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ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT

Our institution, the Politècnic School of Secondary Education has been participating in European projects for many years now, both within the framework of the Erasmus and the Leonardo da Vinci programmes. We have participated in students mobility and in the production and valorisation of materials within pilot and mobility projects. During these years we have established contacts with different partners, through visits of staff (both teachers and management) or through partners in our own country which have well-established relations with institutions or companies abroad. The objective of all these exchanges has been to find partners who can help us achieve and provide a mobility of quality.

The participation in European mobility projects is a key objective to our school. Due to the fact that the Balearic Islands are an important tourist destination and that students have to work and contact people from other nationalities very often, we realized longtime ago that the mobility of students was fundamental for many different reasons. One of them is the need to work on problems derived from insularity. For many students travelling and/or studying abroad is very complicated. Mobility placements have proved to be an excellent way to change this fact, and in some cases it was thanks to mobility that the students had their first experience outside the islands. Another important reason for further developing mobility is the need to open working options for our students. The studies our schools offers are mainly industrial and the market on the islands for this kind of studies is quite limited. Mobility offers us a golden opportunity to expand and improve students training and it is a way to open and increase their studying and working options. It contributes to the improvement of their language knowledge and to help them realize that living and working abroad is something possible. In fact, after a mobility experience abroad some of our students have decided to continue their vocational studies in another country, or to study languages abroad, and some of them have stayed in the same country where they were on placement as they were offered a job.

At the moment we have partners in France, Italy, Germany, Finland and Sweden. In the future we would like to extend our agreements to new countries and companies across Europe which could offer relevant training to our students and teachers. We would also like to promote the involvement and participation of teachers and tutors in European teaching/learning experiences, as without them it would not be possible to implement and establish a mobility of quality.

On the other hand, our school has a big number of students coming from other countries, both European and non- European. We have been applying integration measures for many years, not only at a tutorial level, but also at a general school level. Creating a feeling of European citizenship is one of our main objectives, and mobility is a key tool to achieve that.

Our institution considers cooperation projects as a very important tool in order to improve quality in education. Our school has participated in some projects at national level and has established cooperation agreements with schools in Catalonia, Zaragoza, Valencia and the Basque Country to develop innovative projects through the departments of Construction, Maintenance and Electricity and Electronics. One of the projects dealt with the development of a web-based application to manage educational centres. Another consisted in the



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preparation and construction of electronic plaques. The other consisted in the development of new methodologies to obtain topographic data through microdrones. We would like to continue working on them and collaborate with schools in other European countries so that we can improve and develop the results obtained.

The IES Politecnico is a state secondary school open to people from all backgrounds and origins. Our school has students from all continents. In some of our studies up to 72% of the students come from other countries. There is a very competent guidance department to inform students about the available options, to help them develop a study plan or to design the most appropriate pathways to complete their education. The school is open from morning to evening, which facilitates the access to training to adults or people in the labour market. We also offer distance learning for some of our vocational courses.

We have well-established contacts and agreements with companies, which means that we can have an updated knowledge of the companies needs, of new developments and technologies, and bring it all to training. We have established collaboration agreements with other schools with similar vocational families and we are developing projects in common to increase quality in training and education, and to exchange know-how.

The activities carried out by students participating in a mobility project within the Erasmus framework are part of one of their training modules, the so called "On-the-job training module". This module has a duration of 400 hours, which represents 20% of their training. When students go on placement to a company in another European country there are a series of steps established in order to recognize their achievements. First there is an agreement regarding the training programme to be developed. At the end of the placement the company's mentor certifies that the training programme and the agreed tasks have been completed successfully. Mentor and tutor sign this document, which is included in the students academic record. All this training is recognized through ECTS.

Erasmus placements encourage students to increase their personal and professional autonomy, which is essential if we want to improve their entrepreneurial abilities. Their training at school gives them information on how to start a business or how to develop market research to open significant business options, but the participation in mobility programmes opens them to a new range of resources and helps them in the development and establishment of a new set of standards.

At the same time we have observed that employers always highlight the students' experience abroad as a quality factor which gives and added value to the students curriculum. They assure they always take this fact into account when selecting new staff, so mobility proves to have a direct impact on business and regional development.