



Supporting internationalisation of HE through professionalising services for mobile academic staff

Successful integration of international academics is a key element in building truly international HE institutions. Incoming PhD students and academics receiving high-quality assistance before, during and even after their stay can enjoy the full benefits of their mobility and contribute better to the work and life of the departments and research teams they join. HE institutions able to provide such support can be more successful in attracting and retaining talents.

How to engage with us:

- Higher Education professionals: Test our model welcome service framework and explore the training programme for HE support and management staff
- Various higher education stakeholders: Join us at various events to learn more about our key findings and recommendations

Over the past decade many universities in the Central-Eastern and South-Eastern European (CESE) region have made great progress in developing welcome services and professional capacities to support mobility of (under) graduate students. Services to support international inbound PhD students and academics coming for their mid-term or long-term mobility have not developed at the same speed, nor to the same extent. Along with a growing ambition of HE institutions in the CESE region to make their teaching and research more international, there comes a need for a more strategic approach to enhancing institutional welcoming culture and further professionalisation of services for this target group.

The EU funded Erasmus+ project UniWeliS

is creating practical tools to facilitate such development reflecting the specific HE institutional realities in the target region whilst deploying synergies with other already existing support services provided at institutional, local or national level (e.g. the EURAXESS network, Migration information centres, etc.).



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Main outcomes and activities:

Who are the project partners?

In this project, six partners from five countries are joining their forces to work together, among them three universities, two mobility funding agencies and a European-level federation of national organisations supporting HE internationalisation.

Project timeframe:
November 2020 – June 2023



SAIA, n. o., Slovak Academic Information Agency, Slovakia
www.saia.sk



Academic Cooperation Association, Belgium
<https://aca-secretariat.be>



Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange, Poland
<https://nawa.gov.pl/en/>



Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski”, Bulgaria
www.uni-sofia.bg



Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia
<https://uniba.sk>



University of Nis, Serbia
www.ni.ac.rs

01. Identified obstacles to incoming academic staff mobility and understanding of the institutional gaps for more welcoming services

Report: Attracting and Supporting International PhD Students, Lecturers, and Researchers in Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe: Current Status and Recommended Improvements



- Desk research & open survey among international PhD students and academics
- **640** valid responses from **89** countries
- **70** interviews with higher education administrative and managerial staff in **10** countries in the **CESE region**

02. A strategic model welcome service framework, good practices and online planning tool

- a user-friendly online **UniWelis Explorer App** with:
 - more than **60** recommended practices for HEIs for advancing institutional strategies and activities towards international PhDs and academic staff
 - integrated tool to tailor-make your institutional improvement profile and share it with your team
<https://app.uniwelis.saia.sk>

- Pilot testing of the framework
- A **collection of good practices** and sharing feedback: <https://bit.ly/uniwelis-app-input>

03. A comprehensive training programme including an online version

- 6 training modules:
 - Institutional welcome centre – Strategic and practical considerations
 - Comprehensive approach to welcome services
 - Local partnerships
 - Intercultural communication
 - Digital welcome centre
 - Global profile, promotion & visibility

- International pilot training for staff from the project consortium members in October 2022 in Sofia
- Online course available by June 2023

04. Workshops and conference

- National workshops for HE staff and key stakeholders in Bulgaria, Poland and Serbia
- An international conference in Slovakia for HEIs across the CESE region and the European level actors active in promoting the internationalisation of higher education.

