

1.2 Erasmus Policy statement (EPS)

- What would you like to achieve by participating in the Erasmus Programme? How does your participation in the Erasmus Programme fit into your institutional internationalisation and modernisation strategy?

Participation in the Erasmus + program has led the Rovigo Music Conservatoire to a gradual and significant transformation over the past few years.

We have been working within the Programme since 2005 and countless steps have been taken towards the modernisation and internationalisation of our Institution: over the last 15 years, we have increased our international contacts, introducing a wider perspective to a small town and a mainly rural social fabric, supporting the development of European awareness and international curricula, implementing new cooperation projects and achieving a significant increase in student and staff mobility.

Participation in the new Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme would thus allow us to continue to grow, supporting us with respect to the ambitious objectives we intend to achieve.

Amongst other goals our primary intention is to further augment the quality of our didactic approach and, above all, of the educational experience of students so as to increase the capacity of our institution in terms of prospects relating to the dynamic of professionalisation. We envisage extending the scope of possible partnerships beyond Europe and intensifying the network of connections with the world of work, at both the local and European level, in order to improve employment prospects and to enhance opportunities for international mobility.

Forms of collaboration with the Teatro Sociale, the city's opera house, and with nearby orchestras will be modified in order to allow also incoming students to become engaged in training in their midst during their periods of activity. In the same way, mobile foreign students present in Rovigo will also acquire the possibility to access on-going projects involving collaboration with the Universities of Padua and Ferrara. This will allow us to extend the scope of the training we offer, which will comprise particular musicological subjects and areas of neuroscientific interest. Our own students will be able to take advantage of the same opportunities and will also be offered an international network of partnerships, not only within the educational sphere but also in the world of work, thereby helping them to internationalise their careers and activities and to develop skills of an entrepreneurial nature.

This will render the institute more attractive and will support it with respect to competition within the world market of higher-education facilities. The increase in student mobility, with regard to both outgoing and incoming subjects, will be considered a priority in this context. Likewise, a more effective and targeted use of staff mobility through the identification of specific areas of interest for the creation of projects to be prioritised by the institute will acquire a high level of importance.

However, internationalisation will also be thought through anew, in an attempt to shift attention to the curricula of our students and the opportunities offered at the Rovigo Conservatoire. Areas subject to attention will include the process of facilitating interaction between international and local students, the curating of events and research on international topics and the use of digital technology. In this way we will focus on offering international-level educational courses, which are accessible to all students and not only to those who are able to travel.

We believe that virtual and blended mobility can play a very important role in achieving the objectives proposed by the Bologna Process, in an innovative and decidedly less expensive way.

This is why our second goal will be digitalisation, and not only of the activities related to the Programme, occurring in parallel with the guidelines established by the Erasmus Without Paper Competence Centre, but of all the procedures of the Conservatoire, enhancing the digital infrastructures in terms of network connectivity and internal organisation. On the one hand this will permit use of the Erasmus Dashboard and implementation of the Erasmus+ App, with the consequent active involvement of students and greater awareness on their part as Erasmus 'ambassadors' and, on the other hand, the possibility to focus attention on the opportunities offered by Virtual Mobility.

The development of streaming activities and the creation of courses conducted in the blended learning mode will encourage the participation of a greater number of students and teachers, and also of subjects who may be hindered by difficulties relating to geographical situations that entail particular disadvantages and/or who present physical disabilities, with the same intent of promoting inclusion and not discrimination, as achieved through local and international cooperation projects.

These new and stimulating prospects have led the institution to invest more in the Erasmus Programme and Strategy.

In fact, starting from this academic year, our Erasmus Office will be developed and will increasingly focus on the diversification and development of the dissemination of information and the communication of results that are obtained, in addition to the organisation of events and projects in collaboration with various partners. The Office will take care of increasing the number of educational mobility projects, also through ad hoc funding measures which will allow for an adaptation of the value of grants that are awarded with respect to the actual income of the participants, and thus making it possible for everyone to participate in the mobility activities offered by the Programme and gain access to high-quality educational experiences.

At the same time, in conjunction with local authorities, efforts will be made to create extensive educational networks which will be able to host incoming students and our trainees, thereby exploiting the orientation of our institute with respect to its focus on appropriate professional training.

In this regard, commitment on the part of the local Municipality and, at the political level, within the Regional Administration, with which we maintain on going contact and which are increasingly sensitive to the international activities of the Conservatoire, will be a fundamental factor.

Thus, in order to reinforce and stimulate innovation and to enhance the level of quality in the didactic sphere our intention is to create an ever-increasing number of exchanges and forms of collaboration, exploiting the opportunities offered by the projects of Key Action 2 (KA2), the implementation and dissemination of which will be supported by the AEC (Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen), with which we have been affiliated since 2007 and whose expert evaluators and members represent an extraordinary network of contacts in our field.

Thanks to intervention relating to digitalisation rendered necessary by the COVID-19 pandemic the Conservatoire will soon be equipped with connections and equipment capable

of supporting the live transmission of lessons, master classes and workshop events, which

will be carried out also in collaboration with foreign partners operating in the relative areas of study. In this way and with blended courses, which will start in the coming academic years, we expect to broaden the range of students we will be able to reach, rendering the latter more 'international' and numerically more substantial.

With regard to staff mobility and the development of a greater awareness of objectives and also with respect to our understanding of the impact on the real needs of the institution it will be useful to consider such elements not only from the numerical point of view (cf. inflows and outflows) or in relation to the funding received, but also with respect to projects in specific areas of interest.

In this way, the substantial and important factor represented by a consequent positive public image of the institution will be reinforced by the value of a project that is truly international in its scope. It will be long lasting and will have a strong institutional impact.

- Please reflect on the Erasmus actions you would like to take part in and explain how they will be implemented in practice at your institution. Please explain how your institution's participation in these actions will contribute to achieving the objectives of your institutional strategy.

For the period 2021-2027 the first major commitment for the Venezzes Conservatoire, which, when compared to universities, is a very small institution, will be the establishment of a full-fledged Erasmus Office. Such a facility, existing in what may be referred to as an 'experimental phase' starting from the current academic year, will ensure maximum support during the various phases of mobility and, above all, follow-up and the dissemination of projects that have been undertaken.

The teacher assigned to undertake full management of students' mobility will be assisted by the Heads of Department and relative tutors with respect to the recognition of credits on completion of the period of mobility. Another member of the teaching staff will supervise staff mobility and international projects.

The institution already has a single-drive system, which contains all documents relating to Erasmus activities. The system is divided into sections, which may be accessed by all persons whose work relates to the Programme.

The digitalisation of inter-institutional agreements and thus also the technical aspects of the signing procedure relating to the same will be managed by an administrative operator, whose duties also comprise the receipt of online applications. We therefore envisage following the directives of the EWP Competence Centre in the near future. The digitalisation phase has in fact already begun, thanks also to pressure imposed upon us by the COVID-19 situation, which has led us to speed up the timetable and promptly adopt a more technological approach. The students who are active in the office will therefore be involved in the implementation of the Erasmus+ App - a key point of our strategy - as well as activities relating to the on-site reception of incoming subjects.

This improved distribution of tasks will allow us to increase the mobility of students and staff (Erasmus+ Key Action 1 - KA1), also focusing attention on the training internship to underline the capacity of our institution in terms of professionalisation. We will work towards the creation of a dense network of partners in the professional market, both locally (for our own students and for incomings) and at the European level. Some forms of collaboration are already in the process of being established and many others may start in the future, thanks also to a foreseen development of relations beyond Europe and the creation of partnerships with institutions with which we share a common ideal of excellence (Erasmus+ Key Action 2 - KA2).

The monitoring phase will be managed by the Assessment Unit, a body already provided for in our statute and which every three years is called upon to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of activities undertaken by the institution. In the next meeting, which will occur during the 2020-2021 academic year, the International Office will prepare a grid for the specific monitoring of action taken within the framework of the Erasmus programme.

- What is the envisaged impact of your participation in the Erasmus+ Programme on your institution?

An increase in student mobility and the consequent valorisation of acquired skills and the sensitive stance of teachers and students towards wider-ranging forms of collaboration, also outside the educational sphere, with a view to creating opportunities for professional and cultural exchange, were some of the objectives achieved in recent years by our Conservatoire. An evident improvement in the recognition of academic credits was a further step forward, and students have benefited from this enormously. The compilation and diffusion of the Course Catalogue has also been an effective measure.

This action is leading to a slow but rational transformation of the school, which is increasingly strengthening its relations with local institutions. However, at the same time it seeks to extend and select a network of relations with foreign institutions whose curricula may be integrated with our own.

Our institution is quite small (approx. 400 students) and situated in a provincial town, which, from the geographical point of view, is not in a particularly advantageous position. It is now quite evident that in our case internationalisation is undoubtedly the best policy to adopt to overcome obstacles resulting from such limitations.

Thus, in order to develop an innovative approach and boost the quality of our educational offer we will organise an increasing number of exchanges and forms of collaboration, using the opportunities offered by the Key Action 2 Projects.

In this way and with the blended courses, which we are working on, we expect to broaden the range of students we will be capable of reaching, rendering the latter more 'international'. It is moreover expected that their number will also increase. These courses will play a very important role in the strategy aimed at internationalisation and the modernisation of our Conservatoire. We are already setting up links and equipment capable of supporting the live transmission of lessons, master classes and workshops, which will be conducted also in collaboration with foreign partners, identified in the relative areas of study.

The encouragement to become involved in mobility, deriving from the availability of additional funds and continuous solicitation through the process of awareness-raising, will constitute a stimulus that will lead us to create a consolidated network of forms of collaboration within the professional market. Collaboration projects with nearby universities already allow us to offer initiatives that lead to direct opportunities at the professional level. The Conservatoire has moreover been chosen as a support institution within the sphere of doctoral-level research studies for the Department of Neurosciences at the University of Padua (Music and the Brain / Music and the Muscular-skeletal System). The school also actively collaborates with the Department of Geography, History and Antiquity at this university for the creation of a Sound Library dedicated to sounds perceived at the mouth of the Po River. Thanks to the experience acquired through these local initiatives we now intend to open an international network, identifying the right partners for future projects, such as the creation of an International Library, which will be set up as a leading research centre at European level, thanks to a legacy of about 100,000

manuscripts and published works of extraordinary importance for which we will be responsible.