

According to Article 4 of the Law on Higher Education (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia 88/2017, 73/2018, 27/2018 – etc. law, 67/2019 i 6/2020 – laws) and Articles 22, 23, 66, of the Statute of the Academy for Applied Studies Belgrade the Teaching – Expert Council of the Academy for Applied Studies Belgrade, at the session held on May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2020 adopted

## **INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGY OF THE OF THE ACADEMY FOR APPLIED STUDIES BELGRADE 2020 – 2025**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Academy for Applied Studies Belgrade was constituted in May 2019, by merging three higher education institutions, which, in accordance with the Statute of the Academy now form the following departments of the Academy: the College of Medical Sciences, the College of Hotel Management and the College of Tourism. All three departments of the Academy were renowned colleges with long tradition in education as well as in international cooperation, with top quality and highly motivated staff, enabled to organize the lessons in agreement with contemporary trends. Long tradition and the achieved prominence abide us to set up an efficient system of good quality which will guarantee a high position of the Academy in the higher education system in the future.

Internationalization is the process of introducing international and intercultural elements in educational process at the institutions of higher education as well as research and development i.e. related areas so that an academic institution participates in regional, European and global trends of sharing new knowledge and skills by respecting already adopted and internationally established values, achievements and quality standards so as to promote its own solutions and values abroad.

The Academy for Applied Studies Belgrade (hereinafter referred to as: AASB) has recognized the process of internationalization as one of the most promising ways to further development.. Starting from the traditional openness towards the world, its reputation, geographical position and its own potential, AASB pursues the tradition of openness cultivated by its departments up until now, with numerous activities aimed at the affirmation of the policy of friendly and constructive connections with other higher education institutions worldwide. Accordingly, ASSB is dedicated to inclusion in regional, European and world streams in order to be more visible and primarily recognized as a renowned career-oriented institution in the field of medicine, tourism and hospitality.

Relying on the universal standards accentuated in the Internationalization strategy, AASB has aimed at the continuous professional development of the teaching staff and improvement of the teaching process in order to keep up with the changes on the global market. International two-way student mobility of students and staff, as well as mutual participation in research, development and other projects with partner organizations from abroad should become regular and routine processes at AASB. Internationalization strategy of AASB for the time period 2020 – 2025 (hereinafter referred to as: Strategy) is a document which defines the main objectives of AASB in the domain of internationalization of its activities and international cooperation.

Furthermore, the Strategy defines the basic directions to go in order for the AASB to obtain the objectives set in the domain of internationalization and international cooperation.

This Strategy will be followed by the adoption of the adequate Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy, which will establish the further steps and ways for achieving the goals set by this Strategy.

## **MISSION**

The mission of AASB is to contribute to the social development of the Republic of Serbia by providing a quality vocational education and create opportunities for further professional development for staff working in the fields of medicine, tourism and hospitality. Through its international activities, AASB aims to ensure the continuous advancement of competences for its staff, as well as the conditions for acquiring knowledge and skills for its students which will make them competitive at the national, European and global labour market.

Our common mission is creativity, faster innovations in education. ASSB supports appropriate initiatives and ideas of students and staff which contribute to the improvement of the developmental potential and the international status of ASSB.

## **VISION**

The vision of ASSB is to continuously realize its own development as a modern education institution, known for its quality schooling of experts who possess practical skills and knowledge and are able to apply it, experts who will be able to solve particular problems and thus contribute to the development of their city, region and broader community which in turn contributes to a faster development of Serbia. ASSB should hold and improve its position as an important element in the regional and European education system, firmly incorporated in those systems and well connected with organisations working in education and research, as well as with relevant establishments.

AASB is a partner recognized by the similar higher education institutions both in Serbia and abroad as an institution with the highest standards which enable its students to gain applied and general knowledge and skills, in accordance with the demands of the labour market and the society as a whole.

## **STRATEGIC ORIENTATION AND GOALS**

The long-term commitment of the ASSB is making connections globally with academic institutions, organisations, companies in order to develop and improve relevant vocational programs through the exchange of knowledge, professionals, resources and creativity. Consequently, development goals include the following priorities:

- Strengthening the academic position and international reputation of the ASSB;
- Raising awareness on the importance of the international, intercultural cooperation and academic mobility of students, teaching and non-teaching staff;

- Continuous improvement of teaching staff and study programs with regard to contemporary knowledge and skill requirements in the fields of medicine, tourism and hospitality;
- Intensive exchange of knowledge, specific skills, creativity and innovative solutions through the mobility of students and teaching staff, specifically oriented at the European educational area.

Strategic goals include:

- Academic mobility - ASSB encourages the exchange and mobility of students, teaching and non-teaching staff within the Erasmus+ Programme and other available programmes with the view of exchanging knowledge, gaining experience, developing and implementing professional competences. ASSB strives to create a balance between incoming and outgoing mobility. ASSB is determined to improve and strengthen mobility capacities by participating in the ERASMUS + programs and through bilateral agreements with related institutions to forge relations that will promote mobility at international level. ASSB strive to actively participate and efficiently use the resources and opportunities available through EU projects. It will initiate, run and coordinate or collaborate in international projects, primarily dedicated to the promotion of education, research and advancement of professional knowledge and competencies. ASSB strives to create conditions for the involvement of as many teaching and non-teaching staff members as possible in international projects, thus providing them with the opportunity to work in the multicultural environment, to constantly develop their professional and academic skills and knowledge and contribute to the sustainable development of the economy and society. The implementation of this plan implies proficiency in foreign languages of both, students and teaching staff. Thus, ASSB will continue to support foreign language courses and to provide linguistic support to enhance academic mobility. With the aim of creating conditions of enrolment of the foreign students at the existing study programs at the AASB, the plans have been made for establishing of the Serbian language courses for foreign students.
- Internationalisation and Curriculum - – ASSB is dedicated to innovate and design new study programmes, as well as life-long learning programmes by following international best practices aware of the labour market needs. ASSB will make efforts to build capacities to organize study programs in the English language and further modernize the offer of courses that would be attractive to international and domestic students.
- Internationalisation, Research and Development – In the following period ASSB will intensify activities on the international level in order to be more visible in the fields it promotes. This involves organization of research and development programs, international conferences, seminars, professional congresses with partners from the region and abroad.
- International cooperation – ASSB strives to improve the existing cooperation, but also to extend and establish cooperation with higher education institutions, establishments and business organizations and international scientific and professional organizations in the region, Europe and the rest of the world in order to strengthen the educational, scientific, research and professional potential of students and employees, establish new contacts and build strong ties, as well as exchange knowledge, skills and experience.

- Joint Study Programs – ASSB intends to explore possibilities in the future to launch joint new platforms – interdisciplinary study programs with international partners. This way, AASB will further enrich its academic offer for students.
- Establishing a wide range of cooperation with the prominent lecturers from other countries and their engagement as guest lecturers.
- Organized participation of the students in as many as possible international (regional, European and world-wide) competitions, in order to provide a competent and objective assessment of the higher education that AASB provides within its study programs.

## **STRATEGIC POSITIONING**

AASB is open to the widest possible cooperation, based on equality and mutual respect. In the choice of partners, it identifies three concentric, strategically important areas:

### **1. Regional Positioning**

- Higher education institutions, organizations, professional associations and institutes in the region of Balkans, Southeast and Central Europe are natural partners of the AASB due to a similar geographical and historical context, linguistic similarities, geographical relations and common cultural heritage. For a long period of time, AASB has been recognized as one of the leading regional HEIs in vocational education. One of our strategic goals is to maintain that position permanently. AASB will become a part of the already existing networks of HIEs and professional organizations which enable a long-term and immediate functional networking within the area of education, as well as the transfer of knowledge. Within the areas where there is no adequate form of organizing, AASB should initiate regional networking. AASB aims at becoming the centre of the regional networking, given that AASB already fulfils all the necessary prerequisites, starting with staff and organizational matters, a great number of study programs in various scientific fields, and finally, because of its ideal geographical position.

### **2. European Framework**

- EU countries, as well as all European countries are important partners of the AASB since our priorities are oriented toward integration into the European educational area. AASB should expand the network of higher education institutions it will cooperate with. Bilateral cooperation should be established with the leading higher education institutions and organizations which can contribute to the development and reputation of AASB, and with which AASB should consider the establishment of joint study programs. One of the strategic priorities of AASB is the wide exchange of teaching and non-teaching staff and students within the scope of Erasmus + Programme and other mobilities programmes established by the European Union. ASSB plans to increase its activities within European programmes such as Erasmus+, Creative Europe, Horizon 2020 etc. focused on the institutional development.

### 3. Global Networking

- A strategic goal of AASB is to establish and develop the exchange of teaching and non-teaching staff and students with certain educational institutions and international organizations and associations based outside of the European Union. The long-standing bilateral collaboration of the ASSB with schools in PR China, Russian Federation, Indonesia etc., will enable deepening the existing and creating new relationships with higher education institutions in these countries. AASB is open for the widest possible cooperation in the fields of science and higher education based on the principles of equality and mutual understanding.
- Our membership in numerous international associations will represent a platform for new partnerships and expansion of collaboration.

### **PLANNED ACTIVITIES**

Aimed at accomplishing strategic objectives, international cooperation will focus on the following activities:

- Adoption of the Action Plan on Internationalization of the ASSB. The way of implementing the strategic goals established by this Strategy will be precisely stipulated by the Action Plan for Internationalization of AASB, which will further establish priorities, measures, activities, authorized persons, timeframe and budget.
- Participation in projects in the field of higher education, medicine, tourism and hospitality.
- Participation in EU mobility programs. The Academy will continue the proactive policy of the exchange of students and staff within Erasmus+, CEEPUS and other mobility programmes supported by the European Union, while maintaining the proportion of incoming and outgoing mobility.
- Participation in mobility programs in international frameworks and setting up bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements between higher education institutions and organisations. The ASSB will expand the circle of institutions it cooperates with, taking into account that the signed agreements are the basis for active cooperation, while bilateral cooperation should be raised to the level of strategic partnership, which can result in joint projects, joint study programmes and specific interests of higher education;
- Active participation and cooperation with a network of related, vocational higher education institutions and associations. Better use of the capacity of networks and associations the ASSB is a part of.

### **STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES FOR INTERNATIONALISATION**

We are determined to implement the following measures to ensure the implementation of the Strategy:

- Empowering the International Cooperation Office by involving a competent staff with clearly defined competencies in order to carry out the stated activities;
- Introducing periodic evaluation of the internationalization process;

- Sustainability of the process of internationalization within the priorities and strategic goals of ASSB;
- Introduction of an internet platform for participants in the mobility process;
- Supporting vulnerable social groups;
- Inclusion of student bodies and students in providing the direct support to incoming students (Buddy programme).

### **INTERNATIONALISATION AUTHORITY**

Particular decisions on the internationalization of the ASSB will be delivered by the Teaching – Expert Council of the Academy for Applied Studies Belgrade with the operational support of the International Cooperation Office.

**PRESIDENT OF THE ASSB**  
Prof. Slavoljub Vicic, PhD