

## Who are we?

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The IntlUni Erasmus Academic Network may be considered a microcosm of European higher education in general. Adopting Knight's generic definition, internationalisation is understood as *the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, function or delivery of higher education at the institutional and national levels* (Knight 2008:21f), and members of the IntlUni partnership are at very diverse stages of development in their internationalisation efforts. This diversity is considered an asset for the objectives of the Network project and manifests itself on different parameters:

Size and geographical spread: There are 38 HEIs in the Inner Circle of the IntlUni partnership, representing 27 countries from Ireland to Turkey and from Finland to Tunisia. The size of institutions differs from a few thousand to almost 150,000. Most of the HEIs are in locations with one official language, but there are also HEIs in border areas or in bi-/multilingual countries.

Internationalisation as a result of strategic decisions: For some of the partners, internationalisation of research and education is the result of strategic decisions at the top management level, whereas for others it is much more the result of ad hoc initiatives driven by committed individuals in different parts of the organisation. Few HEIs would define themselves exclusively at one or the other end of a continuum between ad hoc bottom up initiatives and top down implementations of management decisions. Rather, they would see themselves somewhere in between the two extremes in a dynamic process involving top down as well as bottom up initiatives.

Partner representatives: While the individuals representing the partner institutions may all be considered experts within the field of internationalisation, they fulfil a diverse set of job functions in their own HEIs: Senior researchers, PhD students, full time lecturers in non-language subjects, language teachers, educational developers and administrative staff in international offices, some in leadership positions and others as teachers or administrators 'on the ground'.

Language(s) of instruction: The language(s) of instruction may be the national or regional language of a given HEIs, it may be a major – non-local – language or a combination of local and non-local languages. The choice of language(s) very much depends on the local setting. Not surprisingly, English has been adopted as the language of instruction in an increasing number of programmes, but other major European languages are also introduced as the medium of instruction in some programmes, e.g. Russian in Lithuania or German in Hungary. In addition to this, there are special cases where the country or region is officially bi- or multilingual. This has led the project to develop a [spectrum of modalities](#), presented as one of the outcomes of the first year of the project.

Knight, J. (2008) *Higher Education in Turmoil. The Changing World of Internationalization*. Sense Publishers.