**ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT**

IES Valle del Cidacos is a high school located in Calahorra, La Rioja, in the north of Spain. The population of the town is around 24,000 people. The main economic activities are agriculture and different manufacturing sectors. The student profile is diverse from lower class in need of help to middle and upper-class students. What is remarkable is the level of integration, which is the key to integrate the different backgrounds and differences between them. The Vocational Education and Training degrees of the higher grades are related to health, business and administration, computer technology, pre-school education, mechanics and potential programmes that may be implemented in the future. By participating in the Erasmus programme, it is expected that our students will be sent to internships in EU host companies for a period of two or three months. Not only will students’ internships be carried out but also staff mobilities will be implemented for teaching or observation in other high schools in Europe.

Our efforts are focused on increasing the number of partners in the E.U. Until now we have been working with different countries in the E.U.: Germany, France, Italy, UK, Romania. We choose our partners so that our students receive a quality training, of course, but there are other aspects that we consider to be really important too such as: language, accommodation, culture and a global vision about how important it is to feel a sense of belonging to the European Union.

It is also remarkable that the students think about mobility as a part of their future career. Now, we can move in between countries and find a job or study there. This change in mindset is a good thing especially now that. We can move between countries and find jobs or study within the EU. This is not emigration; this is integration and globalization and this is the right way to move forward in our lives and is what we are trying to instil in them.

We have some personal contacts in the countries mentioned above and, in the future, the hope is to manage a variety of new ones (Finland, Ireland, Greece, and so on). In this way, they could help us by providing possible companies for their training period from different sectors. In fact, they could help us by hosting our students and offering any assistance they may need.

We hope for the same opportunities for our staff. It would be beneficial if teachers could travel to other countries for both, learning about academic information and working with our peers. These two factors are essential in our job in order to communicate to our students about what is today’s world is like and for learning about other ways of working and studying different ideas, projects and for learning about the variety of cultures of the E.U. Our institution is prepared to host students, as well as teachers and staff.

The expected impacts of our participation in the Erasmus+ programme on the modernisation of our institutions are:

1. Increase the number of VET and higher students to contribute to the E.U. requirements. During the last few years, there is a very important growth, which has contributed encouraging our professionals, thanks to the student mobilities. The enthusiasm and commitment of teachers enabled the programme to get underway and policy makers joined these types of projects. This phenomenon is so outstanding that it is worthy to highlight:
   * Erasmus is based on the philosophy of the founding fathers of Europe, whose aim was to bring people together to promote a sense of belonging, pooling knowledge and networking.
   * Erasmus is a pioneering programme that has been followed by other mobility programmes in primary and secondary schools, VET training and adult education.
   * The fundamental work is done and the implementation is working, it is time to accelerate the process.
2. Improve the quality and importance of higher education in the E.U. The Erasmus+ programme promotes and facilitates the fulfilment of this.
3. Strengthen quality through mobility and cooperation between countries connecting education frameworks. The overall objective of the Erasmus programme is to improve the quality of European Higher Education, to improve and enhance the career prospects of students, to promote intercultural understanding through cooperation with third party countries and to contribute to the sustainable development of third-party countries in the field of higher education. To achieve these objectives, the Erasmus Mundus II programme includes the following activities: Action 2 Erasmus Mundus Partnerships: To perform this action, consortia of higher education institutions will be established in Europe and third-party countries which will act as the basis for structured cooperation, exchange and mobility at all levels of higher education.
4. Connecting education and business: Thanks to the Erasmus programme students are able to put into practice all the knowledge they acquired in the academic world, which alone is insufficient to acquire the global vision that is the European reality in the business world. This junction (education and business) will open up doors to join any labour objective that society demands now.
5. Improve management and financing: With regards to management, it is crucial to get involved all the students, teachers and staff involved. Regarding financing, it could be very important to increase funding in this moment of economic crisis due to the fact that economical resources are not enough to defray costs.

Based on our experiences in previous projects, we believe that in this Erasmus charter our students and staff will be given the opportunity to:

1. Improve the aptitudes and skills they need to access to the global working world.
2. Develop their personal autonomy as well as their linguistic skills and cultural awareness.
3. Increase their professional value by offering them the opportunity to work in other European countries.
4. Intensify their intellectual and affective bonds with the concept of Europe.
5. Increase their interest in going abroad as part of their professional leaning.
6. Meet the growing need our companies have to hire staff with the linguistic skills requiered to foster international relationships.
7. Promote the creation of bonds with schools as well as companies in other countries.

It should also be noted here that our school has welcomed a huge number of students from different countries, all of whom have received the necessary attention by qualified and experienced members of the staff. There is also de adequate staff to attend to the different requirements of students with disabilities and there is full accessibility to any corner of our high school due to the fact that the architectonical barriers have been removed.

As a whole, this charter will contribute to our institutional goals due to the fact that we are a bilingual institution where the feeling of belonging to Europe is extremely important. The main factors that help to reinforce our international strategy are civic responsibility, cultural awareness, and the use of digital tools which will have a direct impact on our ability to become an international institution.