



## **Newsletter 1**

### **„Internationalization starts at home”**

**PPI/WTP/2022/1/00070**

The main Project goal – “Internationalization starts at home” (abbreviated as “Inter-Home”) increases the integration process and inclusion of the academic community (Polish and foreign students and academic staff). Welcome Point (WP) established by the previous project, officially launched by the University of Bielsko-Biala on 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2022 by the Rector of the UBB, dr hab. inż. Jacek Nowakowski and previous Project Coordinator prof. UBB and dr Agnieszka Będkowska-Kopczyk. In 2023, University of Bielsko-Biala received financial support and the possibility of continuation of the Project from the side of Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange. Project starts on 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2023 and finishes on 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2024. Inter-Home has created a space for integration and mutual intercultural communication.

The following specific objectives were identified:

1) maintaining and continuing WP activities in the area of service, support and integration of students, scientists and foreign staff;

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2) increasing the competences of Polish students and staff in overcoming cultural barriers and stereotypes, communication, building attitudes of openness, mutual respect, empathy and proper support for people affected by war;

3) increasing the level of integration of foreign students and employees with the local academic environment (students, research groups, local government, clubs of interests, choir) and their effective inclusion in the life of the University.

The project “Welcome Point” has brought a new quality of services offered by the University of Bielsko-Biala to its international guests, regardless of whether they were short- or long-term ones. The target group included: Erasmus+ exchange programme students, regular foreign students, visiting representatives of the universities abroad. One of visible marks of their presence, as the representatives of foreign cultures, are greetings written by them in their own languages on a part of the wall of the L building, prepared especially for that purpose as a part of the project.



## **Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange**

The Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange, established on October 1st, 2017 is a leading institution serving to strengthen the internationalisation of Polish science and higher education. It is known and appreciated in the Polish and foreign academic community. It inspires science and higher education institutions to act. It sets standards in terms of supporting academic mobility, internationalisation of science and higher education, recognition of education and the promotion of the Polish language and culture in the international academic community.

The Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange flexibly adjusts its activities to the global and local challenges of the academic world. It responds to the needs of the environment and effectively supports the mobility and international cooperation of students, doctoral students and employees of institutions forming the system of science and higher education.

The Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange co-creates optimal conditions for research and educational activities in Poland, contributing to

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the scientific, cultural and economic development of the country. The Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange creates opportunities for sustainable and transparent use of its offer by the entire academic community, regardless of the disciplines of science, types of institutions and their location, and all kinds of non-substantive considerations.

The Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange is a team of professionals who work with passion and effectively implement the Agency's mission and strategic goals.

Objectives of the action:

1. Supporting the internationalisation of science and higher education.
2. Popularization of the Polish language and culture abroad.
3. Strengthening the presence of Polish science and higher education on the international arena.
4. Facilitating the international transfer of knowledge and skills to science and the economy.
5. Horizontal objective: institutional development of the Agency.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange, access through Word Wide Web: <https://nawa.gov.pl/nawa>.  
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## **Welcome to Poland**

The main objective of the Program is to internationalize Polish higher education and science institutions by financing projects related to:

- 1) building the potential of Applicants in accepting and providing services to foreign students, doctoral students, teaching and research staff;
- 2) promoting Applicants internationally, in particular through cooperation with foreign graduates.



## **The University of Bielsko-Biala**

The University of Bielsko-Biala was founded in October 2001 as an independent governmental academic institution. Previously, since 1969, it had been a branch of the Technical University of Lodz (Politechnika Łódzka).

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The machine-design, electrical, and textile industries have an established history in the region, so the main study fields have been long established. However, due to changes in the economy, other fields of study have been developed, including management, humanities, environmental sciences and computer sciences.

At present, about 5,000 students study at five faculties: Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Computer Science; Faculty of Materials, Civil and Environmental Engineering; Faculty of Management and Transport; Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and Faculty of Health Sciences. The University employs about 400 people, including 200 experienced professors and other academic staff. As the only state educational institution in the Podbeskidzie region which provides tertiary education, the University of Bielsko-Biala has a vibrant community of ambitious individuals who contribute to the University's research and didactic potential by constantly attaining their professional, educational and social goals. The University is firmly rooted in the region which is reflected in various enterprises with members of the community and also in its research interests.

The University of Bielsko-Biala is open to new ideas and opportunities which can be utilised to improve modern educational tools. Internationalisation has become one of the most important objectives of the University, and as a result, it is being constantly promoted through participation in various European network projects.

The University cooperates with many academic centres and research institutes all over the world. The number of bilateral agreements is growing



exponentially each year – up to now, we have signed over 100 agreements in the Erasmus+ programme, which was created to support education,

training, youth and sport in Europe. Additionally, we have signed approximately 50 bilateral agreements covering scientific and educational cooperation with foreign partners. As a result, the number of students who decide to go abroad to study in a different European country while completing a degree and those who decide to come and study in Bielsko-Biala is growing each year.

The University of Bielsko-Biala is open to new ideas and opportunities which can be utilised to improve modern educational tools. Internationalization has become the most important objective of the University, with it being constantly promoted through participation in various European network projects.

The University of Bielsko-Biala is located in the beautiful city of Bielsko-Biała that is surrounded by mountainous landscape. The city is abundant in stunning, diverse architecture and is often referred to as Little Vienna. It is also a student-friendly city with enjoyable nightlife, which is rich in both historical and natural sights.