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## 1. Introduction

This outline aims to modify the current policy on internationalization that was completed in 2003 and amended in 2008 and 2016. The contractor is the Board of Directors of the Comenius College and in particular the Director of Education.

‘Looking ahead’

Europe, historically speaking a continent rife with strife and conflict, is now slowly transforming into a multicultural melting-pot. The countries who joined the European Union after the Treaty of Maastricht have become increasingly dependent on one another in both economic and technological sense, even though some countries might deny this. National borders turned out to be troublesome. Local currency certainly had its charm but still had to make way for the Euro in most countries. European balance concerning tax laws, excise duties and other laws and regulations are either already in place or very close to being enforced. Also, the current economic situation (November 2017) gives rise to further cooperation to preserve and extend European unity.

Internationalization would like to, among other things, contribute to the ‘European dimension’ and stimulate tolerance towards other cultures. Perhaps pretentious, but we hope that the Comenius College’s policy concerning internationalization will encourage young people from European countries to meet, mingle and grow closer together.

Internationalization should not be optional but should be a structural part of the school’s curriculum. It speaks for itself that opportunities for activities concerning internationalization will be created within our organisation. Internationalization offers great opportunities for the implementation of cross curricular projects.

In this outline the following will be discussed: goals, organisation, finances and connections with educational development, ‘onderbouw’ (first three years of Dutch high school), ‘VMBO’, bilingual education and developments in ICT. Consequently, this outline can be seen as a tool that can be used to steer the process of internationalization into the right direction.

Internationalization can be implemented in several ways and this outline aims to stimulate all aspects of internationalization. Furthermore, we will discuss how the Comenius College uses bilingual education as a recruitment tool, because for promotional purposes, internationalization and bilingual education can be used as a recruitment tool and it is of great importance to consider this aspect.

The school outline 2013-2018 of the Comenius College has the following policy regarding internationalization:

- “to expand employees’ and students’ boundaries and shows them new worlds”
- “to focus on collaboration with schools abroad”
- “to expand projects on internationalization to all levels and grades”
- “to have internationalization be a part of 80% of all subjects or learning areas”
- “to have, next to their core responsibilities, every employee fulfil tasks concerning counselling/supervision, subject development, internationalization, arts & culture and sports”

Hopefully this policy outline will help our organisation to truly start ‘looking ahead’ by further incorporating internationalization and offering it a permanent position in our organisation.

## **2. Goals**

### **2.1 introduction**

Several educational objectives are mentioned in chapter three of the Comenius College’s school outline. A lot of these objectives are likely to benefit from internationalization, for example:

- Fitting Education
- Active and independent learning while taking responsibility for the learning process
- Broad personal and social development
- Taking differences into consideration
- Ensuring a powerful, content-rich learning environment

All of these aspects will flourish within international projects. Even though this outline has specifically been designed for ‘Lijstersingel’, other parts of the organisation can also benefit from its contents.

Internationalization should not be an extra or optional activity within the curriculum but a fundamental part of the demands in the ‘Programma van Eindtermen Onderbouw’ and the ‘Programma’s van Toetsing en Afsluiting (PTA)’, (the Dutch secondary school curriculum). We aim to incorporate internationalization into each form and we plan to implement this in several stages over the next coming years.

Three general objectives for collaboration between schools in the European Union are mentioned in the outline *Grenzen Verleggen* (Minister of Education Ritzen, December 1991):

- A. Improvement of education;
- B. Expanding the tasks of teachers who participate in international projects;
- C. Contributing to the 'European dimension' in education (enhancing tolerance towards other cultures).

These objectives are still up to date, which is why they be will elaborated on.

#### A. Improvement of education:

Improving yourself is an ever on-going process. If you want to, there are always new opportunities to expand your horizon. However, daily duties often intervene, which hinders the process of finding new ways to teach. Sometimes due to a lack of time, sometimes due to meetings and yearly outlines.

To battle this lack of time, teams have to create room to stimulate new impulses and growth. Internationalization can offer a valuable contribution to the development of our education. Especially if this room can be facilitated within existing curriculums. A new layer of depth is added to specific projects and subjects if a school can place them in context together with other countries. This is especially meaningful if they aren't offered as an extra, but as a substitute of existing individual- or team activities. When the main goal is more and better internationalization, one shouldn't stop at simply working together with foreign schools, but rather offer assignments that can be linked to those schools. For instance, assignments that prepares students to study and/or work abroad.

It's obvious to see that modern foreign languages like English, German and French will profit greatly from such context. It doesn't stop with just the subjects that deal with language however. In fact, subjects like geography and history will benefit from such an implementation just as much. It's safe to say that closer inspection of the possibilities offer endless opportunities for all levels of education.

When learning from the good practices employed by schools in foreign countries, great steps can be made regarding a school's own daily functioning. There is much to be learnt on matters like, for instance, organisation and student guidance. It can be both inspiring and refreshing to see in what way different schools in different countries operate and how their daily systems help offer the best form of education that is possible to them.

#### B. Expanding the tasks of teachers who participate in international projects:

According to the report, *De Toekomst van het Leraarschap* (Van Es, 1994), it is pivotal that a teacher varies more. Internationalization offers countless possibilities for teachers to approach their lessons in a different manner. It is extremely useful for both the individual teacher, as well as an entire department, to have a look at different schools and its operations. While it can be quite time consuming to make and maintain contacts with different schools within the EU, most teachers who do so experience it as a great addition to their daily routines. Apart from this, the European Platform offers teachers from EU countries the opportunity to meet up and exchange their experiences using the so called Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP). Additionally, teachers can receive supplementary schooling in another country. As we speak, the LLP programme is undergoing revisions. This could mean that new and different opportunities are presented to teachers to grow in the context of internationalisation. As of yet, it is unclear in what way the programme might change compared to its current state, if any.

Students from partner schools consider assignments significantly more interesting, due to the international collaborations. Needless to say, this is a great boost to their motivation which in turn is of great benefit to the teacher. A similar conclusion is reached in the report, *Van Startbekwaam tot Excellent Leraarschap* (Schuurmans 2007), where Schuurmans says that a variety in teaching is of vital importance to a teacher's motivation.

In this relation, improving education can only be achieved if Internationalization is beneficial to a school. The final aim for Internationalization projects should be that it greatly enhances positivity throughout the school. It is pivotal that this is achieved, as Internationalization concerns the entire school. For teachers, this means that their voice and the one of their respective sections, is equally important. Internationalization doesn't belong to one person or commission, but should be ingrained in a school's complete system.

#### C. Contributing to the 'European dimension' in education:

Cooperation and indeed corroboration on an educational level within the European Union contributes greatly to the European dimension. Projects and the exchange of knowledge and information needs to reinforce the assumption that working together within the EU is meaningful. To expand the knowledge of one's own culture as well as the culture of our neighbours in the EU is one of the highest achievements this project can hope to accomplish. Additionally, such corroboration helps to battle prejudices and strengthens the bonds of fellowship, which will lead to a greater

respect for each other's differences. These are all values that are deeply ingrained in the identity of the Comenius College.

## **2.2 The importance of internationalization**

Internationalization is of great importance for the school and its students and employees.

We can distinguish the following objectives:

### **2.2.1 For the students:**

On a social and personal level:

- becoming aware of their European identity and learning to place their own frame of reference into the bigger picture;
- becoming familiar with cultural differences and values of others in order to shift their perspective. Developing a certain level of respect for the culture and values of others and becoming more aware of their own culture;
- enhancing social skills. Especially during exchange programmes, students and teachers are placed in different environments. Internationalization helps both groups to learn to stand on their own two feet, to learn to adapt to different situations and to learn to cooperate in a 'strange' environment.
- develop and strengthen the ability to adapt, persevere and be independent;
- become familiar with working abroad and/or in an international environment;
- making friends 'beyond borders'.

On an educational level:

- enhancing reading skills;
- enhancing language knowledge and skills, boosting motivation for 'learning', understanding the benefits of the subjects they are taught in school regarding their future;
- using ICT, international activities stimulate the use of modern communication tools;
- boosting study-skills; due to current trends in education it is important that students do not solely acquire the required knowledge, but they also have to master certain practical skills. Internationalization stimulates the acquirement of these skills;

On an economic level:

- increasing job opportunities and employability (apprenticeships abroad as a part of internationalization)

### 2.2.2 For the teachers

- didactic and subject related development (being inspired to innovate);
- reflecting on one's performance and the school's performance;
- applying ICT regarding internationalization;
- being challenged by 'the new';
- carry more responsibility for a part of the school's policy;
- learning to develop lesson materials on project basis and in an international environment.

### 2.2.3 For the school

International projects can:

- improve the quality of education;
- be motivating for both students and teachers;
- shed a positive light on the school's reputation; can have a recruiting effect towards primary schools, potential students and their parents;
- contribute to the 'European dimension' of education by stimulating international contacts;
- stimulate collaboration, cooperation and cross-curricular education;
- generate enthusiasm among (a part of) the employees;
- lead to adjustments of the curriculum in order to better prepare students for an international society.

## 2.3 Goals concerning the Comenius College's policy on internationalization

In conclusion, the goals for internationalization are as follows:

- ensuring students' places in a living and working environment that is becoming increasingly international;
- integrating subjects through internationalization, in all forms;
- contributing to didactical and subject related development of teachers;
- exploiting cross-curricular learning;
- ensuring the school's reputation in the region.



## 2.4 Approach of Comenius College's policy on internationalization

- introducing the international projects in phases;
- offer employees the opportunity to participate in international projects;
- guiding students in education and schooling and ensuring students' places in a living and working environment that is becoming increasingly international;
- keeping up with ICT policies;
- appointing people to coordinate internationalization.

## 2.5 Conditions

These goals can only be achieved if a number of conditions are met. These conditions can be divided into educational conditions and material conditions:

### 2.5.1 Educational conditions

- students know their way around computers and the internet;
- students are given the opportunity to learn more about ICT in the first form;
- teachers are given the opportunity to learn more about internationalization and ICT (see also: 'finances, chapter 5');
- students work with study planners and/or are capable of working independently;
- internationalization is introduced in phases, gradually. It is impossible to introduce international activities within all forms at once.

### 2.5.2 Material conditions

- good ICT-facilities are available for both students and employees (see attachment 1);
- there's a library and/or study area available with internet possibilities;
- every student has a school email-address.

## 3. Activities Lijstersingel

### 3.1 Introduction

It is important to achieve cooperation and understanding for internationalization among personnel.

The academic terms 2007/2008 2008/2009 and 2014/2015 were used to work out ideas and possibilities within the unit 'Lijstersingel'. These tasks were appointed to a 'Coordinator Internationalization'. Ideas from colleagues and the possibilities within the curriculum were used as a framework for developing activities.

A start has been made with a couple of small projects in the first three forms of, in particular, the bilingual department. Because of this it is possible to offer schooling regarding internationalization. The gained knowledge will be passed on to colleagues within the team. There are also several international projects in place in the upper forms, in particular in year 4 of 'HAVO' and year 5 of 'VWO'. To guard the process of internationalization, the members of the internationalization group, founded in the academic term 2012/2014, will gather once a month. During those meetings the focus will be on the following:

- the international activities should fit within the outline of the policy 'internationalization' and the school outline of the Comenius College, Lijstersingel;
- the activities should be SMART, should fit the curriculum and shouldn't lead to increase of the current workload;
- for each project an objective, the participants and the appraisal should be determined (see format);
- development of activities for both students and teachers;
- make and maintain contact with schools abroad;
- determine who is responsible for what, who, where and how;
- create a time frame with moments for evaluation;
- using existing excursions abroad as a blueprint for international projects;
- writing a financial plan for these activities.

### 3.2 Concise overview of activities for the coordinator

He/she

1. keeps the current outline regarding internationalization up to date;
2. establishes which activities will take place during the academic term (2016-2017);
3. contacts possible candidates through the principal;
4. gives advice in regards to possible options concerning internationalization;
5. reports to the principal (either face-to-face or on paper)

## 4. Internationalization committee

### 4.1 Introduction

For the sake of educational parity, it is important that internationalization activities are synchronised with one another. The idea is to have internationalization gently phased in into the curriculum, starting with the lower forms. For an easy transition, it is important that they are compatible with activities that already exist. This follows the organisational plan of the Comenius College, location Lijstersingel, which contains the executive outline that internationalization has a fixed spot in the educational policy and as such it can be seen as inherently interwoven with the school's identity. This doesn't mean that upper forms don't do internationalization projects at all. It is very much desirable that the lower and upper forms create a plan that connects both forms, especially concerning the bilingual department.

### 4.2 Task description of the internationalization committee

#### General

The main focus of the internationalization committee is to fine tune internationalization activities, to create synergy, to give advice and to create policy proposals concerning internationalization.

History has told us that the idea to participate with a European educational project, usually stems from one individual member of the team or from a select few likeminded teammembers. However, in order to achieve a successful outcome for such projects, it is pivotal that this freshly sprung enthusiasm spreads across an entire school's community. This means that not only teachers, but also support staff, parents and the surrounding community are involved.

It is important that direct internationalization facilitates and initiates. To help this process, it is a requirement that a member of the board of directors is part of the committee. They can act as the linking chain between the committee and the board of directors.

Teachers and students need to be motivated and actively engaged for internationalization.

### 4.3 Tasks chairman commission international projects

It is important for the commission to assign a chairman.

#### Tasks:

- organises and coordinates the projects;
- prepares at least three meetings per academic term;
- informs the board regarding internationalization;
- answers questions regarding internationalization.

## 4.4 Facilities and finances

Each academic term, the coordinator and principal will determine which finances and facilities will be needed.

For the projects:

For each project this depends on how much financial aid can be received.

The commission will determine what kind of facilities are needed for each project.

This meeting will preferably take place before the yearly tasks are divided.

## 4.5 Other task that will befall the commission

These tasks will be discussed with management. Furthermore, it might be the case that other, specific tasks will arise along the way due to new projects.

General tasks:

- Informing colleagues about international projects;
- stimulating international projects according to this outline;
- evaluating both product and process;
- maintaining contact with foreign partners;
- coordinating international projects;
- investigate possibilities and to apply for financial aid;
- coordinating both internal and external PR regarding international projects;
- answer questions of teachers, unit managers and others;
- assuring internationalization gets a place in other school policies, outlines and plans.

It is possible that members of the commission are assigned tasks that were originally appointed to the chairman, as long as all parties agree with this. The number of participants can differ per unit. School management determines this.

## 5. Finances

### 5.1 introduction

In order to keep all finances in check it is crucial that a separate account is opened especially for internationalization.

For several projects it is possible to request subsidy from the European Platform or other organisations. This subsidy is usually appointed for two academic terms, and should be transferred to the previously mentioned separate bank account.

**In general, the expenses can be separated as follows:**

## **5.2 Teacher training**

### **5.2.1 Training committee**

Especially the coordinators will need training in the start-up phase. Training can also take place within the walls of the school. If chosen for the latter, the 'train the trainer' principle will be used.

### **5.2.2 General training**

There are several subsidy plans for this, which will cover the costs in most cases. Depending on the topic and the person, extra finances can be added to this budget, like personal retraining and further education funds, or from the general budget for internationalization.

It is important that the different units come to an agreement about this.

Training will always take place after consulting the unit-principal. The chairman of the committee will request the Director of Education for school-broad training.

## **5.3 Call charges**

Call charges will be taken from the project's budget if these calls are conducted at school.

## **5.4 Follow-up costs**

Depending on the different projects, we strive to use subsidy plans whenever possible.

Furthermore, besides the options that the European Platform offers us, it might be possible to take sponsorships by other parties into consideration.

If necessary, parents will be asked for a contribution.

## **5.5 Personnel costs**

This will be determined in consultation with the unit-principal.

## **6. Education policy – draft**

### **6.1 Minimum requirements**

The minimum requirement is for each and every Comenius College student to participate in an international project at least once.

Participation is obligatory. However, parents can object to their child participating in an exchange programme.

In this case, the school will offer them an alternative programme.

### **6.2 Lower forms secondary education and ‘MAVO/VMBO’**

The foundations for the internationalization policy should be built in the first three forms.

If we want to prepare our students for the ‘Europe of the future’ (and of today), we will have to draw parallels with neighbouring countries and make comparisons while teaching our different subjects.

The task of the internationalization committee is, among other things, to put together an activity outline that starts in the first form up until the second to last form (3 ‘MAVO/VMBO’, 4 ‘HAVO’, 5 ‘VWO’)

The new learning routes in ‘VMBO’ focus more on skills, and internationalization can provide great benefits for this.

The main goals in the first three forms have three things in common. They focus on practical application, skills and cohesion. Besides the main goals, the possibility of course integration is offered. Examples of this are projects like ‘Life Long Learning’ and exchange programmes.

In the first three forms, students will exchange emails with students abroad through cross-curricular learning and theme based learning. Obviously this will first be discussed with the foreign partner schools.

### **6.3 ICT**

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is now part of the new exam programmes in most subjects. Having to integrate ICT in our education is therefore inevitable.

ICT is a crucial part of exchange programmes. Traditional means of communication like telephone, fax and post have been replaced by email and Internet. The Internet also plays an important role in doing research and gathering information. During the preparations for an exchange programme, the students can contact each other through e-mail or social media and/or video conferencing.

For certain subjects lessons can be developed around a specific theme, or be a part of cross-curricular projects.

Modern foreign languages can use email for their communication exchange programmes. Projects that come into being through these programmes can use ICT to create products together, like for example PowerPoint presentations.

Obviously, other forms of technology can also be used. For example WiFi, I-Pods and I-Pads, among other things.

## **6.4 Career orientation**

A lot of studies, and not solely economic ones, prepare students for international jobs.

It is important for students to delve into the different possibilities of further education after finishing high school and possible future jobs.

Students are required to write a report after their exchange in which they describe what they have learnt and how this might help them make future career choices. Experience tells us that internationalization has a positive effect on becoming familiar with one's own expectations and possibilities in regards to education and occupation.

There will soon be more possibilities to (partly) study abroad while keeping one's scholarship and with appointment of international accredited ECTSs. Students who have been given the opportunity to delve into the manifold possibilities of studying abroad are more likely to actually take the plunge and set off for an international adventure.

It is of utmost importance that deans are able to give up-to-date advice regarding follow-up education, scholarships and professional opportunities abroad.

## 7. Personnel policy

### 7.1 Introduction

In order to make internationalization work within our organisation it is important to have the support of school management, teachers, parents, support staff and last but not least: the students.

The committee should keep teachers up to date regarding the various possibilities concerning internationalization. For example by handing out copies of 'IPE', the magazine published by the European Platform.

Keeping one's subject knowledge up to date and continuing to be inspired is a positive side effect of teacher exchange programs. It is therefore logical that the school outline mentions the importance of it.

The Erasmus+ programme is a programme that focusses on additional training and refresher courses for teachers. The KA1 training course offers an excellent opportunity for teachers, headmasters, career consultants, trainers and HRM professionals to participate in international courses in different European countries.

### 7.2 Additional training for teachers (Erasmus+) (KA1)

- offers refresher courses and additional training for European teachers;
- language teachers can get additional finances for additional training through Erasmus+;
- nowadays, future teachers are offered opportunities for apprenticeships abroad;
- teachers can receive a 'VIOS' scholarship for study trips to EU-countries and Morocco (at least one week – a maximum of three weeks – sometimes 4-13 weeks);
- through the Erasmus+ programme, school managers and coordinators can attend study weeks abroad;
- additional training and refresher courses are also possible through the Council of Europe;
- seminars, projects and group study trips will be announced on the website of Nufic ([www.nuffic.nl](http://www.nuffic.nl)).