

STRATEGY FOR THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE ITALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

**Universities and institutions of
Artistic-Musical and Coreutical
Higher Education**

Three-year period 2024-2026

Courtesy translation: in case of discrepancy between the Italian language original text and the English language translation, the Italian version shall prevail.

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Preface by Antonio Tajani

The Italian higher education system, with its globally recognized excellence in all fields, is a key asset of our country, an engine of cultural and economic development, and an important foreign policy tool.

The activity of attracting more and more excellent students to Italy, also through the strengthening of scholarships from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with which I obtained the collaboration of parliamentary forces, represents a great investment for growth.

It means contributing to the creation, in our partner countries, of Italian-speaking ruling classes close to Italy, the development of new opportunities for collaboration and the opening of new routes for the export of our excellence.

The internationalization of Italy's higher education System is fully part of the "diplomacy of growth" action that I have launched since the beginning of my mandate and that I made central to the government's foreign policy action to support an international projection of our companies and territories. An all-encompassing action that systematizes political, economic, cultural, scientific, and sports diplomacy tools to strengthen Italy's growth, prestige, and ability to influence the world.

In agreement with the Ministers of Universities and Research, Education, and Merit, and with the Minister of Culture, I convened the Working Table at the Ministry since the birth of the Government for the attractiveness, promotion, and internationalization of the Italian educational model, in order to make it an increasingly effective tool for projecting Italy and attracting the best foreign talents.

Teamwork is indeed crucial in this commitment. With this Strategy, we want to define the priorities for the next three years, the goals we want to achieve and the actions to be implemented in order to increase, also in this strategic sector, the competitiveness of the Italian System on the global scenario, foster growth and well-being, as well as job creation.

Antonio Tajani
Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

Preface by Anna Maria Bernini

Italy is the homeland of universities. Some of the oldest universities in the world, still active today, were born in our peninsula starting in the 11th century.

Originally conceived as associations for the free exchange of knowledge and reflections among scholars from all over Europe, they have gradually transformed, grasping, interpreting and adapting to the spirit of the times. Until they became centers of innovation and technological development, now more than ever an essential engine for economic growth and the welfare of future generations.

In this evolutionary process of the Italian university, a key milestone is the Bologna Process: the agreement signed in 1999 between European ministers of education, which led to the birth of the European Higher Education Area, which this year celebrates its 25th anniversary.

An agreement based on academic freedom, institutional autonomy and the participation of faculty and students in the governance of higher education, and which still represents one of the key moments in the reform process of Europe's higher education system.

In recent years, and thanks to this understanding, Europe has once again become the center of the world's culture and knowledge.

It has regained its proper role, “the cradle of culture, arts, philosophy and science”: a single multicultural and transnational entity, driven by common goals and shared values.

At the same time, advanced realities continue to develop on other continents. Which represents on the one hand a competitive challenge for our system, and on the other hand a mutually enriching collaboration opportunity.

In this context, there is the need to renew the work begun with the first Strategy for the promotion abroad of Italian higher education, with the aim of being able to reaffirm our country's leading role in not only the European but also the global panorama.

Italy wants to achieve this goal by demonstrating how the internationalization of higher education can be the catalyst for promoting the economic and social recovery of our country and the entire European system, which is grappling with epochal challenges, whether it is the crisis that has been intensified by the pandemic, the technological revolution, or the new geopolitical tensions that are taking place.

In this strategic vision the promotion and support of bilateral and multilateral international cooperation assume a crucial role, with particular regard to our key partners. I am thinking about the EU and G7 countries, starting with the United States, which are our natural traveling partners in the world of research and higher education due to the commonality of interests and values that link us.

In the spirit of the Mattei Plan, special attention must then be given to the African continent, the countries of the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) area and the Balkans, our geographical neighbours and essential partners for building bridges of knowledge, innovation and sustainable development. Without forgetting the countries of Asia and those countries where our compatriot communities have solid roots, such as South America, on which we can also build innovative training projects.

I am strongly convinced that the new international strategy of Italian higher education, from now to the 2026, will be able to contribute decisively to the growth of our country and to the development of a strong and cohesive Europe, a leader in knowledge and research as its founding fathers envisioned it.

In this process, I am then convinced that the European Joint Degree, the degree awarded by universities in EU countries and automatically recognized throughout Europe, will mark the beginning of a new revolutionary path.

A path that will guarantee virtuous opportunities for the entire higher education system, thanks to the high quality and recognizability of degrees awarded by European institutions. With an ambitious goal: to extend these benefits beyond the European Continent until it becomes a global phenomenon.

Anna Maria Bernini
Ministry of Universities and Research

Summary sheet



2024 - 2026



Offer higher education institutions a tool aimed at strengthening the system's international dimension.



European Union and North America.
Countries of the MENA area and the Balkan Peninsula.
Countries of the African Continent.
Countries with advanced or growing economies in Asia, Latin America and Oceania.



Strengthen the culture of internationalization and complete the spectrum of skills.
Promote mobility and increase attractiveness.
Promote and support bilateral and multilateral international cooperation.
Strengthen European cooperation as a tool for internationalization.



Activation of a dedicated monitoring group with specific indicators.

Premise

This document aims to provide the Italian system of higher education, academic, artistic-musical and coreutical education, with the strategy that the Ministry of Universities and Research and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation adopt, for the period 2024-2026, in order to foster and enhance the competitiveness of the Italian higher education system within the global scenario, in light of the rapid and complex development that the world of Higher Education is going through.

The document was created in continuity with the experience acquired as a result of the “Strategy for the Promotion Abroad of Italian Higher Education 2017/2020” - already shared between the two ministries - and takes into account the priorities indicated by the Minister of Universities and Research and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, as well as the investments financed with the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) funds.

Among the activities that will be launched in 2024, through **NRRP funds**, to boost collaboration and agreements between Italian and foreign higher education institutions, there are **two separate Notices that have as their objective the funding of projects** aimed at strengthening the higher education, university and AFAM systems, within the timeframe envisaged by this strategy, consistent with the work program envisaged by the NRRP.

These are the **Transnational Education (TNE) and Internationalisation of Artistic, Musical, and Coreutical Institutions (AFAM)** notices, respectively. The first one is addressed to Italian universities and intends to fund transnational educational initiatives with a total funding of **50 million euros**. The second one is addressed to the Artistic, Musical, and Choreographic Institutions (AFAM) sector and aims to boost their internationalization through the funding of specific projects of more than **80 million euros**.

Both the promoted initiatives represent the start of a desirable long-term process that will empower the Italian higher education system, as a whole and through the enhancement of its level of internationalization, to play an increasingly relevant role in the global context.

Horizon 2026

Italy is working to improve the internationalization of its higher education system in order to make it more competitive in today's global environment. **Internationalization is a factor for growth and improvement.**

The Italian higher education system is being called upon to face the new global challenges that characterize the international education and research environment. Interdisciplinarity, transversal skills, specialization, experimentation, and innovation are some of the elements that enable students to acquire the knowledge needed to face international challenges in the role of global citizens.

To achieve this path, the Italian system acts to strengthen its level of internationalization, becoming a place of comparison, training, and culture where national and international students and researchers can confront each other, train, and do research in a shared way.

This Strategy identifies macro-objectives to be pursued in order to offer the different actors of the system (students/students, teachers, researchers/researchers, technical, library, and administrative staff) an open and inclusive environment characterized by an increasing number of possibilities to explore international realities, prioritizing mobility, both incoming and outgoing, both as an element of cultural and professional growth and as a tool to promote European and international integration.

Students, researchers, and all the staff working in the institutions that belong to the Italian higher education system are among the best representatives of the Italian culture and research in the world.

The purpose of the Strategy

This Strategy is aimed at offering the involved institutions a tool aimed at strengthening the international dimension of the system itself.

The Strategy outlines a set of national objectives and priorities that ministries can offer to the various institutions, understood as centers of knowledge generation and sharing, to actively act in the international sphere by promoting Italian excellence and creating better conditions of study and work for the younger generations.

To be effective, this Strategy requires an integrated approach at national level that fosters the implementation of activities geared toward the achievement of shared objectives. It involves taking action to increase the number and quality of international students and researchers who choose our country so that they can make a qualified contribution to Italy tomorrow, and to increase and make more structured academic collaborations and international programs of our higher education institutions with foreign counterparts. **More mobility opportunities for students, faculty, researchers, and technical administrative staff equals more opportunities for growth in the education system and for the country as a whole.**

The Strategy for the Internationalization of Higher Education is developed **through four general strategic macro-objectives**. For each of them, a set of objectives and actions are defined to support the internationalization and promotion activities of the Italian system in the different regions and areas of strategic interest.

The global context

Globalization, understood as a set of convergence and integration processes on a global scale that produces complex interdependence internationally, has a profound impact on higher education, transforming the way in which universities and educational institutions globally operate, collaborate, and educate students.

Higher education, following up on its own innate vocation, has seen an increase in the number of students moving internationally among different institutions. Universities and artistic-musical and coreutical institutions around the world attract students from different countries, fostering cultural exchange, increasing the level of cultural and scientific interconnection of different countries, promoting diversity and the education of a global student body. This leads to the creation of multicultural learning environments and the exchange of ideas and perspectives.

Institutions in the education system are, by their nature, oriented towards creating international collaborations and partnerships to carry out research projects, teacher exchanges, joint programs and collaborative projects with institutions around the world. These collaborations enhance academic and artistic-musical research, facilitating knowledge sharing and promoting cross-cultural understanding. The development of technologies has provided the tools to expand access to information and various forms of online learning. Online learning platforms, large-scale open online courses (MOOCs) and virtual classrooms allow students to access educational resources from anywhere in the world. This phenomenon has expanded educational opportunities by offering a new face to internationalization and new areas for the higher education system to explore.

The aforementioned context also calls for the need to introduce, develop and enhance global competencies and skills within the curricula of higher education and university institutions. Graduates must be equipped with intercultural communication skills, adaptability, and understanding of global issues in order to thrive in an interconnected world. Educational institutions are called upon to incorporate global perspectives into their programs to prepare students for diversified and globalized work environments.

Globalization has also facilitated the mobility of talent across borders, leading to brain drain and brain gain phenomena that need systemic interventions at the national level to transform potentially negative movements into virtuous circles of growth, sharing and interconnection between training systems.

Global convergence is able to expand the potential of the networked democratic community on a global scale, fostering information and knowledge exchange, cultural engagement, and creative hybridization.

The Italian education system stands out in the international context for its ability to achieve excellent levels in many different areas of knowledge and research. Italy has many prestigious institutions, active for centuries, that have earned a reputation for excellence and have played a leading role in European higher education.

Italian universities, known for offering high-quality education and conducting high-impact research, consistently rank among the world's best institutions in many disciplines including, but not limited to, engineering and technology, humanities and social sciences, archaeological sciences, and physics studies.

Italian universities offer specialized programs that enhance the country's cultural resources and facilitate hands-on learning experiences. Italy excels globally for its rich cultural heritage and historical importance, making it an attractive destination for students in art, history, archaeology, and conservation. In these areas, MFAIC's commitment to supporting Italian archaeological research abroad gains significant relevance. An internationally recognized model of excellence, it in fact constitutes a fundamental tool of our cultural diplomacy, as well as a strategic asset for developing bilateral relations and contributing to mutual understanding, particularly in complex quadrants that are the object of privileged political attention, such as the Mediterranean area, the Middle East and, in perspective, the entire African continent. Italy's 279 archaeological, anthropological, and ethnological missions abroad (2023 data) are conducted in more than 60 countries and involve thousands of Italian and foreign researchers. The fundamental contribution of this research to our Cultural Diplomacy takes the form of scientific cooperation actions aimed at the exchange of knowledge and the transfer of techniques and technologies for excavation and restoration. By encouraging the investigation of the past and promoting the protection and conscious appreciation of Heritage, the Missions act in the depths of the societies and economies in which they operate.

In these contexts, universities and institutions of artistic, dancing and musical education distinguish themselves by their activism in creating international collaborations and participating in academic networks, by promoting research cooperation, student exchange programs and joint degrees. This emphasis on internationalization promotes a multicultural and globally connected learning environment.

Some crucial elements for the definition and development of the national strategy are summarized below:

1. **The growing global interconnection.** The internationalization of higher education is an increasingly relevant topic in the current context. With the increase in globalization and interconnection between countries, governments in the most advanced countries have included the internationalization of the university system among their priorities, promoting greater collaboration between academic institutions around the world.
2. **The growing demand for international higher education.** Students around the world, and particularly in specific geographic areas, are looking for study opportunities that offer a global perspective, high-quality programs and training that gives them the skills they need to access -see and act as protagonists in the global job market.
3. **The attraction of international students, teachers and researchers.** More and more countries and institutions are taking action to attract international students, teachers and researchers, to enrich their institutions and contribute to the local economy, offering scholarship programs and benefits.
4. **Demographic trends.** The decision of the European population and in particular the Italian one will have a significant impact on the academic system. The reduction in enrollments poses problems for the sustainability of academic programs.
5. **The impact of technology.** Technology, also following the widespread use of new training tools forced by the emergency of the pandemic, is playing an increasingly important role in the internationalization of higher education, and is a fundamental tool for the innovation of teaching and the modernization of administrative processes.

Higher education institutions must adapt to this ever-evolving context, addressing financial challenges and seeking to attract talented international students, in order to promote cultural and academic diversity, counteract the negative effects of demographic decline and prepare students for an increasingly interconnected world.

In this context, the position of the Italian system as a promoter of the process of strengthening the "**European Higher Education Area**" is revealed as strategic. The integration process underway

at European level is an element that strengthens the internationalization strategy promoted by Italy. The exchange and creation of stable collaborations between European educational centers, both Italian and foreign, allows the Italian and European higher education system to present itself in an integrated manner within the broader global context. A further step in this direction is the activation of moments of **exchange and communication between the European training area and the European research area**. The two areas, training, and research, must be considered in a complementary way.

The Strategy also complements the tools already put in place in terms of coordinating activities between Ministries. Among these, the **MFAIC-MUR-MEM-MOC inter-ministerial working table coordinated by the MFAIC** plays a central role, with the task of harmonizing the activities of the various Ministries involved in strengthening the internationalization of the entire country system.

Strategic geographical areas

Below are the geographical areas of strategic interest to enhance the level of internationalization, in terms of attraction, of the Italian higher education system, taking into account the geopolitical context and without prejudice to the importance of relations in the European and North Atlantic, on which important resources are already converging.

Priority areas of interest:

Countries of the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and the Balkan Peninsula. Italy is a platform launched in the Mediterranean which has almost 8,000 km of coastline. Its geographical conformation makes it an ideal landing point for students and researchers active in the countries of the MENA area. The higher education system can find a natural space for international promotion in these countries. The proximity to the countries of the MENA area and the Balkan area makes it essential to strengthen international relations between the institutions of the Italian training system and the university institutions present in the Balkan countries. For some countries in the MENA area (for example, in the Arabian Peninsula), where younger people boast high levels of education, often with university studies or PhDs obtained in the Anglo-Saxon world, it is appropriate to identify niches of high specialist training.

Countries of the African continent. Our position at the center of the Mediterranean and the traditional propensity for dialogue with Africa, also in light of the growing centrality that the continent is assuming against increasingly complex global phenomena, makes it appropriate to strengthen collaboration in terms of higher education and scientific-cultural development. This objective will be pursued within the framework of the "Mattei Plan" for the development of the African continent.

Countries with advanced or growing economies. Countries with advanced economies, growing or with great potentials, such as Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Panama (with, in alternative, Costa Rica, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic), China, India, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and the countries of Central, South-Central and South-East Asia, where we see growing demand for high-quality higher education. With reference to Japan and South Korea, there are also significant opportunities for exchanges between universities and research centers, especially in high technology and innovation sectors (semiconductors, aerospace, microelectronics, green economy). It is appropriate to concentrate internationalization efforts on these areas in order to attract motivated and talented students, teachers and researchers and create a basis for future commercial and cultural relationships and to consolidate those already in place.

Furthermore, particular attention is given to the higher education institutions present within the G7 member countries. Italy, also considering the role of the G7 rotating presidency, considers it of priority interest to strengthen the internationalization of the Italian system and promote further opportunities for mobility, collaboration and interaction with the countries involved.

In addition to the areas and countries mentioned above, are included all countries which, regardless of their location, demonstrate a potential interest in **introducing the Italian language** into the academic curriculum with the implementation of teacher training projects for the teaching of the Italian language at local schools. For our country, in fact, the promotion of the Italian language abroad is a priority tool for both external projection and attraction. Furthermore, as it facilitates cultural and economic exchanges between Italy and other countries, it can also have a positive impact on internal economic growth.

Finally, countries with a **large presence of Italian citizens** (including second or third generation) play a central role. From an internationalization perspective conceived as a tool for promoting one's culture and excellence and attracting talent, the valorisation of the Italian communities present in foreign countries constitutes a fundamental element.

The strategic objectives

This strategy document identifies **4 macro-objectives**.

Macro-objective 1: strengthen the culture of internationalization and broaden the spectrum of skills.

Higher education, research and innovation play a crucial role in supporting social cohesion, economic growth and global competitiveness. At the same time, the growing demand for skills and abilities requires new answers and a more complete approach. Wider access to higher education requires **strengthening the training** offer through the promotion of flexible and interdisciplinary learning paths. Truly internationalized planning of the sector's capabilities also includes innovative elements in the recruitment of teachers and researchers. It involves implementing actions aimed at encouraging the attraction of international teachers and researchers and the virtuous outgoing and incoming mobility of Italian teachers and researchers.

It is considered strategic that the Italian higher education system prepares young people for the role of future leaders with a broad global vision. Pivotal elements are the spread of a culture of internationalization both at an institutional and individual level and the integration of the spectrum of skills with multidisciplinary and intercultural elements.

Actions:

- **Enhance international experience and the interdisciplinary and intercultural component** in the definition of study paths and career paths of the staff of higher education institutions.
- **Expand the number of courses in the vehicular language** and facilitate the activation by institutions of study paths aimed at **issuing double degrees** and, if possible, **joint degrees**.
- **Enhance the international paths and activities carried out by teachers and researchers** in order to improve their careers.

Macro objective 2: promote mobility and attractiveness.

One of the key elements to increase the level of internationalization of the Italian higher education system is the mobility of students, teachers and technical-administrative staff working in higher education institutions.

Supporting **outgoing mobility** allows us to increase the level of internationalization culture, guaranteeing a dynamic environment aware of the value of international cooperation, better able to compete on a global scale.

Incoming mobility, supported by effective communication at an international level, is a source of significant economic, social and cultural returns. Foreign citizens, trained thanks to the Italian education system, become natural ambassadors of Italy in the world, contributing, indirectly, to promoting our interests and values. In particular, students in technical-scientific areas with their experience in our country can substantially contribute to the intensification of relations with the national socio-economic and industrial world. The potential of the Italian training system can be enhanced and brought to light thanks to the dialogue, protection and promotion capabilities of the diplomatic network.

With the aim of making it more attractive, also at a structural level, the Ministries support and assist the Italian higher education system, with a variety of tools, including the promotion of the following actions.

Actions:

- **Increase scholarships and incentives** aimed at encouraging the mobility of national students and the attraction of international students. The purpose of providing the grants is the activation of virtuous mobility paths abroad which include a subsequent phase of return to Italy, as well as the attraction of international students and researchers.
- **Create a national database of scholarships** provided by the various actors in the Italian higher education system, with the aim of providing international students with a complete picture of the possibilities for scholarships and benefits that the Italian system makes available. This database can be promoted through the “University” portal, the official access point to information on the higher education system and to the pre-enrolment platform for international students.
- **Support the inclusion of international students**, providing within the Youth Fund, specific funds for the tutoring of incoming and ongoing international students.
- **Promote specific agreements that include the involvement of multiple Ministries and which have as their objective** the promotion of academic mobility (students, teachers and researchers) to and from Italy.
- **Promote** the establishment of **institutional Alumni networks** and facilitate the expansion of existing ones. For example, in the case of the “Farnesina Alumni” network, created by the MFAIC to bring together its former scholarship holders, it will be possible to collaborate in order to create a stable bond over time with the Alumni, understood as promoters of the Italian System in the world.

- **Support the Italian Diplomatic Network as to the verification of the requirements for the entry into Italy of international students** (in coordination with the MFAIC), carrying out checks on the validity and recognition of qualifications with a timescale that allows skimming applicants who do not meet the requirements before approaching the consular desks. Strengthen the competent offices in areas of strategic interest, bringing forward the period for submitting the study visa application in order to allow students to receive a timely response on the granting of the visa, in time for the start of the academic year. Also make use of the support of the staff of the Uni-Italia Centers around the world, where present, as reference bodies for guidance on studying in Italy.
- **Strengthen the use of IT communication channels** in order to promote the Italian higher education system at a global level also through the creation of specific communication campaigns. The continuous updating and strengthening of the “University” website plays an essential role in this activity.

Macro-objective 3: promote and support bilateral and multilateral international cooperation.

The expansion of inter-university cooperation between Italian and foreign institutions has allowed the growth of networks and the development of joint programs that offer a global vision of training, which allows and facilitates the movement of people.

Cooperation between institutions, competent administrations and governments certainly has a global scope, in which the path started in the European context to strengthen multilateral collaboration stands out, trying to overcome approaches focused on impacts and procedures at a national level. The initiatives of the "European universities" - the Alliances -, for example, constitute an advanced tool designed to encourage the creation of the "European Higher Education Area".

The support to higher education institutions in the implementation of bilateral and multilateral initiatives for academic and artistic-musical cooperation, such as the establishment of joint study courses, and for the strengthening of the international mobility of students, teachers and administrative staff, is a fundamental objective to allow our country to improve its attractiveness.

This includes the establishment or strengthening of bilateral collaborations in the sector of higher education, lifelong learning and research, aimed at promoting convergence between the respective university systems, the issuing of double qualifications and joint qualifications, the implementation of joint research and permanent training programmes, to support the creation

of databases and telematic connections between university systems in order to establish a virtual network of information, teaching and permanent training.

Actions:

Support Italian educational institutions that participate in European and international capacity building projects, aimed at strengthening individual universities or higher education systems of non-European countries.

Promote actions aimed at creating transnational training initiatives involving Italian institutions and those of other countries.

Promote university education credit recognition systems, for example block chains, in order to facilitate truly internationalized study paths.

Promote specific agreements with various Ministries that provide for simplification procedures for the recognition of qualifications.

Promote membership of the "Global Convention for the Recognition of Qualifications Related to Higher Education" promoted by UNESCO.

Promote the initiatives of the Italian UNESCO Chairs by giving them support and fully enhancing their nature as a laboratory of ideas and catalyst for inter-national cooperation, through universities and other institutions of higher education and research.

Macro-objective 4: strengthen European cooperation as a tool for extra-EU internationalisation.

The *European Strategy for Universities*, adopted by the European Commission in January 2022, proposed important actions aimed at supporting European universities in achieving four objectives:

- strengthen the European dimension of higher education and research;
- consolidate the role of universities as reference centers of the European lifestyle through support actions focused on careers in the academic field and in the research sector, on

quality and relevance for skills suited to future needs, on diversity, on inclusion, democratic practices, fundamental rights and academic values;

- give universities the tools to become fundamental agents of change in the dual green and digital transition;
- strengthen universities as drivers of the EU's role and leadership at global level.

In 2024, the European dimension of higher education and research will see over **60 European universities** operational, with the involvement of over 500 higher education institutions. A path is underway that will lead to the creation of a long-term structural, sustainable and systemic cooperation instrument. We also need to develop a **legal statute for alliances of higher education institutions** that allows them to pool resources, capabilities and strengths.

This will lead to the birth of a European training space in which it will be possible for students to have a continuous exchange, broadening the horizon beyond European borders, facilitated by the recognition of the **value of transnational experiences** of the higher education qualification, thus reducing bureaucracy and **strengthening the European student card initiative** with the introduction of a unique European student identifier available for all mobile students in 2022 and for all university students in Europe by mid-2024.

The Italian system is playing a leading role in this process.

Actions:

- To support joint programs and projects at all levels of higher education, but also for subsequent postdoctoral training.
- To support the mobility of students and teachers, and of all staff in any capacity involved in the higher education system.
- To support the influx of particularly qualified foreign teachers and researchers into Italy and the valorisation of technological and digital aspects of teaching and learning procedures as tools to support mixed teaching (blended).
- To implement actions aimed at creating the regulatory and system conditions that favor the attenuation or resolution of the gap in the involvement of Italian institutions in European and international networks.
- **To support the "European Universities"**, the involvement of Italian institutions in European and international networks with particular attention to the expansion to institutions from non-EU countries considered strategic.

- To promote the activation of projects and experiences aimed at **enhancing the integration between training and research** in an international context also through the activation of transnational education courses.

Monitoring and evaluation

Within the general lines of the internationalization strategy outlined above, it is considered essential to develop a system to evaluate the effectiveness of the actions undertaken in order to implement corrections and identify areas for improvement, to facilitate the identification of good practices and, ultimately, also to guide decisions on the allocation of resources.

For this purpose, a specific **monitoring and evaluation group** will be identified, with a subsequent act, with the purpose of **establishing reference indicators** and the appropriate **monitoring and evaluation tools**, with the aim of improving the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of activities.

Conclusions

The Ministry of Universities and Research, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, works to enhance the funding, deriving from ordinary funds and from the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, aimed at promoting initiatives and activities that are intended for national and international students and for the internationalization of higher education institutions. In doing so, it considers the priorities outlined in this Strategy, which represents the general framework of reference for the actions planned for the years 2024-2026, and which aims to be a useful contribution to the definition of the strategic plans of the universities.

It should also be noted that the implementation of this strategy must consider the objectives of the **Mattei Plan for Africa** envisaged by the Legislative Decree of 15 November 2023, n. 161, converted with amendments by Law 11 January 2024, n. 2 (in Official Gazette 01/13/2024, no. 10). The intent is to activate paths and projects capable of increasing the ability to attract the best African students to Italian universities, improve Italy's ability to train African ruling classes and support the consolidation of research in university systems in Africa. The Ministries strongly believe in the realization of this Programme, also in light of the solid integration that exists between Italian universities and African countries, in terms of students coming from that area. Our higher education system will provide African students with a quality training offer, allowing them to take advantage of qualified and specific operational and scientific structures for study and research activities, as well as access to multiple services supplementing teaching.

The internationalization process, supported by the Ministries, will ultimately be developed in a coherent and integrated way with the choices made at EU level. In particular, the **"Skills and Talent Mobility Package"** adopted by the European Union on 15 November 2023 with the aim of increasing the attractiveness of member countries for citizens coming from third countries and, at the same time, facilitate mobility within the European area.

The development of objectives and tools to encourage the mobility of students and researchers, to enhance transnational knowledge and to concretely implement cooperation and mutual exchange between higher education institutions has the ultimate aim to promote and stimulate cultural and academic diversity.

Italy's international dimension in science and research is further supported by the presence of international organizations and research centers that we support in our territory and which often also collaborate with our prestigious universities, as well as with institutions in the rest of the

world. The attractiveness of the Italian higher education system can therefore be integrated with the possibility for international students in Italy to come into contact with realities of excellence in world research, which could be a starting point for young scientists and researchers to identify subsequent paths of development in our country and continue to collaborate in sharing knowledge at a multilateral level.

The strategy outlined above offers useful objectives to the higher education system for enhancing its level of internationalization by enabling the various actors involved to present themselves in a coordinated way in the global scenario.