



## Erasmus Declaration on Higher Education Policy from 7 May 2013 (General Strategy)

Evangelische Hochschule Freiburg (EHF) is committed to ensuring that existing or new partnerships and co-operations with international higher education institutions (HEIs) are based primarily on quality. EHF intends to anchor partnerships within the structure of the HEI, and on a sustainable basis, and to this end adopted an internationalisation strategy on 6 June 2005. Key statements of the strategy include:

- We see internationalisation as a process that inevitably concerns the entire HEI and must be supported by everyone – administrative staff as well as teachers and students, and regardless of whether they are mobile or not themselves.
- We see internationalisation first and foremost as an expedient means of improving the quality of our teaching. Given the rapid changes in communication as well as the demands of a knowledge-based society, graduates should be able to survive in an increasingly globalised working and living environment. Student diversity is to be seen a resource, which is why EHF is interested in student diversity and is encouraging qualified young people from abroad as well as people with migrant backgrounds to take up a study programme.
- The mobility of both professors and students is a major concern for EHF, at the same time understanding that mobility is only one aspect of internationalisation. There should be an international dimension to all students' learning experiences during their studies at the HEI.
- EHF sees intercultural competence and the ability to communicate in different languages as having an equally enriching effect on life at the HEI. All HEI members are therefore being encouraged to learn another language and take part in intercultural training courses.

We have a tradition and history of having many partner HEIs, mainly in protestant countries in northern and central Europe and in neighbouring countries (Switzerland and France). More recently, our partnership portfolio has expanded and now includes countries from southern and eastern Europe as well as on other continents.

Since 2006, we have had a criteria-based strategy paper for planning new international co-operations with a clear timetable for applications, consultation in committees and application approval. New co-operations should be established with specific HEIs rather than with specific coun-



tries. They should also be based on specific content. Criteria should be related to the study programme concerned, and they should be content-based rather than geographical in nature.

The focus will also be on Europe in the future as well as on key regions – Brazil and Palestine/Middle East –, as close contact based on the above criteria already exists and can be developed further. We are essentially interested in creating synergy effects by integrating directly several departments or study programmes at new partner HEIs where possible.

We traditionally focus our mobility efforts on the first cycle of study (Bachelor), as it is easier to organise study periods abroad within this cycle and at the same time address the largest study group in terms of numbers. There is a smaller range of mobility offers for Master's students and we intend to expand this offer in the future. As there are no short-term or PhD study programmes at EHF at the moment, we are conducting no mobility activities in these areas.

In terms of numbers, internships or practical semesters abroad are more popular than theory semesters abroad. The reasons for this are as follows: (1) because an internship abroad is a compulsory element in one of our basic study programmes and is laid down as such in the study regulations, and (2) students often see practical semesters abroad as easier to complete than theory semesters.

Together with partners in Germany, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Estonia and the Czech Republic, we participated in the development of an international Joint Master's Programme in Diaconia Studies. The co-operation is currently on hold on our side due to a lack of interest among EHF students.

For more than 20 years, there has been a close teaching co-operation (RECOS) for an additional qualification organised jointly with neighbouring HEI partners in France and Switzerland (trinational qualification). If existing obstacles, mainly in the French higher education and legal systems, could be removed, it would be possible to develop the existing additional qualifications further into joint or multiple degrees.