France, a key example of which is the University of the Greater Region, a network that offers the opportunity to study and conduct research projects in three languages, in five regions and involves seven universities from Luxembourg, Belgium, France and Germany. Luxembourg also participates in EU programmes like Erasmus+, is aligned with the Bologna Process and actively contributes to the European Higher Education Area.

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31   _Devynioliktosios Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės programos nuostatų įgyvendinimo planas._ English translated title provided by the authors.

Malta

In Malta, there is no single overarching internationalisation strategy for higher education. However, _Malta's national strategic action plan for further and higher education, 2022–2030_ includes seven pillars, with one focused specifically on "Strategic internationalisation and mobility". Three main challenges are identified in the document: fostering a European identity and international collaboration; facilitating outward mobility and increasing participation of disadvantaged learners in mobility programmes and, finally, promoting automatic mutual recognition of qualifications. Internationalisation is actively supported by Education Malta, a public-private partnership between the Ministry for Education and the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry, which promotes foreign direct investment in the sector and the attraction of international students. There also appears to be national consensus to enhance Malta's international profile through participation in EU policy fora, ensuring optimal use of EU opportunities related to funding and sharing expertise and participating in EU projects and capacity-building activities.

Moldova

Moldova does not have a dedicated national strategy focused on the internationalisation of higher education. Instead, its broader national education strategy, _Education 2030 (2023–2030)_[32] , incorporates objectives that contribute to internationalisation, such as expanding joint and interdisciplinary programmes, aligning national qualifications with the European Qualifications Framework and enhancing research and doctoral competitiveness. Complementing this, the _Roadmap for the Internationalisation of Universities (2020–2025)_[33] and its accompanying _Action Plan for 2024–2025_[34] , both approved at ministerial level, provide a dedicated policy framework. The roadmap establishes four strategic priorities: policy development, capacity building, programme internationalisation and student mobility. The Action Plan seeks, among others, to increase joint degrees with European institutions, expand programmes taught in foreign languages and attract more international students. These measures, together with the launch of the Study in Moldova platform in 2025, illustrate a systematic national effort to advance the internationalisation of Moldova's higher education system.

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32 _Strategia de Dezvoltare "Educația 2030"._ English translated title provided by the authors.

33 _Foaia de parcurs privind internaționalizarea învățământului superior pentru anii 2020–2025._ English translated title provided by the authors.

34 _Planul de acțiuni privind internaționalizarea învățământului superior pentru anii 2024–2025._ English translated title provided by the authors.

Montenegro

Montenegro does not have a stand-alone strategy dedicated exclusively to the internationalisation of higher education. Instead, internationalisation is addressed as a core priority within the *Strategy for the Higher Education Development in Montenegro (2024–2027)*. The strategy outlines a single strategic objective on internationalisation "Strengthening the role of higher education institutions at the international level" supported by an operational plan that includes expanding joint study programmes, improving academic mobility procedures and increasing English-language provision. While this is the only formally operationalised internationalisation objective in the strategy, the situational analysis chapters provide additional forward-looking commitments such as intentions to enhance virtual mobility, recognition of qualifications and alignment with European frameworks. Overall, the approach combines concrete actions with forward-looking intentions to foster mobility, cooperation and the visibility of Montenegrin higher education in the European and regional context, complemented by growing institutional efforts that further advance English-taught provision, mobility and joint programme development.

Netherlands

Despite a long tradition of actively supporting internationalisation, recent years have seen a shift in tone and policy in the Netherlands, driven by various factors. There is no national internationalisation policy, but the draft legislation *Balanced internationalisation act*[35] (in Dutch) has been a source of ongoing discussion. The focus is to increase control on the inflow of international students due to risks to the quality, accessibility and affordability of the HE system associated with excessive internationalisation. Main goals of the legislation include: optimally utilising the added value of internationalisation for the system; ensuring sustainability and affordability; preserving and strengthening Dutch as a language in HE; educating students to participate in an internationally connected society and economy and educating students primarily for Dutch society, but with attention to the broader international context. National associations such as UNL (Universities of the Netherlands) and VH (Vereniging Hogescholen) have published their own action plans as conversations continue.

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35   *Wet internationalisering in balans*. English translated title provided by the authors.

North Macedonia

In North Macedonia there is no national strategy for internationalisation. However, documents such as the _Education Strategy for 2018–2025 and Action Plan_ and the _National Youth Strategy 2016-2025: Action Plan 2023–2025_ show the inclination to develop a special framework for internationalisation of (higher) education in the country. The focus points for this framework include: promoting opportunities and support for international mobility (incoming and outgoing) of higher education students; facilitating the process of recognising credits and diplomas for students; supporting participation in Erasmus+ exchanges; informing HEIs about good practices; as well as providing clear and concrete recommendations for the better implementation of the Bologna system. Targets have been formulated, for example to have at least 80% of all HEIs and/or faculties involved in networks with foreign (European) institutions or in the Erasmus+ programme, to identify foreign HEIs for partnerships and to launch student and staff exchange programmes by the end of 2025.

Poland

Poland does not yet have a dedicated national strategy for the internationalisation of higher education. However, several policy frameworks and programmes address the topic, and a strategy is in development. The _Integrated Skills Strategy 2030_[36] (in Polish) includes international elements through mobility, internships abroad, talent engagement, returnees and support for educators. The _National Science Policy_[37] (in Polish) emphasises researcher mobility, institutional internationalisation strategies, joint programmes and attracting international talent. In parallel, the national _Higher Education Internationalisation Programme_[38] (in Polish) offers a vision for internationalising research and higher education. The upcoming _National Strategy for the Internationalisation of Science and Higher Education_ is being coordinated by NAWA (Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange), under the auspices of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education with broad stakeholder input. Its focus includes student and researcher mobility, the internationalisation of education and science, science diplomacy and responsible internationalisation, marking a significant step towards a dedicated, comprehensive national strategy.

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36 _Zintegrowana Strategia Umiejętności 2030._ English translated title provided by the authors.

37 _Polityka Naukowa Państwa._ English translated title provided by the authors.

38 _Program Umiędzynarodowieniea Szkolnictwa Wyższego._ English translated title provided by the authors.

Portugal

Portugal does not currently have a dedicated national strategy for the internationalisation of higher education. However, internationalisation is addressed in several government policies and laws. Earlier frameworks, notably the resolutions of the Council of Ministers No. 78/2016, and No. 115/2021 (both in Portuguese), set out strategic guidelines for strengthening the international dimension of science, technology and higher education, and reinforced the mandate of the Erasmus+ National Agency regarding the internationalisation of higher education. The current *Programme of the XXV Constitutional Government* (2025–2029)[39] (in Portuguese) continues this orientation by identifying "Reinforcing the internationalisation of higher education" as a key policy measure, committing to promoting European and joint degrees to foster transnational recognition and innovation, reinforcing Portuguese participation in European Universities alliances and their global outreach and expanding academic mobility opportunities and support mechanisms. Additionally, the new legislative framework (Decree-Law 131/2025) further reinforces internationalisation in the governance framework of higher education and science.

San Marino

In San Marino there is no stand-alone strategy concerning the internationalisation of higher education at the national level. As confirmed by national authorities, San Marino is a part of the EHEA and the country works together with other member states on many objectives, including internationalisation.

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39   *Programa XXV Governo Constitucional 2025.* English translated title provided by the authors.

Serbia

Serbia does not have a stand-alone strategy dedicated to the internationalisation of higher education. Instead, internationalisation is addressed within the *Strategy for the development of education and upbringing until 2030*[40] (in Serbian). For higher education, the strategy sets one overarching priority, which is to improve accessibility, quality, relevance and equity. This is pursued through four goals: (1) improving the quality of provision, human resources and outcomes; (2) enhancing the relevance of higher education at national and international level; (3) expanding coverage and equity and (4) advancing digitalisation. These objectives are further operationalised through the action plans for 2021–2023 and 2023–2026 (both in Serbian), which include concrete measures and indicators related to international cooperation. Key internationalisation actions include expanding study programmes in foreign languages, promoting mobility through Erasmus+ and other schemes, strengthening cooperation with the Serbian diaspora, encouraging institutional internationalisation strategies and improving digital platforms for global visibility.

Spain

Currently, Spain has no stand-alone national strategy for internationalisation of higher education, although one was in place for the period 2015–2020[41] (in Spanish). The development of a new national strategy for internationalisation is a clearly articulated objective of the *Action plan 2025–2027*[42] (in Spanish) for the Spanish Service for the Internationalisation of Education (SEPIE). Motivation for a new strategy is framed principally around increasing the strength and global visibility of the Spanish higher education system. Promoting educational quality alongside incoming and outgoing mobility of the brightest students, academics, researchers and administrative staff is perceived as a key element of this work. Other objectives include strengthening the potential of Spanish as a language for higher education, enhancing the internationalisation of practical training, research, development and innovation, and ultimately supporting the international attractiveness and competitiveness of Spain to foster the country's socioeconomic development.

40 *РАЗВОЈА ОБРАЗОВАЊА И ВАСПИТАЊА У РЕПУБЛИЦИ СРБИЈИ ДО 2030. ГОДИНЕ.* English translated title provided by the authors.

41 *Estrategia para la Internacionalización de las Universidades Españolas 2015-2020.*

42 *Plan de actuación 2025–2027.* English translated title provided by the authors.

Sweden

Sweden does not currently have a stand-alone strategy for the internationalisation of higher education, although the policy field remains highly active. The last comprehensive _HE Strategy: New world - new university_[43] (in Swedish) was adopted in 2005. In 2012, the government published a proposal referring to a strategy for _Research and innovation_[44] (in Swedish). A 2017, government inquiry later produced two reports (_SOU 2018:3_ and _SOU 2018:78_, in Swedish) recommending measures for HEIs and the government to support increased internationalisation. An English summary of these reports present a proposal for a national internationalisation, strategy. While this proposal has not been formally adopted, several measures have advanced, including the establishment of a _Platform for internationalisation_[45] (in Swedish), a formal cooperation structure to coordinate support for HE internationalisation, research and innovation. More recently, successive _Research and Innovation Bills_ (2020/21:60 and 2024/25:60, in Swedish) have reaffirmed the role of internationalisation in strengthening the quality of HE and research.

Ukraine

Ukraine currently has no national stand-alone internationalisation policy for higher education. However, internationalisation is referenced in the _Strategy for the development of higher education in Ukraine 2022-2032_[46] (in Ukrainian), which encourages the mobility of students alongside scientific and pedagogical staff, and promotes regional and international cooperation. The state funding formula for higher education also includes certain internationalisation criteria. International cooperation has been a particular focal point for Ukraine since the 2022 Russian invasion, with a wide range of organisations and partners—including the EU, individual EU member states, the UK and other countries—offering short and long-term capacity-building support and partnership opportunities for educational and scientific/research activity across the country. Despite the challenges posed by the ongoing war in Ukraine, key stakeholders—including the Ministry of Education and Science, National Erasmus+ Office and individual higher education institutions—continue to advance internationalisation where possible.

43   _Ny värld - ny högskola._ English translated title provided by the authors.

44   _Forskning och innovation. Prop. 2012/13:30._ English translated title provided by the authors.

45   _En plattform för internationalisering._ English translated title provided by the authors.

46   _СТРАТЕГІЯ розвитку вищої освіти в Україні на 2022–2032 роки._ English translated title provided by the authors.

SOME KEY TAKEAWAYS

As this overview shows, when it comes to the internationalisation of higher education, there is currently a very rich diversity of strategic approaches across the higher education systems of the EHEA. All in all, 13 higher education systems had a defined strategy for internationalisation at the time of this study, while another 35 systems depicted more diffuse strategic approaches, sometimes featuring complex combinations of different policy documents, laws and frameworks with a bearing on internationalisation. Most defined strategies are in their 'prime time' as of 2025, with the majority due to expire around the year 2030. This suggests a certain degree of alignment (whether intentional or not) across the EHEA countries in terms of the lifespan of strategies.

While a comprehensive comparative analysis of the existing strategies and policy approaches was beyond the scope of this study, some noteworthy common threads did stand out when reflecting on this overview, and can be concisely summarised here in the following key takeaways:

1. **Defined strategies**—*ie* "specific and explicit policy endeavours already adopted at the national level, which can be considered active policy-making aimed at advancing some aspect(s) of internationalisation" (Crăciun's, 2018)—**are less commonly in place across the EHEA than other forms of national-policy engagement with internationalisation.** Just 13 of the 47 EHEA member states reviewed in this study were found to have defined strategies in 2025.

2. From a historical perspective, most strategies are in a 2.0 stage of maturity, *ie* showing further evolution from the previous strategic period as conceptualised by Crăciun (2018). Current strategies, like their predecessors, continue to **encompass a diversity of internationalisation activities, but importantly, they go beyond predecessor strategies, reflecting the further development of the former and overall innovation in the field.** For example, alongside the typical physical mobility of students and staff, current strategies support virtual exchanges or forms with integrated digital components (like blended mobilities). The same can be seen with respect to cooperation: here, several strategies make a clear distinction between bilateral and multilateral cooperation, while underlining the strategic importance of supporting both.

3. **The majority of strategies portray a view of internationalisation as an important tool for quality enhancement supporting national and institutional development.** Institutional capacity building and capacity enhancement are often quoted in the current strategies, which seem to be framed by an impact-driven approach. Complex portfolios of internationalisation activities are no longer pursued on their own (or for some external targets/metrics), but because of what they can help achieve at the level of the countries, the institutions and/or the individuals involved in the respective activities.

4. **Ensuring better access to internationalisation activities is of nearly unanimous concern,** with the most recent strategies setting clear objectives for making specific activities more inclusive, or 'for all'.

5. **Both the local and the global have increased in importance**. While strengthening regional level cooperation is still regularly underlined (*eg* between Visegrad 4 countries, between the Western Balkan, or the Baltic or the Nordic countries), increasingly more countries show interest in venturing beyond Europe for their student recruitment efforts, and list a diverse set of measures meant to help them recruit particularly non-EU/EEA students.

6. **Along with the new, there is still plenty of 'the old'**. Strategies consistently refer to remaining obstacles that need to be tackled to ease international cooperation, chief among these visas for non-European students and improving recognition of credits and qualifications earned abroad.

7. **While the majority of the EHEA member states do not have a dedicated strategy focused exclusively on the internationalisation of higher education, this does not mean the topic is not important.** In most cases, there are overarching, broader (education) strategy documents that incorporate objectives that show a commitment to the internationalisation of higher education. Topics that are often mentioned are, amongst others: the development of joint/double degree programmes, stronger international partnerships, incoming/outgoing student mobility support, international talent attraction and/or retention, mutual recognition of qualifications, the marketing of the national HE field, and efforts linked to research and innovation.

8. **Broader, encompassing frameworks and initiatives are often mentioned by countries, no matter their size.** For example, alignment with the EHEA and Bologna commitments offer opportunities for smaller member states as well as providing the basis for policies or strategies in larger countries. European-funded tools such as Erasmus+ mobility and the European Universities alliances are also often mentioned, whether a country has a dedicated strategy linked to internationalisation within higher education or not.

CHAPTER 3

Perspectives on national strategies today:
Relevance, key influencers and implications for the future

As evidenced in the previous chapters, there is a diversity of approaches to national strategies relevant to the internationalisation of higher education systems across the EHEA. They range from fully fledged stand-alone strategies focusing on internationalisation, to a complex mix of wider or differently focused policy documents, strategies, white papers, plans or legal frameworks that tackle (some) aspects and objectives of internationalisation that professionals in our field would find relevant. This diversity shows that internationalisation has taken root across Europe in different ways. Rather than signalling gaps, these variations point to different ways of integrating internationalisation into national-level priorities, policy and governance frameworks.

On their own, the country profiles presented in Chapter 2 offer valuable insight into many aspects of these policy documents and the national complexity of EHEA member countries in the internationalisation of their higher education systems; yet they only partly reveal the dynamic realities shaping them. National strategies are shaped by and evolve with their environments; they exist in wider national (and international) contexts, prone to change and subject to multiple internal and external influences, many of them much wider than the field of higher education alone.

It is against this background that, while compiling the previous chapters, several broader questions emerged, which reach beyond the analysis of strategies themselves:

1. Which factors, as perceived at the national level, impact internationalisation strategies today? To what extent have the recent polycrisis affected internationalisation strategy-making and strategy implementation at national level? And, if influential in this respect, what are the perceived changes?

2. How illustrative are the national strategies portrayed in Chapter 2 of the current situations, national debates and political attitudes towards internationalisation? Have these debates and priorities evolved since the launch of the strategies, or have they remained largely unchanged?

3. Are national strategies perceived as still holding value at national level, especially during such volatile and complex times? Or, in countries that are yet to renew their previous strategies or launch fully new ones—is there still an appetite for related strategy development (and for internationalisation more broadly) or have other issues become more salient?

4. And what can we expect from the future in this respect? What are the factors most likely to shape future strategy-making and strategy implementation at national level, as well as the overall support for internationalisation in EHEA countries? Can specific scenarios be envisaged?

This chapter strives to tackle these broader questions, at least to some degree, based on (1) the authors' collective direct experience and observations over many years in this field, (2) additional contextual information that emerged from national-level representatives in the process of validating the country factsheets and overviews presented in Chapter 2 and (3) focused conversations with 11 individuals working in leadership positions at national level, and directly engaged in shaping or implementing higher education internationalisation policy in their respective countries. These conversations took the form of semi-structured interviews, conducted online between April and June 2025, involving participants from: Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Serbia, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia.

These countries were purposely selected to reflect differing national contexts related to internationalisation and variation in factors such as size of population, history of internationalisation in the country and presence/absence of a current stand-alone national policy or strategy on internationalisation of higher education. These discussions were structured around four main themes: the current national context and priorities for internationalisation; funding and resources; implementation dynamics and the relationship between national and institutional levels; and expectations and scenarios for the future. Given the sensitivity of some of the emerging details, the interviewees' contributions are treated anonymously in the present chapter.

Building on all these insights, this chapter is structured in four main parts, each exploring answers to the wider open questions referenced above.

FACTORS IMPACTING NATIONAL STRATEGY-MAKING

The analysis suggests that factors impacting national strategies for internationalisation are both external in nature (*ie* international, and even global) as well as internal (*ie* stemming from the particular national context).

External factors

Amongst the external influencers, the **multiple geopolitical and health-related crises** are by now well-known, and their effects largely documented within the international education field, as they pose new challenges both for the running of internationalisation at different levels, as well as for related national and institutional policy-making. For example, the **full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine** has created significant challenges for the international student recruitment agenda of all EHEA countries that historically relied on sizeable Russian student cohorts (*eg* Finland, Estonia, the Slovak Republic). This conflict has also pushed the countries that previously had the Russian Federation as a priority country for institutional partnerships to rethink their partnerships arrangements and diversify their portfolios.

Israel's war on Gaza is currently generating similar reactions, with an increasing number of higher education institutions pausing their cooperation with their Israeli counterparts, while at country level similar responses have been somewhat rarer.

On the brighter side, these developments have had the positive effect of encouraging new interest in strengthening relationships with India (by countries like France and Germany) and other emerging economies, as well as renewed attention to the African continent.

Greater emphasis on strategic international cooperation was also promoted by the **COVID-19 pandemic**. This globally disruptive phenomenon supported a shift away from a singular or predominant focus on student mobility, which could be easily impaired again by other potential health crises, to a more diverse portfolio of internationalisation activities. Nonetheless, several countries (especially those smaller in size) report real challenges associated with the push to diversify geographic engagement, as they lack the diplomatic infrastructure necessary to support institutional collaboration and expand student recruitment around the world.

At the same time, new layers of complexity and sensitivity in partnership arrangements have been triggered by both the **shifting political profile of the US** (until recently a true model for international education) and the perceived security risks of cooperation with China (another major player on the international scene). Developments in the US are already leading a number of European countries to strive to strengthen their partnerships within Europe, while the concerns surrounding China have contributed significantly to the emergence of the concept and increasing prominence of 'responsible internationalisation'—generically understood as an approach that balances the benefits of international collaboration in higher education with a critical assessment of potential risks, aiming to ensure that international partnerships and mobilities are mutually beneficial, ethical, secure and anchored in mutually shared values. This development is significant particularly in Northern and Western Europe (Norway, Sweden, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, France), where national-level guidelines for responsible internationalisation, dedicated policies and/or national structures have already been set up to support

and often advise higher education institutions in navigating the new realities of international partnership development, within the limits of institutional autonomy.

At the same time, the current research found that not all factors pose new challenges. Notably, there were unanimous references to the **positive impact of European Union (EU) policies, objectives and initiatives** on national-level policies and internationalisation processes. Whether through active alignment with EU strategic goals, involvement in EU-level actions or simply monitoring EU developments, it is clear that the EU's activity has an important and generally positive effect on national approaches to internationalisation.

Erasmus+ mobilities, the European Universities alliances and the European degree were specifically mentioned by interviewees in several countries as being of particular relevance to national-level policymakers. Although it is not always clear to respondents how these initiatives will evolve, there is nonetheless wide interest in engaging with them.

The orientation toward Europe was especially clear in conversations with interviewees from smaller size countries and those from Central and Eastern Europe. For them, cooperation and engagement through EU-funded channels offer distinct advantages unattainable through purely national instruments. Also noteworthy is a **reorientation towards Europe** by a few internationalisation frontrunner countries that experienced significant budget cuts in recent years, driven by the pursuit of substitute resources and/or by the need to forge new strategic partnerships amid rising global instability.

Regarding the **COVID-19 pandemic**, while challenging in the short term, this is also perceived to have generated important positive developments in the medium and long term. These range from new forms of student and staff mobility with digital components, necessitating mastery of new technologies—such as virtual exchanges, Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) and Erasmus+'s Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs)—to a renewed interest in internationalisation at home and greater attention to international student wellbeing and mental health.

Taken together, these developments show that internationalisation is increasingly shaped by global developments, which present a mix of new challenges and significant opportunities.

Internal factors

Amongst the internal factors—*ie* those stemming from the national context—domestic political shifts and budgetary constraints (frequently connected dynamics) were most often referenced as having negative effects on internationalisation strategies, while new skills shortages seem to have primarily positive effects.

After decades of largely positive connotations and attitudes towards the internationalisation of higher education in EHEA countries, many of the experts interviewed or validating different national factsheets reported a newly divided political landscape within their societies, leading to mixed perceptions of internationalisation. While some countries maintain a generally positive view, others show a clear correlation between the rise of populist or (extreme) right-wing parties and more critical views of internationalisation processes and their necessity. In these contexts, internationalisation has become a sensitive subject, linked—whether accurately or not—to increased immigration, rising housing costs and the wider use of English as a medium for instruction in higher education, which is perceived in these contexts as a threat to the national language.

Although this is not yet a general trend, the fact that some internationalisation frontrunner countries like the Netherlands have paused to consider the question of potentially having gone 'too far' in internationalising their higher education system (and started to reassess their priorities, means and modes of engagement) has reportedly spread concern across the wider EHEA. Even when such critical attitudes have not yet permeated the national discourse, some experts are wary of possible ripple effects, especially when such debates and reorientations are sparked by these 'frontrunner' countries, that used to considerably support and also widely benefit from internationalisation processes.

In some European countries, these more critical debates have already been accompanied by significant **budget cuts** affecting the implementation of internationalisation objectives at both national and institutional level. Development cooperation was specifically cited as an area affected by reduced funding in countries like Norway and the Netherlands, until recently role models in this respect across the world.

However, budget pressures were reported even more widely, including in EHEA countries that are still overtly politically supportive of internationalisation. This is due to austerity measures and pressure to reorient the diminishing financial resources to other areas, like defence spending, as triggered by recent geopolitical shifts.

At the same time, it is important to stress that these critical developments are not necessarily unidirectional across the board. There seems to be renewed support in countries like Denmark, which went through a period of more cautious international engagement, for specific internationalisation processes that were limited in the past, such as international student recruitment. The current Danish administration is perceived by some as more favourable to this process than its predecessors.

Furthermore, there is still real positivity, including in the national contexts more critical of internationalisation, when the process is understood as supporting a country's connectedness to Europe-wide economic or political developments, or when it addresses national skills gaps. In Finland or Germany, for example, international students are seen as important contributors to skilled migration, and their retention is considered essential for reinforcing the domestic labour market and ensuring its competitiveness.

From the above, it is clear that there is a gradual shift in the political discourse around internationalisation in some notable European countries, with changes also observed in the degree of funding for internationalisation efforts.

Overall, these dynamics point to a new balance, characterised by continued commitment to internationalisation on the one hand, and greater caution and adaptability on the other. These multiple external and internal factors explain why a significant number of countries are still in the process of launching a new strategy, are in a gap period between strategies, or are working to elaborate their first one. The sum of these factors also collectively generates an impression of volatility, with repeated and unpredictable crises framing the international education sector, even as opportunities and openness towards internationalisation persist in many systems. In this uncertain environment, there is a growing expectation for new strategies to be more adaptive and forward-looking, able to predict some of these developments and help prepare for them.

NATIONAL STRATEGIES – ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE STATUS QUO?

One of the remaining framing questions listed at the beginning of this chapter was "How illustrative are the national strategies portrayed in Chapter 2 of the current situations, national debates and political attitudes towards internationalisation?" The short answer is "It depends…" or "To some extent…". The previous section certainly makes it clear that the strategies, as read on paper, are only partly telling of the current internationalisation reality on the ground.

The newer strategies—launched in the past year or so—tend to account for all these factors. Indeed, these newer strategies reflect a recent paradigm shifts towards a more careful engagement in international cooperation that weighs risks alongside benefits, develops specific strategies for engaging with countries perceived as higher-risk, reassesses traditional partners and their reliability, evaluates the degree of engagement and how far the country should aim to go in internationalising its higher education system, and plans explicitly for an era of uncertainty characterised by repeated crises.

In countries where the strategies predate recent developments and the policies are in their final years, the documents understandably do not reflect current major trends and might thus appear overly ambitious or supportive of internationalisation,

whereas in reality the situation has since largely changed. To acknowledge these shifts, some countries have opted to publish a renewed, more concise) vision to still provide sector guidance while embarking on a longer-term process for amending the previous strategy. Others have simply amended the strategy 'on the go', refocusing its implementation around renewed priorities without formally changing the original document. For example, *Finland's Vision 2040* presents an example of a longer-term yet concise update, clarifying the main values and principles guiding the country's approach to internationalisation, rather than updating specific objectives and actions. Meanwhile, countries such as Serbia have opted for short- to medium-term planning instead of long-term commitment, reflecting recent global and regional volatility. What national strategies cannot account for, especially in fast-changing times, is the state of development of institutional-level strategies and the concrete internationalisation efforts of higher education institutions within each system. Insights from the project interviews show that national and institutional actors view these strategies through different lenses, reflecting varying levels of institutional autonomy and policy development across countries. At the same time, during the various consultations and interviews, national-level experts frequently highlighted the autonomy of HEIs in their countries to pursue their own goals and priorities when it comes to internationalisation.

While there is certainly an interplay between the national and institutional level strategies, it is clear that the role that national strategies play vis-à-vis institutional actions (and at times, vice-versa) depends entirely on the national and institutional contexts; no single answer is valid across the board. As the elaboration of national strategies tends to be a laborious and highly consultative process, it seems safe to say that some institutions are better placed to react in real time to important shifts, adjusting their policies and actions well before the national level can. In such instances, institutional policies often offer good practice examples for national-level strategy-making. At the same time, in smaller education systems, HEIs often rely on a national umbrella strategy to align the sector and enable joint action, especially when supported by resources otherwise inaccessible at the institutional level.

Overall, the analysis suggests that national strategies often capture the policy context in which they are conceived—reflecting the priorities and assumptions of their time, which can quickly lose relevance as external conditions evolve.

PERCEIVED VALUE OF NATIONAL STRATEGIES

Distilled to two words, interviewees characterised the appetite for internationalisation in their countries as "Yes, but…" or "It's complicated", given the internal and external factors listed above that may impact national strategy-making. It seems thus reasonable to ask if there is still value in investing in national-level strategy-making in this area, given the high volatility and increasingly complex challenges. This project found that the answer to this question is a unanimous "Yes". Establishing a national strategic direction for internationalisation in higher education is considered vital by many stakeholders. This feels particularly urgent in countries where support for internationalisation faces a more complicated political or social environment, as a nationally adopted strategy helps make a stronger case for this work.

Notwithstanding, crafting strategy or policy in this area is complex work under the best of circumstances, and even more so in a context of significant disruption and change. Discussions on recent strategy updates with various stakeholders highlight at least two crucial necessities:

- **Investing in the development of a shared vision,** leading to setting priorities that are truly endorsed by the sector. Experts from Austria, Finland and Slovenia described their national strategy processes as highly inclusive, leading to increased convergence between national and institutional level priorities. Another interesting example comes from the Slovak Republic, where alignment is ensured through new performance agreements with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) between the government and higher education institutions, with additional state funding attached.

- **Safeguarding institutional autonomy,** affording higher education institutions the freedom to adapt actions within the scope of the country's strategic interests while pursuing institutional agendas. This autonomy, combined with an increased need to be agile, allows individual institutions and systems to adapt to changing circumstances in a timely fashion.

In larger countries like Germany, adaptability and a 'flexible interpretation' of strategic frameworks offer room to manoeuvre during challenging times, whereas in smaller countries, such as Denmark or Slovenia, interviewees noted that their more compact systems may allow for a natural ability to collectively adjust course, when needed. In highly consultative systems, like the Netherlands, where institutional autonomy is high, self-regulation by HEIs is seen as a viable option pending a revamped national strategy. Elsewhere, as in France, a concerted effort is underway to turn a moment of political complexity into one of creative opportunity, with the aim of developing a new strategy for 2026–2028 grounded in arguments for global relevance and competitiveness.

FUTURE PROSPECTS BEYOND SCENARIOS

A proper scenario exercise would entail imagining a wide array of possibilities, from the most optimistic to the gloomiest, ones for the internationalisation of higher education in EHEA countries. None of the experts involved in this study offered an indication of the latter—a full backlash against internationalisation and/or a dramatic decrease in national-level resources to support it. Rather, there is wide agreement that the sector should work strenuously to prevent negative scenarios, as supported by the perspectives of the project interviewees on future expectations for national strategies and the sector's perceived readiness to navigate upcoming challenges.

Consequently, this final section reflects on additional courses of action—not yet covered in previous sections—that are likely to positively shape future strategy development in this area:

1. Showing the tangible value of international education.

For national-level internationalisation strategies to have a future, internationalisation must continue to be perceived as important and be supported by earmarked funding.

Perhaps the clearest message from the interviewees is that when it comes to the future, much hinges on money. Most experts were pessimistic, noting that securing current funding levels has already become a yearly 'battle' in some systems. While there was nearly universal appreciation expressed for the resource gap filled by Erasmus+, several interviewees also noted the risk of reductions in this key funding source during the next programme generation, given the tough budgetary negotiations at the EU level.

The solution for this unwanted scenario rests on a widely agreed-upon need to investigate and document the impact of internationalisation more thoroughly at all levels—from the personal and professional to institutional, regional, national and international, as well as of specific activities. This will provide tangible evidence that financially supporting internationalisation is a smart and necessary investment.

Several countries are already increasingly commissioning impact studies to collect crucial evidence on areas such as the economic impact of incoming students, the impact of study abroad and the value of partnerships at different levels, even where internationalisation is not economically driven.

Critically exploring the impact of internationalisation should also mean addressing potential myths, confronting what does not work and adjusting course as needed. These actions should not be regarded as failures, but as healthy responses, intrinsic to any innovation and experimentation processes.

2. Widening the conversation around internationalisation beyond the inner circle.

Equipped with this evidence, the next step is to present these results in a way that resonates with the most relevant stakeholders. It is essential to engage a wider range of national and European policy actors beyond the field of education—including those in immigration, labour, foreign affairs, trade, competitiveness, *etc*—to ensure this evidence is taken into account when new priorities emerge and resources are scarce. Beyond policymakers, engaging the wider public to better understand and appreciate the value of internationalisation is another important ingredient for policy success.

It is hard to imagine how support for internationalisation can be secured, let alone increased, if the conversations remain confined to the field of higher education.

3. Future strategy-making – a (partial) break from the past.

Comparing recent national strategies with those from just three to four years ago reveals some noticeable changes. Newer policy documents are more expansive, casting a wider vision and reaffirming the core values and principles of internationalisation, while focusing less on the nitty-gritty of strategy implementation that characterised their predecessors—such as concrete targets, measurable indicators, priority countries, specific resource allocation and monitoring mechanisms.

They also openly acknowledge the high degree of uncertainty and volatility of our times, emphasising ingrained flexibility, the need to cultivate agility to be able to deal with unforeseen events and provide accurate responses and the mastery of crisis management. This also impacts what is regarded as the **appropriate lifespan for a national strategy**. While there is still great variation, there is also an increasing practice of reviewing the priorities mid-cycle, if not on a yearly basis, and making necessary adjustments as the context demands.

All in all, strategies are less and less a set, fixed policy document, and rather portray an approach **to strategy as a living document,** constantly subject to change and adaptation. Crafting and implementing such strategies require a new set of skills for leaders at all levels, new resource allocation and monitoring mechanisms, as well as many new questions powered by the unfolding AI revolution.

TOWARDS THE NEXT GENERATION OF STRATEGIES

It seems safe to say that national strategies, as they exist on paper, might not fully reflect the current national debates, state of affairs and institutional realities, given the growing uncertainty and volatility triggered by recurrent crises. Even so, there is still much to learn from them, and they remain an important guiding force and an anchor for the countries that have them. Indeed, in combination with the internal and external factors currently impacting the field of international education and strategy-making, they are still very telling of what future strategies are likely to look like, as well as the challenges they will need to help navigate.

Looking ahead, it is likely that future strategies will not be strategies 'as usual'. They will likely be more adaptive, inclusive and evidence-driven, widening the conversation around internationalisation to engage other key players beyond higher education and providing tangible proof of its impact. In doing so, the next generation of strategies may be well positioned to help secure the policy commitment and appropriate resources that the sector truly needs.

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