



# Strategic Plan

Eastern Mediterranean University

2012 – 2015

V. 2



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## Message from the Rector

Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) has gone through a noteworthy transformation process since its establishment. In 1979, the Higher Technological Institute (HTI) was established to provide higher education opportunities for young Turkish Cypriots and to educate high-calibre technical staff needed for the development of the new state. The HTI comprised of an English Preparatory School and Civil, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Departments offering Diplomas in Technician Engineering. Due to the high academic standards and laboratory facilities at the HTI, the Higher Education Council of Turkey (YÖK) accredited a four-year B.Eng. program in 1982. In 1986, the governments of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and Republic of Turkey agreed to open a university in North Cyprus and in June 1986, the Parliament of TRNC passed a law that formally granted the HTI a charter establishing it as a state university under the name Eastern Mediterranean University. The university was then fully accredited by YÖK; as a result, the degrees and diplomas awarded by EMU have been recognized internationally. The campus and academic infrastructure of EMU developed over the years to a fully fledged university campus.

The vision and mission statements of EMU clearly states that EMU administration puts special emphasis on internationalisation. Internationalisation efforts of EMU has not only been limited to attracting students from all over the world; the administration of EMU has also been spending a considerable amount of time developing protocols for international collaboration and exchange programs, and was able to settle agreements with some 80 institutions of higher education within the region and around the world, despite constant lobbying and attempts to block these efforts by the Greek Cypriot government, organizations, and individuals. During its development process, EMU has also put special emphasis to develop a quality assurance system in education. As a result of this policy, all academic programs have gained the accreditation of YÖK and Higher Education, Planning, Accreditation and Coordination Council of North Cyprus (YÖDAK). Moreover, Academic programs (partly or fully) are accredited by the official accreditation bodies of foreign countries (e.g. Ministry of Higher Education, Engineering Council, etc.). Above all, a number of academic programs have been accredited by reputable international accreditation institutions (e.g. ABET, TEDQUAL, ASSIN, etc.). During this process, EMU has also attained membership of a number of reputable international associations (e.g. EUA, IAU, FUIW, etc.). The membership to these organizations provides the opportunity for EMU to benefit from their experiences, activities, publications, workshops and conferences in improving its quality assurance measures. EMU has also gone through the Institutional Evaluation Program of EUA.

As an outcome of continuous internationalisation efforts, EMU currently offers education to more than 13,000 students from 68 different countries, with above 1000 academic staff from 35 different countries. The university provides high quality education in 10 faculties, 4 schools and the English Preparatory and Foreign Language School, EMU strives to become a pioneering force with a primary mission of becoming a truly international

university. EMU is proud to have produced more than 34.000 graduates from different cultures and nationalities.

As a result of the continuous efforts for development, EMU has become a well-known world-wide university. The development efforts of the university administration will continue to further expand the academic reputation of EMU. This strategic plan, which was formulated with the contribution and efforts of all stakeholders, is a road-map that EMU administration will follow to attain its short- and long-term goals. During this process, constant support and contribution of its entire staff, students, government, and other stakeholders is necessary. We sincerely believe that implementation of the strategic plan policies will bring EMU to a higher level both in terms of international recognition and the attainment of international standards in higher education.

Prof. Dr. Abdullah Öztoprak  
Rector

## **Part 1: The Mission, Vision, and Values**

### **The Mission Statement**

*To offer contemporary, sustainable and quality education at international standards, conduct research, contribute to the needs of the society, meet the needs of all stakeholders and graduate students in a multicultural environment having international knowledge and competences.*

### **The Vision Statement**

*To become a preferred, participating, autonomous university open to change and development, producing science and technology and serving as a model with its multicultural diversity.*

### **The Values**

EMU is determined to flourish and preserve the following values:

1. Science
2. Productivity
3. Justice and Equality
4. The Rule of Law
5. Transparency and Accountability
6. Creativity
7. Becoming a Contemporary Institution
8. Mutual Trust and Empathy
9. Devotion to Ethical Values
10. Responsibility and Cooperation
11. Loyalty

## Part 2: Policies, Objectives and Principles

### The Policies of the University

Based on the mission and the vision statements, EMU administration has developed the following policies:

**1. Internationalization:**

EMU aims to increase the number of international students in its undergraduate and postgraduate programs from all over the world. Moreover, the University is currently working on attracting international students and professionals for short-term courses and training programs through collaboration agreements with other universities and international organizations.

**2. Quality Assurance (QA):**

EMU is currently adopting new QA principles and guidelines to improve QA in education and administrative affairs parallel to European Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

**3. International Accreditations:**

Certain programs of EMU have already been accredited by internationally reputable accreditation bodies such as ABET (Engineering Programs), TEDQUAL (Tourism Programs), and ASSIN (Computer Technologies and Information Systems). During recent years, more attempts have been made to diversify and expand the accreditations of various programs by well-known and internationally accepted accreditation institutions such as AACSB, RIBA, etc. The policy of EMU is to gain international accreditations for all of its academic programs.

**4. Research:**

Academic staff has been encouraged to be more involved in conducting research, publishing scientific articles in internationally reputable journals and participating in academic conferences and seminars.

**5. Financial Sustainability:**

EMU's financial resources rely on student fees and state funding. Current EMU administration has put special emphasis on financial sustainability and it has taken necessary measures to increase its income and decrease its expenditures as well as enhancing academic and administrative quality standards in the meantime. Financial sustainability will enable the university administration to further increase its investments in the academic staff and facilities as well as the technical and physical infrastructure.

**6. Student Centred Education:**

EMU has been focusing on the needs of its students to enhance a student-centred education system. The curricula of various programs, course contents and the interactivity of courses have been revised and updated and new projects are still underway. To support this policy, the University administration has also updated the physical facilities in many classrooms and other learning environments.

**7. Following the Bologna Principles:** Although the universities of Northern Cyprus do not officially take part in the Bologna Process, EMU has dedicated itself to follow the principles set by Leuven Communique of 2009. These are reflected in the objectives and principles of EMU.

## The Objectives and Principles

The objectives and principles of EMU set for the achievement of its policies are as follows:

1. To train the students in becoming innovative and professionally responsible individuals who are able to adopt themselves to changing society and technology.
2. To develop cultural diversity, and respect for different cultures.
3. To contribute to the welfare of the society and peace in the region and the world.
4. To assume a pioneering role in the economic, social and cultural development of the country by giving highest priority to quality in the areas of education and research.
5. To become a transparent and autonomous institution with the participation of all its stakeholders.
6. To adopt lifelong learning, flexible courses and learning environment including distance education as an integral part of the education system,
7. To activate university-community collaboration by attracting the attention of the entire community through various activities such as conferences, seminars, working groups and so forth;
8. To carry out scientific research and developmental projects by considering the primary needs of the society.
9. To develop collaboration with industrial organizations.

## Part 3: Strengths and Areas That Need Development

### Strengths

**1. Being a State University:**

Being a state university gives all its stakeholders a sense of security and confidence; to the students and families in particular.

**2. Offering Education in English:**

Offering programs mainly in English enables EMU to attract international students from all over the world. Moreover, it has an advantageous position in Turkish higher education sector where most of the universities only teach in Turkish. Having education in English does not only enable the students to have access to most updated information but it also provides an excellent opportunity to the graduates in their future careers throughout the world.

**3. Being the Largest University in Cyprus Regarding the Number of Students and Physical Infrastructure:**

Throughout the years, EMU's student population has not only increased in numbers but has also become multi-cultural. Over the years, the University's educational quality as well as the physical and technological infrastructure have all developed towards the highest international standards.

**4. Experienced Staff Members:**

EMU has a population of internationally experienced academic staff with highest academic level in teaching, research and services.

**5. Harmonizing Various Cultures:**

Having students from more than 60 different countries creates a multi-cultural environment in EMU which provides an excellent opportunity for the students to be exposed to diverse cultures and values.

## Areas That Need Development

### 1. **Financial Structure:**

EMU does not have access to external funds and therefore its financial resources fully rely on state support and income from student fees. Policies should be developed and measures should be adapted to increase income from different sources and reduce expenditures whenever possible, without any decrease in the quality of education.

### 2. **Having an Autonomous Administrative Structure:**

The Board of Trustees which is appointed by the ruling government is the highest decision-making authority in EMU. This structure makes intentional or unintentional political interference to the university's administration. A restructuring in the board is needed to minimize political interference and reduce bureaucratic processes in the decision making mechanism.

### 3. **Setting the Criteria for the Evaluation of the Academic and Administrative Staff:**

The regulations regarding the assessment of academic and administrative staff approved by the university administration need to be modified and updated according to recent trends in global higher education system in order to have an evaluation system at international standards.

### 4. **Increasing the Participation of the Stakeholders:**

There are a number of people and organizations ranging from students to employers and from governments to local community who have interest in EMU both locally and internationally. Establishing communication channels with the stakeholders and encouraging and enabling their participation to the decision making mechanism of the university is important.

### 5. **Improving Quality Culture, Productivity and Economizing:**

Improvement of a quality culture in academic and administrative system will inevitably bring productivity and efficient and effective use of existing resources. Improvement of a quality culture and thus quality awareness is a long and tiresome process which requires hard-work, dedication, and commitment. Therefore, EMU administration needs to improve its quality awareness policy amongst its staff and students to become more competitive at national and international levels in higher education.

### 6. **Strengthening the Awareness of the Institutional Identity:**

Strengthening the institutional identity of the university will not only contribute to the better fulfilment of the duties and responsibilities of the staff and students but also maintain strong ties with the public.

**7. Promoting the University More Effectively:**

Promotion policy of EMU has proved its success by attracting considerable number of students from more than sixty countries. However, promotional activities should be more intensive and strategical to be able to compete in highly competitive higher education market particularly in Turkey from where majority of the students are enrolled. Moreover, promotional activities should also include EMU alumni, industry representatives, local public and authorities.

**8. Increasing Student, Administrative and Academic Staff, Graduate and Employer Satisfaction:**

Satisfying primary stakeholders is an important issue that should seriously be improved. The university administration should have long-term goals and policies to improve satisfaction. Policies can only be developed if feedback from major stakeholders is received. Hence, satisfaction surveys need to be carried out periodically in order to develop policies and measure the performance of the policies. Certain academic units who have expertise in the field may contribute to these activities.

**9. Ongoing Evaluation and Update of the Curricula and Programs:**

EMU has been promoting itself as a university which provides education at international standards. Effective promotion can only be achieved if those standards are met and this can only be achieved by continuously evaluating and updating the curricula in line with the developments in international higher education arena. By doing so, more accreditations granted by reputable international organizations can be obtained and graduates may pursue better job opportunities throughout the world.

## **Part 4: Opportunities and Challenges**

### **Opportunities**

**1. Support of the TRNC and TR governments and YÖK:**

EMU has always been supported financially and technically by the leading governmental higher education organizations and governments of TRNC and Turkey. Being a state university has been an important factor in this process.

## **2. A Secure Environment for Students:**

TRNC is known to have a very low crime rate and a secure environment for students. Both the university administration and security authorities have been taking necessary measures to maintain this position.

## **Challenges**

### **1. Cyprus Conflict and Isolations:**

Long-lasting solution attempts to the Cyprus problem have not yielded any political agreement in Cyprus and North Cyprus has been facing embargoes in many areas. Although EMU has managed to become member of many international organizations, embargoes are still a problem in obtaining research grants from some international institutions.

### **2. Living Conditions for Students:**

Compared to some countries in the region, North Cyprus as an island is regarded as an expensive place to live. The measures taken by the university administration aims to reduce the cost of living for students. Comprehensive and effective policies should be formulated in coordination with all stakeholders.

### **3. Being Excluded from the Bologna Process:**

North Cyprus universities are not allowed to be part of the Bologna process. Previously, some attempts have been made to alleviate the problems related to this exclusion. However satisfactory results have not been obtained. A nation-wide policy should be developed and the related government and non-government organizations should raise awareness in Europe with the argument that education is a basic human right. EMU should play a leading role in this process as a state university.

### **4. Development of Gambling and Entertainment as a Sector:**

The opening of new casinos and betting-offices in recent years has adversely affected the image of North Cyprus particularly in the eyes of the families of Turkish students. Students' access to such places are restricted by law however many families are not informed about the tight controls and the reputation of the universities of North Cyprus has been negatively affected.

### **5. Increasing Competition:**

New universities are opening in Turkey and neighbouring countries which lead to a more competitive environment.

## **Part 5: Actions to be Taken**

- 1.** Economizing and creating resources to strengthen the financial situation and ensure sustainability.
- 2.** Improving the educational facilities and venues in line with the development of the modern technology.
- 3.** Working on formal regulations for the institutionalization and autonomous structure of the University.
- 4.** Closely following the Bologna Process goals and implementing them carefully (Developing the ECTS system, developing mobility, developing quality-assurance collaborations in Europe and throughout the world, developing European dimension in higher education, focusing on lifelong learning, including the participation of students in decision-making bodies, developing synergy and doctoral degree studies between the university and European Higher Education Area).
- 5.** Completing the processes for the new academic evaluation and performance criteria.
- 6.** Strengthening collaboration between the University and the industrial organizations.
- 7.** Revising the curricula of the university's academic programs.
- 8.** Developing new academic programs in accordance with latest career trends and student demands
- 9.** Obtaining international accreditation for all academic programs
- 10.** Improvement and development of the campus infrastructure in line with the developments in educational technologies.