



EUniverCities Sub-network Internationalisation (2017 – 2019)

A strategic approach towards the internationalisation of university cities

1. Background

Internationalisation is a key challenge for medium size university cities in the battle for brains. How to attract people (students, academics, other knowledge workers) from Europe, or even beyond. What are good practices and barriers? Related to that, cities face any other issues as well, such as: how to integrate the different types of higher educated foreigners in the local labour market and the society? How to make them stay? What are the implications for urban services? To remain competitive, the key stakeholders in medium sized university cities need a strategic approach and tackle all these issues in a coherent way.

Several cities in the EUniverCities network have indicated that they find this topic important. During the network meetings, the question of internationalisation and talent attracting turned out to be a crucial policy issues for many cities. But we never went “into deep” in this topic. ***This proposal suggests to take a next step and to set up a sub-network on internationalisation, to be formed by interested members from the EUniverCities network.***

This new network is focused on the following six themes (they are interconnected):

- Effective marketing of the region together, abroad
- Labour market integration of higher skilled foreigners
- Social embedding & cultural integration of foreigners
- Internationalization of urban services, facilities and amenities
- Housing and accommodation for internationals
- Internationalisation of higher education & research

Each sub-theme raises specific questions, and has particular barriers and opportunities. Also, in each sub-theme, different types of stakeholders might be involved.

It is to be discussed if more themes should be added.

2. Proposed method

The exchange is structured as follows:

- Each participating city will host a meeting; we might have 2 meetings in 2017, and 3 in 2018 (incl. a side visit)
- Each meeting will take max. 2 days
- The host city presents its policies and practices (by presentations, field visits etc.), focusing on one or two of the six themes that it finds most important/relevant.

- The host city explicitly involves of the “target group” (foreign students/expats etc.) in each meeting, to get the real picture
- Each time there will be a prepared & structured give-and-take session where city teams share how they do things at home
- Participating city teams will use the exchange to improve their policies
- The results and reports of the work will be shared in the EUniverCities network

3. Benefits for the participating city teams

The following benefits might be achieved:

- The project generates an analysis of the stronger and weaker points regarding internationalisation
- It yields ideas, best practices and inspiration from European colleagues who face the same challenge
- Participation in the project is a catalyst for action and policy innovation: it can help to bring the relevant stakeholders together and create a more strategic, unified approach

4. Project Organisation

4.1. Project partners

The main issue of the project is a part of the thematic flower of the EUniverCities network. The core group of members should be partners of the network but the subnetwork is free to spreading the group with important partners from outside.

The project partners are:

- Aalborg
- Parma
- Tartu
- Delft
- Magdeburg

4.2. Project coordination

The City of Magdeburg has taken over for the coordination of the project. This includes the dissemination of all necessary information's for the partners (invitations, reports etc.).

4.3. External expertise

Willem van Winden takes over the role of the external expert. He will support the preparation of the meetings, he will be the moderator and prepare a synopsis in a report.

4.4. Meeting organisation

Every host city is responsible for the organisation of the meeting. The content preparation should be in cooperation with the expert. Magdeburg takes over the formal matters like the invitation, the distribution of material etc.

4.5. Theme plan for the meetings

Meeting in Magdeburg

Marketing international students and scientists

- Is there a marketing strategy, and if so, what is it and how does it work?
- Which marketing tools are effective, for which sub-group?
- Which marketing channels should be used?
- How do they differ between students and academics/scientists?
- Should marketing be differentiated for different cultural circles?
- How many foreign students should be recruited? Is there a maximum proportion which should not be exceeded in the interests of the University's ability to function?
- Is there a country mix to be strived for with foreign students?
- How can the success of marketing measures be measured?
- How do you collect feedback from international students/scientists that came to the city?
- How can we use foreign graduates as marketing assistants (ambassadors)?
- How can international students and scientists, who are already at the location, be involved in marketing?
- How can actors in the city (universities, the city, knowledge institutes) work together in their marketing efforts?

Meeting in Tartu

Improving the quality of life for international students and scientists

- How can international students and scholars be received and adopted?
- How can legal requirements for foreigners be effectively resolved?
- What information is essential for these groups (housing, healthcare, finance, etc.?)
- How should effective information be provided?
- Which services should be offered to these groups (housing, language courses, etc.)?
- How to organise special services for these groups
- What are the demands on the people who are entrusted with this task?
- How is the care of temporarily living families (childcare, support for adult partners)?
- How is the feedback made with regard to the quality assurance of the measures?
- Should a permanent contact person (trust person) be offered for personal problems?
- How do you find out how these people rate the quality of life?
- How can city and university collaborate more effectively in all these respects?

Meeting in Parma

Improved involvement of international students and scientists in the city society

- How do the students and scientists mix with the population?
- What are the main barriers that prevent mixing?
- How can the public be taught the benefits of international students and academics for the location?
- How can the interest of the population in contacts be increased?

- How can existing barriers be removed?
- How can international students and scholars be encouraged to open themselves to the population?
- Which urban actors are particularly involved (theatres, art galleries, sports clubs)?
- How should urban policy be included?
- What is the role of schools (language teachers, guides for foreigners)?
- How do we deal with xenophobia?
- How can city and university collaborate more effectively in all these respects?

Meeting in Aalborg

Integration of international graduates into the regional labour market,

Development of refugees to skilled employees

- How well are international graduates integrated in the regional labour market?
- What are the main barriers that prevent integration?
- How can foreign students be brought into contact with companies during training?
- How can the awareness in the companies be strengthened that foreign specialists represent an opportunity?
- Which offers are necessary to integrate family members (language courses, child care, work places, etc.)?
- How can the search for suitable living space be supported
- How can this process be organised?
- How can employees' reservations in the companies be reduced?
- What role do universities play in qualifying refugees?
- How can the status of qualifications and the abilities of refugees be objectively determined?
- Which qualification offers can be offered?
- How can city and university collaborate more effectively in all these respects?