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UNATC Internationalisation Strategy

1. Introduction and context

This strategy sets out how the National University of Theatre and Film "I.L. Caragiale" Bucharest (UNATC) will develop its international dimension over 2024–2027.

Founded in 1954, UNATC is the only Romanian state higher education institution covering two fundamental fields: Theatre and Performing Arts, and Film and Media Studies. Its mission is to act as a national cultural centre that forms, develops, transmits and disseminates cultural values, and to serve as a benchmark for Romanian art and culture.

UNATC offers bachelor's, master's and doctoral programmes in its two faculties, Theatre and Film, and its profile has become increasingly interdisciplinary. It now includes programmes in animation (a bachelor's and a master's in Animated Film, and a master's in Animation Theatre), lighting design (the master's in Design, Light and Sound in the Performing Arts) and photography (a bachelor's in Photography). Several master's programmes are taught in English, including Art of Game Design, Interactive Technologies for Performing and Media Arts, Design for New Media, and Audiovisual Archives – Preservation and Programming. This makes UNATC open to international students and partners. CINETic, the International Center for Research and Education in Innovative Creative Technologies, is the university's research department for digital interaction and neuroscience applied to the performing arts and film.

2. Vision, mission and guiding principles

Vision. By 2027, UNATC is a regional hub for artistic education and research in South-East and Central-Eastern Europe, recognised internationally for theatre, film and media, and for interdisciplinary work linking the arts with technology, medicine and applied research.

Mission of internationalisation. To build an open, connected academic community that takes an active part in global artistic dialogue. UNATC does this through mobility, joint projects, co-productions and research with partner universities and cultural organisations in Europe and beyond.

Guiding principles

- Artistic excellence and learning by doing. In theatre, film and media, competencies are acquired through practice. International activity must give students and staff formative professional experience.
- Inclusion and non-discrimination. Admission, selection and learning do not discriminate on grounds of nationality, religion, gender, political affiliation or social origin. UNATC actively widens participation for students and staff with fewer opportunities.

- Student-centred learning. International experience supports each student's own artistic path, initiative and responsibility.
- Mutual recognition and quality. Mobility is based on full recognition of learning outcomes and on a transparent, well-supported process.
- Cultural diplomacy. Exchanges and productions act as tools of intercultural dialogue, especially with emerging and vulnerable regions.
- Sustainability. Partnerships are built for the long term, with diversified funding and, where possible, green and digital formats.

3. Current situation (baseline 2025)

In 2025 UNATC carried out 201 Erasmus+ mobilities (KA131 and KA171): 160 outgoing and 41 incoming, with 25 active Erasmus+ partner institutions in 15 countries.

Category	Mobility type	Field	Incoming	Outgoing
Students	Study	Theatre (BA/MA)	9	35
Students	Study	Film (BA/MA/PhD)	23	30
Students	Traineeship	Theatre (BA/MA/PhD)	0	40
Students	Traineeship	Film (BA/MA/PhD)	1	31
Staff	Teaching	Theatre & Film	5	1
Staff	Training	Academic & administrative	3	23
Total			41	160

Key achievements

- Partnerships. Presence at EAIE, EURIE and APAIE and at education fairs in Tunisia, Morocco and Kenya, with an average of 6 MoUs signed per event.
- Recruitment. International master's applicants from Kenya, Zambia and Tunisia, and a database of over 75 prospective international students.
- Project demand. About 16 invitations from universities in Europe, Asia, North Africa and South America to join European applications for 2026.
- Networks. Founding role in the Interbalkan Network of Art, Education and Culture; accession to CEEPUS; membership of CILECT, ELIA, SEECS, ISTA, IDEA and other associations.
- Projects. Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programmes (e.g. DOC Student Hub), ELICIA (creative leadership and ethical AI in arts education, 6 countries) and SoliCultEU (cultural solidarity).
- Artistic visibility. Student films and performances selected at Cannes (La Cinef), Annecy, Sarajevo, Biarritz, Shanghai and other festivals; CineMAiubit hosted over 30 partner universities.

- European dialogue. A 20-member delegation at the European Parliament in Brussels (11–12 November 2025) on funding and policy for arts universities.
- Communication. A Visual Identity Manual (approved 29 October 2025) and a website fully translated into English and French.

Strengths and challenges

Strengths	Challenges
Strong outgoing traineeship demand (71 students), linked to labour-market entry	Mobility imbalance: 41 incoming vs 160 outgoing; incoming staff teaching is low (5)
Unique national profile in theatre, film and media; internationally recognised productions	Outgoing staff teaching mobility is very low (1)
Seven English-taught programmes; CINETic infrastructure	Competition from arts universities in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic
Growing network beyond Europe (Georgia, Moldova, Turkey, North Africa, Asia)	Budget fluctuations and dependence on Erasmus+ funding
Experience in BIPs and European projects as partner	Limited experience as coordinator of Erasmus+ cooperation projects; occasional delays in Transcripts of Records

4. Strategic objectives

UNATC pursues eight strategic objectives, grouped under three directions: expansion of academic networks, competitiveness through interdisciplinarity, and diversification of the resources that fund international work.

SO1. Expand and consolidate international partnerships

- Deepen cooperation with existing Erasmus+ partners and turn the most active ones into strategic partnerships (joint projects, co-productions, joint courses).
- Open structured cooperation with institutions in Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Albania, Armenia, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, India and Vietnam, using Erasmus+ KA171 where eligible.
- Develop the Interbalkan Network of Art, Education and Culture towards a stable legal form, such as a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC).

SO2. Increase and balance academic mobility

- Increase student, teaching and administrative staff mobility each year through Erasmus+, CEEPUS and bilateral agreements.

- Raise incoming student and staff numbers, using the English-taught programmes and an improved welcome package.
- Strengthen outgoing staff teaching mobility and invite renowned international artists and scholars to teach at UNATC.
- Integrate master's and doctoral students into international academic and professional contexts.

SO3. Develop international artistic research and innovation

- Build joint research projects, creative labs, workshops and residencies with partners.
- Prioritise interdisciplinary themes: immersive technologies and VR, ethical use of AI in artistic creation, neuroscience and the arts, and theatre and film for mental health.
- Use CINETic as a platform for international research partnerships.

SO4. Increase international artistic visibility

- Develop international theatre and film co-productions with partner universities and cultural organisations.
- Support student films and performances at major international festivals.
- Strengthen CineMAiubit and other UNATC festivals as international meeting points.

SO5. Participate in international projects and diversify funding

- Take part in Erasmus+ cooperation projects as partner and, from 2027, as coordinator (see Section 6).
- Apply to Creative Europe, Horizon Europe, Interreg and national internationalisation grants (CNFIS-FDI, FSS).

SO6. Strengthen international communication and support services

- Apply the Visual Identity Manual and Communication Guide consistently in international promotion.
- Keep English and French web content current, with clear information on mobility, programmes and cooperation.
- Continue targeted presence at EAIE, EURIE, APAIE, NAFSA and regional education fairs.

SO7. Develop regional mobility through CEEPUS

In 2025 UNATC joined CEEPUS (Central European Exchange Program for University Studies). CEEPUS becomes a second mobility channel, complementary to Erasmus+, for Central and Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova.

- Join existing CEEPUS networks in performing arts, film and media, and propose a UNATC-coordinated network with regional arts universities.

- Link CEEPUS networks with the Interbalkan Network of Art, Education and Culture, so that both reinforce each other.
- Use CEEPUS for student and staff mobility, short-term excursions with students and summer schools where Erasmus+ funding is limited.
- Promote CEEPUS calls alongside Erasmus+ calls on the UNATC website and at information sessions.

SO8. Open cooperation with the Americas

UNATC will open structured cooperation with universities and cultural institutions in North and South America. It builds on existing links: collaboration with NYU Steinhardt on "The Role-Playing Brain", a workshop led by Yale School of Drama faculty, the Fulbright page on the UNATC website and project invitations from South American institutions.

- Sign inter-institutional agreements and MoUs with selected film and theatre schools in the United States, Canada and Latin America.
- Open the Americas region in Erasmus+ International Mobility (KA171), starting with North America, within the limits the programme sets for each region.
- Use Fulbright and other bilateral programmes for staff and doctoral mobility.
- Invite partners from the Americas into Erasmus+ BIPs, Capacity Building projects and CineMAiubit.

5. Erasmus+ Policy

Erasmus+ is the core of UNATC's internationalisation and modernisation strategy. This section restates the university's Erasmus Policy Statement and the commitments it made under the ECHE.

5.1 Role of Erasmus+ in the institutional strategy

UNATC sees Erasmus+ as both a source and a resource for internationalisation. The programme supports:

- study exchange and academic cooperation with European and partner-country institutions;
- higher quality standards in teaching and artistic creation, through continuous exchange of practice;
- respect for cultural and linguistic diversity;
- curriculum reform towards international openness and mobility;
- graduate employability, mainly through traineeship mobility;
- access for people with fewer opportunities, as part of the social dimension of higher education.

5.2 Erasmus+ actions UNATC takes part in

Action	What UNATC does
KA131 – Mobility with EU Member States and associated countries	Student study and traineeship mobility; staff teaching and training mobility
KA171 – International mobility	Mobility with third countries not associated to the programme (e.g. Georgia, Moldova, Armenia, USA, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina)
Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs)	Short joint programmes combining online and physical activity, such as DOC Student Hub
KA2 cooperation projects	Cooperation Partnerships, Capacity Building in Higher Education and other actions (Section 6)

5.3 Inclusion and non-discrimination

UNATC promotes non-discrimination in all its actions. Admission, selection and learning do not discriminate on grounds of nationality, religion, gender, political affiliation or social origin, and the student body is gender-balanced. The university uses its infrastructure, financial and academic means to increase the participation of students and staff with fewer opportunities, including through Erasmus+ inclusion top-ups.

5.4 Mobility management and recognition

The Erasmus+ Office organises and supervises every mobility, for incoming and outgoing students/staff. The process is:

1. Promotion. Calls are published on the UNATC website and through online media, student events, brochures and video.
2. Selection. A transparent selection by a committee that analyses each file, the applicant's motivation and their needs.
3. Nomination. The Erasmus+ Office is responsible for nominating students to the partner institutions to which they intend to apply.
4. Learning Agreement. Drafted with the student and the Erasmus+ Responsible Teacher/Erasmus+ Office to select the most suitable courses/activities at the host institution.
5. Monitoring. Continuous contact during the mobility, with reminders before it ends and support for any problem reported.
6. Recognition. The Erasmus+ Office and the responsible departments handle the academic recognition process for beneficiaries upon their return from mobility.

5.5 Horizontal priorities

UNATC promotes the four horizontal priorities of the Erasmus+ Programme: inclusion and diversity, digital transformation, environmental sustainability, and participation in democratic life. These priorities are integrated into all stages of Erasmus+ mobilities, ensuring equal opportunities, encouraging sustainable practices, supporting digitalisation, and promoting European values and intercultural exchange.

5.6 Expected impact

- Enhanced readiness of graduates for the European and international labor markets.
- Elevated international visibility for UNATC's academic programs, artistic productions, and the CINETic research infrastructure.
- An increased influx of incoming international students.
- Continuous advancement of teaching quality by integrating best practices brought back by mobile staff.

6. Participation in Erasmus+ cooperation projects

UNATC will take part in Erasmus+ cooperation projects with other institutions, first as a partner and, from 2027, also as coordinator. Demand is already there: after the 2025 fairs, UNATC received about 16 invitations to join European applications for 2026.

6.1 Why cooperation projects matter

- They move partnerships beyond mobility, into joint curricula, research and co-productions.
- They bring UNATC's specific expertise (performing arts, film, animation, immersive media, artistic pedagogy) into interdisciplinary consortia.
- They build the experience UNATC needs to coordinate its own projects.
- They diversify funding beyond the mobility budget.

6.2 Target actions

Action	UNATC's intended role	Example themes
KA220-HED Cooperation Partnerships	Partner from 2026; coordinator from 2027	Artistic pedagogy, AI ethics in creation, arts and mental health
KA210 Small-scale Partnerships	Partner or coordinator with cultural organisations	Workshops, residencies, Theatre in schools
Blended Intensive Programmes	Partner and host	Documentary, animation, immersive media, summer schools

Action	UNATC's intended role	Example themes
Capacity Building in Higher Education	Partner with institutions in Georgia, Moldova, North Africa, Asia	Curriculum development in film and theatre
Alliances for Innovation	Partner with technical universities and creative industries	Art, technology and applied research
European Universities alliances	Explore membership of an arts-focused or regional alliance	Long-term institutional integration
Jean Monnet actions	Explore	European cultural policy and arts education

6.3 Priority partners and networks

- Existing Erasmus+ partners (25 institutions in 15 countries).
- Research partners such as Istanbul Kültur University, Burgas Free University and LUT University (Lappeenranta-Lahti).
- The Interbalkan Network of Art, Education and Culture (Hellenic Open University, National Theatre of Northern Greece, Athens Epidaurus Festival, University American College Skopje, Institute of Art Studies of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Faculty of Dramatic Arts Belgrade, Babeș-Bolyai University and others).
- International networks: CILECT, ELIA, SEECS, AFNedu, CEEPUS.

6.4 How UNATC selects and joins projects

1. Receive the invitation. All invitations go to the International Relations / Erasmus+ Office.
2. Assess fit. The office checks the proposal against the strategic objectives (Section 4), the partners' profile and UNATC's capacity to deliver.
3. Consult faculties. The relevant faculty and department confirm academic interest and name a project contact person.
4. Approve. University management approves participation and any co-financing.
5. Sign the mandate. UNATC submits the mandate letter and contributes to the application.
6. Implement and report. If funded, a project team runs UNATC's work packages; results are shared across the university.

Selection criteria: relevance to UNATC's fields, added value for students and staff, quality and reliability of the consortium, realistic workload and budget, and potential for follow-up projects.

7. Implementation

The Vice-Rector responsible for international relations leads the strategy, with the International Relations and Erasmus+ Office running it day to day and the faculties delivering the academic content.

7.1 Responsibilities

Body	Role
Senate and Administrative Board	Approve the strategy, its annual review and co-financing
Vice-Rector for International Relations	Leads and coordinates the strategy; reports annually
International Relations / Erasmus+ Office	Manages mobility, agreements, project applications and reporting
Faculties (Theatre, Film) and departments	Academic coordination, project content
CINETic and research centres	Lead on research and technology partnerships
Communication department	International promotion, website, visual identity

7.2 Action plan 2024–2027

Action	Objective	Lead	Timeline
Review all inter-institutional agreements; add partners in priority regions	SO1	Erasmus+ Office	2026, then yearly
Apply for KA171 with partners in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, North Africa	SO1, SO2	Erasmus+ Office	Each annual call
Welcome package and buddy system for incoming students and staff	SO2	Erasmus+ Office, student associations	2026–2027
Staff teaching mobility campaign and visiting artist programme	SO2	Faculties	From 2026
Assess the 16 project invitations received for 2026	SO5	Erasmus+ Office, management	2026
Join at least 2 KA220 or BIP consortia per year as partner	SO3, SO5	Erasmus+ Office, faculties	From 2024

Action	Objective	Lead	Timeline
Submit UNATC's first KA220-HED as coordinator	SO5	Erasmus+ Office, faculties	2027
Develop the Interbalkan Network towards an EGTC	SO1	Management	2026–2027
International co-productions with partner universities	SO4	Faculties	From 2026
Presence at EAIE, EURIE, APAIE and regional fairs	SO6	Erasmus+ Office, communication	Yearly
Training for staff in project writing and management	SO5	Erasmus+ Office	2026–2027
Join existing CEEPUS networks in arts, film and media	SO7	Erasmus+ Office, faculties	2026
Propose a UNATC-coordinated CEEPUS network	SO7	Erasmus+ Office	2027
Sign agreements with selected universities in the United States, Canada and Latin America	SO8	Management, Erasmus+ Office	2026–2027
Include Latin American partners in a KA171 application	SO8	Erasmus+ Office	2027

7.3 Resources

The strategy is funded mainly by Erasmus+ (KA131, KA171, KA2), complemented by Creative Europe, Horizon Europe, Interreg, CEEPUS, national grants (CNFIS-FDI, FSS) and UNATC's own budget. UNATC will invest in staff capacity for project writing and management, since this is the main condition for coordinating projects.

8. Monitoring, evaluation and indicators

The International Relations / Erasmus+ Office reports on these indicators each year in the annual internationalisation report. The Senate reviews the strategy each year and at the end of the period.

Indicator	Baseline 2025	Target 2027
Outgoing student mobilities (study + traineeship)	136	160
Incoming student mobilities	33	60

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Indicator	Baseline 2025	Target 2027
Outgoing staff teaching mobilities	1	15
Incoming staff teaching mobilities	5	15
Outgoing staff training mobilities	23	30
Active Erasmus+ partner institutions	25	35
Erasmus+ cooperation projects with UNATC as partner (running)		6
Erasmus+ cooperation projects coordinated by UNATC	0	2
BIPs organised per year	1	3
CEEPUS networks UNATC belongs to		3
CEEPUS mobilities per year (students and staff)		20
Partner institutions in the Americas (with signed agreements)		5
Participants with fewer opportunities receiving inclusion support		Yearly increase
International festival selections of student productions		Yearly increase

Monitoring also uses participant reports, satisfaction surveys of outgoing and incoming students, and feedback from partner institutions. Results feed into the next year's action plan.