

Europeanisation within the University of Malta

Dr. Joseph Mifsud

The Socrates Office is responsible for the facilitation and support of the Europeanisation of University of Malta.

This work includes:

- providing support to students, both incoming and outgoing, with, for example, European involvement, orientation, EFL and registry; and liaising with other Departments as appropriate.
- working with the International Office in forming links with partner institutions abroad, and ensuring that existing links are effectively administered.
- disseminating information within the University on mobility opportunities in Europe through REFUND, CORDIS, EurAlert, the Official Journals and other appropriate sources.
- investigating opportunities for external funding e.g. ERASMUS/SOCRATES and LEONARDO, and submitting applications for these funds.
- facilitating and maximising the use of the University contracts with external consultants and EC sources where appropriate.
- administering the SOCRATES programme.

Information on our Intended Participation in the SOCRATES Programme

The University has been awarded a contract by the European Commission covering various collaborative activities within the SOCRATES programme.

These activities include:

Student Mobility

Staff Mobility

ECTS Units

Intensive Programmes and the participation in thematic networks.

We have collaborative links, which involve around 55 partner institutions.

The Santander Group, the Utrecht Network and the Campostela Group are academic groupings that provide the majority of these partnership links.

In terms of Europeanisation, the University has set up an EU Impact Committee chaired by one of the Pro-Rectors whose members have visited pre-accession countries and their higher education institutions with the intent of building up provision for the different scenarios expected in Europe. Work on this aspect has been intense and Slovenia, a small comparable alpine state and Hungarian Institutions were targeted in this regard.

The University has also provided a number of information sessions for Students and Staff on EU related matters. Experts from the European Commission visited Malta and the University. The University was also one of the focal points for the screening and negotiating teams vis-a-vis Malta's accession policy.

Support services are also being set up mainly in terms of the Registrar's Office, the Finance Office of the University and the Library services. Staff from these offices have shadowed their European counterparts and attended sessions in Brussels aimed at bringing them in line with EU regulations and directives.

The University has hosted the Utrecht Network meeting in Malta and also co-organised the International Bureau of Education-Unesco conference for Education Ministers and their Directors of Curriculum to launch the Euro-Med Network, hence supporting the regional euro-mediterranean vocation of this institution. This year has also seen the holding of the Erasmus-Socrates National Agencies Meeting which discussed the participation of Higher Education Institutions in Socrates II.

Further links are expected especially in the Education-Industry participation at regional level, where the University of Malta is keen to exploit its strategic niche in attracting both international students and international projects to its shores.

(For further information about our participation in the SOCRATES programme, please refer to the website at: <http://home.um.edu.mt/socrates>)

Dr. Mifsud is Head of the Department of Primary Education, Faculty of Education and Manager of the University's Socrates Office.