



## ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT

The Portuguese Air Force Academy, hereafter PoAFA, will focus on activities that can contribute for a solid education of students in scientific fields and subjects that are compatible to those existing in the PoAFA. The internationalization is seen as a mean to align with the European guidelines for higher education, research and knowledge transfer. As military school, our priority is to exchange students and staff with other military HEI. Nevertheless, we are also looking to establish learning agreements with civilian HEI. The strategic guidelines of the PoAFA are: promote transnational partnerships; internationalization of learning and teaching; development of transnational mobility of students, teachers, researchers and staff (in and out) and develop strategic research partnerships with high-quality institutions. At medium term, we want to increase the opportunities to our students to have a learning experience abroad, recognizing all the credits earned. At long term, we are looking to create an international environment at home through an English teaching environment integrating foreign students in regular classes and activities and admitting foreign professors.

The geographical area chosen by the PoAFA includes the HEI from participating countries, the Portuguese speaking countries and other strategic partners, as per example nations members of NATO. It is important for the education of our students, future officers of the Portuguese Air Force, to know and understand different cultures and to harmonize competences and procedures with our allies.

Among the most important goals for the mobility activities are the cooperation with institutions with similar core areas of study and the exchange of teachers, by participating in workshops and training, in order to transfer the acquired knowledge to their students and their peers. For the next years, the focus of the PoAFA is to increase and consolidate the exchange of students and academic staff in the 1st and 2nd cycles, especially with other military HEI, but without

disregarding civilian HEI. The PoAFA is also interested in strategic partnerships for the development of new curricular courses and the implementation of international semesters.

The PoAFA has been working in some cooperation initiatives, namely:

- Students' research studies in several EU countries: Germany, Spain, Holland and France;
- Cultural exchange programs with foreign Military Academies: Brasil, Spain, USA, France, Italy, UK, Greece, Germany, and Holland;
- Graduate students from the Portuguese Speaking Countries Community;

Since 2001, the PoAFA is a member of the European Union Air Force Academies and has recently joined the Implementation Group for the Exchange of Military Young Officers. These groups are aligned with the Erasmus program, since their objective is to promote the exchange of students and academic staff, share information and experiences and cooperate in the domain of education and training.

Currently, the PoAFA is involved in the development and implementation of an international semester for the European Air Forces. The aim is to develop common modules of education and training, recognized and accepted by all members of the Implementation Group. The development of this international semester will promote the exchange of students, teachers and instructors and contribute to the harmonization of - competences and procedures from similar education profiles. The Erasmus+ Programme will increase exponentially the opportunities of the PoAFA to take part in strategic partnerships and cooperation projects, since most members of these groups are already holders of the ECHE charter. The PoAFA is looking forward to take part in a Key Action 2 project soon.

The PoAFA main priorities, in the domain of cooperation projects and strategic partnerships, within the Erasmus program are:

- The development of multicultural activities leading to a higher awareness of the European identity in teachers, students and administrative staff;
- The enrichment of syllabuses of all courses with the knowledge and experience acquired in foreign institutions;
- The exchange of expert knowledge concerning different teaching methodologies;

- The promotion and cooperation with congeners institutions of joint research and development projects;

The PoAFA has been developing initiatives to integrate HEI scientific and academic network and develop partnerships with those institutions and other foreign scientific institution in the European Union. These partnerships and cooperation aims the increase of scientific research and innovation, the transference of scientific and technological knowledge, the improvement of working skills, and a better understanding of European and Portuguese speaking countries and institutions.

For the PoAFA, the internationalization of students and staff is considered a mean to harmonize the curricula of our education programs with the other military HEI. The objective is to guarantee the same level of skills and competence of Europeans officers, homogenizing the education between allied. The PoAFA is focused in maintaining the curricula programs modernized and updated.

As an HEI, the PoAFA is also focus in Research and Development activities. In the last years, the PoAFA's students and teachers have been actively involved in national and international Research and Development projects, both military and civilian, working closely with other national and international academic entities and enterprises. The mobility of students and staff will allow the PoAFA to keep up with the best practices in this area and further develop our international research networking, both with scientific entities and enterprises.

The PoAFA is looking to increase the awareness of the European Identity. The outbound and inbound mobility of students and staff will allow to share cultural and professional experiences between parties and contribute to the development of common values and a European sense of citizenship.